

# Look to Jesus!

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 14 September 2018

Preacher: Rev Mark Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] Now if you can turn back to Numbers chapter 21 and really looking at verse 4 down to the verse marked 9 there, so that little section headed the bronze serpent.

Now we are very easily discouraged. We are people who are very easily discouraged. That's one thing we're very good at. There's some things we're not very good at, but that's one thing we are very good at, being discouraged.

And very often that discouragement that we feel as the Lord's people, that discouragement can lead into a kind of complaining spirit. It can happen very easily indeed. Discouragement leading on to this kind of complaining nature.

And for that reason, we can come to the people of Israel in the wilderness here and we can relate to them very well indeed, because these are a people who are very discouraged.

And as we see in the passage, there are people who complained often against the Lord. And sometimes when we are in that state of discouragement and complaining and when our heads are perhaps quite low and we're struggling in the faith for perhaps various reasons, the Lord needs to intervene.

[ 1 : 19 ] The Lord needs to intervene, to lift up our eyes away from perhaps the difficulties of our own situation or the difficulties of our own spiritual troubles and trials, to lift up our eyes away from ourselves and to look and behold the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because one look at Christ and all of a sudden we can be filled with that sense of the joy of our salvation once again, because that's what happens. We very often and perhaps far too easily lose sight of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And here in this passage that we're looking at tonight in verse 4 to 9 here, we begin this section by seeing a discouraged, rebellious and complaining people.

That's what you have at the beginning of the section. Discouraged, complaining people. They're looking at the difficulties of their own situation and they're lamenting and they're complaining to the Lord.

But then at the end of the section, it's very different. At the end of the section, you have them looking to the Lord, looking to the salvation of God, as is depicted here in this bronze serpent.

[ 2 : 27 ] And as we'll see, that is a picture to us of the Lord Jesus Christ. So maybe tonight you are discouraged. Maybe we are becoming an impatient and rebellious people.

Maybe we are very down, spiritually speaking, our heads down, perhaps focusing on all the difficulties of our own providential situation, whatever that might be, focusing on all the negative things.

Well, my prayer is, as we look at this text here tonight, that it would lead us to lift our eyes up. That's what we need more than anything. Perhaps especially on a weekend such as this, to lift our eyes up away from our own situation and to lift them and to look at the Lord Jesus Christ and to see our Lord lifted up in the sufferings of the cross.

So that's what I want us to do this evening. Now, the beginning of this chapter is actually a very significant moment for the children of Israel in the wilderness journey.

In verse 1 to 3 there, that's actually a record of their very first victory against the Canaanites. So that's pretty significant. This was the very first victory in what was going to be quite a long string of battles against the people of Canaan as Israel were going to go on and to attempt to and to go on to conquer the land of Canaan.

[ 3 : 54 ] So quite a significant moment indeed. And things are looking on the up for Israel. Things are looking good. They've had 40 years where things have not been very good.

But now all of a sudden they've got their first victory under their belt, so to speak. And you think that things would be looking up, that they would be perhaps very positive with the way things are going. And they go forward and they come to this place called Edom. And here they face a wee bit of a setback because they come to Edom and they're not actually allowed to go through Edom. For various reasons, they can't go through. It's actually recorded for us in the chapters before this. You can read that later on. You can see why they couldn't go through. But they were prevented from going through the land of Edom.

That would have been the quickest route to the promised land. That would have been the ideal route. But they weren't allowed to go through Edom. And because of that, they had to go the long way round the land of Edom.

[ 4 : 52 ] And the people of Israel, they are not best pleased with that at all. Very rarely are God's people happy when the Lord delays our journey or when the Lord makes us go the long way round.

We don't like that. We like to get somewhere fast. That's, I suppose, the culture we live in as well. We want to get somewhere fast. We want to get somewhere in as easy a way as possible, in a hassle-free way.

We're, I suppose, a very impatient people ourselves. And that's not something that's new now.

That's not something that just exists in the 21st century. People have always been impatient.

And here, thousands of years ago, here are the people of Israel and they're being impatient.

They're not happy at the fact that they can't just go straight through. They have to go round this long way.

And you see that impatience coming out in verse 4. And the people became impatient on the way.

And the people spoke against God and against Moses. Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

[ 5 : 56 ] For there is no food and no water. And we loathe this worthless food. They're complaining straight after their very first victory against the people of Canaan.

And here they are immediately, a few verses later, complaining against the Lord. It's quite remarkable. They've spent 40 years in the wilderness.

It's a long time. 40 years. And throughout that whole duration, God has been teaching them the importance of perseverance. He's been teaching them the importance of being obedient to the commands of the Lord.

He's been teaching them the importance of the fact that the Lord was going to be the one who abundantly provides for them. He's been teaching them all of these things.

And here they are, straight after this first victory, complaining and speaking against the Lord. And what is it they're actually complaining about here?

[ 6 : 52 ] They're complaining of their lack of food and water. And that is, that's quite remarkable. They're complaining about that in the last passage, in the last chapter, in chapter 20.

That's where God miraculously provided water for them from a rock. They complained of thirst there and the Lord miraculously provided for them. And it's like they've completely forgotten that.

Completely forgotten that God had given them water from this rock. Because no matter how many times God graciously and miraculously provides for his people, no matter how often he does it, they are so quick to forget.

And that's exactly what they do here. They forget the goodness of the Lord. They are murmuring and they are complaining at the Lord's provision. And how like ourselves that is, isn't it?

That's so like ourselves. How often we experience a great blessing from the Lord. Perhaps he answers our prayers in an amazing way. And perhaps he just gives us a very positive providence, whatever that might be.

[ 8 : 00 ] Perhaps he's blessing us through the word or something like that. And we're rejoicing and we're aware of the goodness of the Lord. And then all of a sudden things perhaps become a bit difficult.

And it's like we forget it. We forget all the goodness of the Lord in the past. All the blessings that he's given us. We forget all of these things. And we fall into this spirit of complaining.

Maybe even wishing we were back in Egypt. And that's what the people do here. They're wishing they were back in Egypt. Now Egypt of course in the Bible is a representation of the world, isn't it?

It's the place we were in before we were saved. And here these people are wanting back there. And I wonder, have you ever thought like that? Lord's people in here tonight.

Have you ever thought to yourself when things are difficult spiritually, very hard. Have you ever thought, you know, things would be so much easier if I just went back into the world?  
[ 9 : 00 ] Things would be so much easier if I just gave up on the faith altogether and just departed and just forgot it all. Now, perhaps we might not admit saying that or thinking that.

But many of the Lord's people go through that. Many of the Lord's people think like that. In these times of difficulty, times of spiritual darkness, the devil of course is involved in that. We can allow ourselves to think these very things.

Well, in response to that kind of thinking, like the Israelites are thinking here. In response to this going back to Egypt. I think what I would say there is, well, do you not remember what Egypt was like?

Do you not remember what it was like before you came to faith? You might look back with rose-tinted glasses, but it wasn't good. There in the world without Christ, there was no joy, no lasting joy.

It was a place with no lasting peace at all. You had nothing. You were on this road to destruction. There was no purpose in life. Certainly no lasting eternal purpose at all.

[ 10 : 03 ] It was a terrible place to be. And would you honestly prefer to go back there? Would we honestly like, in all the difficulties of our spiritual trials, trials to go back into the world and back the way things were back then?

Well, that's what the Israelites are wanting. That's exactly what they're wanting. These Israelites are struggling in their pilgrimage. And because they're struggling, they've forgotten two things.

They've forgotten the goodness of the Lord, all the provisions of the Lord. And they've also forgotten how bad Egypt was. They've forgotten these two things.

And we can do the same. We can forget these things. But their specific complaint is about the worthless food that God is providing for them.

So that's a reference to the manna. That's their main complaint. They are fed up of this manna. This manna that has sustained them right throughout their journey. This manna that they didn't earn, that they didn't work towards, that they didn't produce.

[ 11 : 05 ] The Lord just graciously gave it to them. He literally rained it upon them and fed them. And here they are despising it. They've come to despise the very provision of the Lord.

It just, it wasn't enough for them anymore. And, you know, we have to ask ourselves as well as we apply that to ourselves. To satisfy us.

To satisfy us. You see, the Old Testament manna, it's a picture to us of the word of God, isn't it? There's a close correlation between the manna and the word of God.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. And we have to ask ourselves, have we come to a situation where we're actually despising the provision of the Lord?

Are we despising the very word of God? Perhaps we open our Bibles and think, I'm fed up of this. Perhaps you open your Bibles and think, I've read it through so many times.

[ 12 : 07 ] I want something else. I want something new. I keep coming to it. It's the same things I'm coming to. I feel like it's not feeding me anymore. I want something fresh. I want something new.

And the same thing can happen when you come to God's house to worship as well. Exact same thing. You can come under the word. Hear the word. You can hear the word preached. And you can think the same thing. I've been to hundreds of sermons.

Maybe thousands. Some of you. Hundreds and hundreds of sermons. I've heard the gospel. I've heard the word of God. I've heard it all. The minister's not going to tell me anything new. Anything different.

I want something fresh. Something new. I'm fed up of the word of God. The provision of God. And perhaps we come and we think, right, we'll just get through this hour of worship.

And then I'll go back to my house, to my worldly pleasures. Are we despising the word of God? The provision of the Lord? Perhaps you think as a Christian you couldn't possibly do that.

[ 13 : 04 ] But it's possible. It's possible. You can actually despise the provision of the Lord. The Israelites were doing that just here. And then what happened to them? They despised this provision of the Lord.

And then in verse 6, we see there the Lord judging them. Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people. And they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

That's pretty solemn and pretty serious. Maybe in our ranking of sin, if we're going to rank sin. Not that we shoot. But if we're going to rank sin, maybe in our rank. Of complaining against the Lord and murmuring like this.

It's maybe, maybe perhaps not quite as bad as other things. But from the passage here, make no mistake. It is a grievous sin. A grievous sin.

To complain against the Lord and his provision. And to moan and want to go back to Egypt. To think we were better off outside of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[14:01] To think we were better off in the world. And that's exactly what these Israelites are going through here. So God sends these fiery serpents. This judgment. Now what were these fiery serpents?

Well, they're not literally snakes on fire. That's what it sounds like. Fiery serpents. That's not what these things were. They were ordinary serpents. But obviously their venom, the poison in their venom, caused this kind of burning sensation.

When the venom got into your body, it would burn you. And that's why they were known as these fiery serpents. And that's an amazing picture of the burning effect of sin.

You see, the judgment of the Lord here, it's so apt for the situation. Because serpents remind us of sin. The image of the serpent. When you think of a serpent, what do you think of straight away? Go to the Garden of Eden. It just instinctively brings Eden to mind. And when you think of the serpent there, the serpent is the one who brought, effectively, brought sin into the world. It's the serpent tempted man into sin.

[15:08] So there's this link between the serpent and sin. It's there from the very beginning of time. And here, there's these fiery serpents. A picture of the burning effect of these people's sin here.

So how do they react when this happens? When the Lord sends these fiery serpents their way? Well, you see in verse 7 there. And the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you.

Pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents from us. So Moses prayed for the people. Now you'll notice there how the people very quickly, they make the link between their sin and this judgment from the Lord.

They know straight away that all this has happened because of their sin. They're not going to Moses and saying, Why are these fiery serpents here? They're not going to Moses and saying, Why is the Lord doing these things?

They know. They know fine well why all this is happening. They know it's because they have sinned. And they know specifically it's because of their complaining against the Lord and their moaning and their despising of the Lord's provision, despising of God's manner.

[16:26] They know. Now, it's worth pointing out that it's not always the case that every bad thing that happens in your life is because of a sin or a particular sin.

The Bible never teaches that. It doesn't say that every bad thing that happens to us is because we committed some sin somewhere. That's not the case. But although that's not always the case, sometimes it is.

There are occasions, there are times when our sin actually brings about this hardship. And that's exactly what happens here. And usually when that happens, it'll be very clear.

There'll be a very clear connection between the particular chastisement of the Lord and the sin that we've actually committed. There'll be an obvious link. And here, these people, they know. They have no doubt at all.

They know exactly what sin has caused this particular hardship. And so it is with ourselves. When we are being chastised by the Lord, we know. We know exactly why these things are happening.

[17:25] And the people here, they come to Moses in repentance. Because we think of judgment as a bad thing. But actually, judgment's got a good side. Judgment is intended to bring about repentance.

And that's why the Lord sent these fiery serpents. He didn't just strike them all down. He sent the fiery serpents as a judgment in order to bring them to repentance. And that's exactly what they did here. And they come and they say, we have sinned.

And they don't hide behind any excuses. They say it as it is. We have sinned. They're not going to try and make any excuse about it. They know the Lord sees their heart. And they know the Lord knows everything about them.

So they just come before God. And they say, hands up. We have sinned. We have sinned against you. And you'll notice as well how they confess very specifically.

They confess very specifically the sin that they commit. Look at verse 7. They are specific in their confession here.

[ 18 : 33 ] And there's a lesson there for ourselves, isn't there? We ought to be a people who are specific in our coming to God and repentance. Not just saying, forgive my sin in this general way as though sin was this abstract thing which we can't actually relate to.

We ought to be coming, actually naming our sins. I mean, that's a, I suppose that's a basic principle of even how we discipline children. When a child comes and he's done something or she's done something wrong, you don't want them just to come and say sorry.

You want them to come and say sorry because I did this or sorry because I did that. You want them to acknowledge exactly what it is that they've done wrong. And the same is true with the Lord.

When we come in repentance, we don't just come in this general way, forgive me for my sin.

We come naming our sins, lay them before the Lord. So next time when you pray, privately I'm talking about here, not public prayer is a different thing altogether. But private prayer, you and the Lord, when you say those words, forgive me for my sin.

Stop, stop at that moment and ask yourself, what am I asking here? What sins am I actually confessing? And list off the sins of that day, the sins of that evening, the sins of that morning, whatever it might be.

[ 19 : 44 ] Actually name them before the Lord. And you'll also notice that the people here, they're also very specific in how they want saved.

Very specific. They want these serpents taken away from them. We read, pray to the Lord that he take away the serpents from us.

So they don't just ask to be saved. They tell God how to save them. They say to God, God, take away these serpents from us.

But God doesn't always answer our prayers in the way that we want. He doesn't always save us in the way that we would like. We might say, save me this way or save me that way.

But these things are up to the Lord. And the Lord here, he saves them, but he doesn't take away these fiery serpents at all. He provides salvation in a different way, in a very unusual way.

[ 20 : 43 ] And that leads us to this wonderful picture that we have in verse 8 there. This picture of salvation. And it's not just a picture of salvation. It's a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's exactly what this bronze serpent is. This bronze serpent on the pole, a picture of our Lord. So in verse 8, we read this. And the Lord said to Moses, so in answer to the prayer.

By the way, before I go on to that, notice, Moses is acting as a mediator there, isn't he? The people didn't pray. The people told Moses to pray for them. He's acting like a mediator.

And that's really him acting in this role of being a type of Christ. As Christ is the mediator between God and man. So Moses here becomes the middle man. The mediator between the people of Israel and God himself.

And Moses, he prays. He prays on behalf of the people and the Lord answers. And in verse 8, And the Lord said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole.

[ 21 : 42 ] And everyone who is bitten when he sees it shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

So God tells Moses to erect this serpent. And Moses makes a bronze serpent. And he sticks this serpent on a big pole. And if you were bitten by these fiery serpents, All you had to do was look at this bronze serpent.

And you would be healed. You would be saved. Now, that strikes us as being a very unusual way of providing salvation. It's really strange.

Why did the Lord use this particular method and this particular means? But of course, the Lord had a plan in it all. And the Lord always intended that this would point us forward to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember, in our first reading, we read in John chapter 3 and verse 14. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, So must the Son of Man be lifted up.

[ 22 : 48 ] That whoever believes in him may have eternal life. So Christ himself compares him and his death, his future death, to this serpent.

This bronze serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness in the same way Christ was going to be lifted up in the cross of Calvary that was to happen in the coming days.

But I want to ask now, basically just for the remaining time, I want to ask, in what way does this bronze serpent actually point us forward to the Lord Jesus Christ?

In looking at this bronze serpent, what do we actually learn about the Lord Jesus? What are the parallels between the two? Well, there's quite a few. Firstly, we notice that this image that these people are to look at in order to be saved, it's the very image of the thing that's killing them.

That's bizarre, isn't it? They're told to look at the very image of the thing that's killing them. What's killing them? It's the serpent. The serpent is the thing that's killing them.

[ 23 : 58 ] And they're to look at a picture or an image of the serpent in order for them to be saved. And that's very unusual. Sure. That's a very strange way for the Lord to grant them this healing.

We want to ask, how does that then relate to Calvary? How do we relate that to Calvary? Well, what is it that's killing us? What is it that's putting us to death?

Well, the answer is sin, isn't it? It's sin. That's the thing that's killing us. We're already dead. It's not just killing us. We are dead in our trespasses and in our sin. We are being put to death by sin.

And when we look to the cross, what do we see there in the cross? You see there the darkness of sin. That's what you see. Because when you look to the cross, you see the God-man.

And he's there, beaten, bloody. He's there, panging on the cross. Nailed hand and foot to this cross. And there's a darkness enveloping this whole sin.

[ 25 : 03 ] Literally, there's a darkness. Remember, there was three hours of darkness. But spiritually, there's a darkness as well. There's a darkness right around this scene. And then you hear the Lord cry, that cry of dereliction.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And you look at all that and you see this is a scene of the judgment of God on the sin of his people.

You look to the cross and you see sin. A terrible black picture of sin. And if you're the Lord's people here tonight, you can look at the cross and you can say a bit more than that.

You can say, I see my sin. I see my sin there on the cross. Every evil word, every sinful action, every lustful thought, every sin that I have committed as the Lord's people here tonight, we can look at the cross and we can say, my sin is there.

My sin is there on the cross, on the shoulders of the Lord himself, upon our sin bearer. So, the Israelites, they see an image of the very thing that's killing them.

[ 26 : 16 ] They see a serpent. And so we, as we look at the cross of our Lord, we see there our sin. The very thing that's killing us. We see it there on the cross of Christ.

But, praise God, that's not all we see here. You also see the salvation of the Lord. You see, as the Israelites look at this bronze serpent, they literally see the salvation of the Lord, don't they?

As they see that bronze serpent, they see there an image of the mercy and the grace of God. The salvation of God. They know they don't deserve it. They know they've sinned.

They know that this is a gracious provision from the Lord. And all they need to do is look at this bronze serpent and they will live. And so, too, as we look at the cross of Christ, we don't just see sin.

We see the salvation of the Lord. We see there on the cross one who is dying sacrificially in order to take all of our sin, all that guilt, all of it away from us.

[ 27 : 24 ] When we look to the cross, we see there someone who's experiencing the wrath of God so that we, as the Lord's people, will never have to experience the wrath of God.

We see him suffering the pains of hell there on the cross so that that sting of death will never burn through the souls of his people.

You see, we're in need of healing. Every single one of us in here tonight, we are in need of healing because we're all infected. We've all got this venom running through our veins, this sting of sin.

Sin is there as much as blood is pumping through our body, so too is that sin. Sin is all over us and we need that healing. And what is our prescription? What is our form of healing?

What's available to us in this medicine cabinet of God? But it is to look to the Lord Jesus Christ. We look to him and we live.

[ 28 : 28 ] There we see the salvation of the Lord. And notice too, that this bronze serpent is accessible to all. We read that it's lifted up on a pole.

Why was it put on a big pole? Now, it seems pretty obvious. It was put on a big pole so that people could see it. That was the whole point. You had to see this thing in order to be saved.

So they put it on a pole so that it doesn't matter where the people were in the camp. It doesn't matter if they were far away. It doesn't matter if they were close. It doesn't matter if there might have been obstacles in between them and the bronze serpent.

Because it was lifted up on this pole, all they had to do was look. Wherever they were in the camp, it was accessible to all of them.

And it's the same not true of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Lifted up on the cross through the preaching of the word.

[ 29 : 26 ] Because there he is accessible and he is visible to all. Doesn't matter who we are.

Doesn't matter our background. Doesn't matter how much we know or how little we know.

The Lord in the preaching of the cross is lifted up, elevated and accessible there for all. Evident there for all to see.

It doesn't matter tonight how far you think you are from God. It doesn't matter how near perhaps you think you are to God. It doesn't matter if you've been to church your whole life.

It doesn't matter supposing you've hardly been to church at all. It doesn't matter if there's obstacles in your way stopping you from getting to Christ. None of that matters. Because when the Lord Jesus Christ is elevated in the preaching of the word on the cross of Calvary, as he's lifted up there, he is visible and accessible to all.

So that everyone can see. And everyone can bow the knee and look to the Lord and be saved.

See, sometimes we think we have to know so much of the Bible.

[ 30 : 31 ] Sometimes we think we have to get closer to the cross before we can put our faith. It's not how it is. It doesn't matter where we are. How far we are, you can look to the Lord with saving faith and you will be saved.

And you need to look with the eye of faith. You need to look with the eye of faith. You see, when the Israelites looked at the bronze serpent, they believed the promise of God.

They believed that they would be healed. In that sense, it's not really the bronze serpent that healed them. It's not just like looking at an object healed them.

That's not the issue here. When they looked, they looked with the eye of faith. They believed in the promise of God. See, God promised, if you look at this bronze serpent and if you're bitten, you will be healed, you will be saved.

When they were looking to the bronze serpent, they were looking, believing very much in the promise of God. Believing in that promise that they would be saved.

[ 31 : 36 ] It was a look of faith. Even then, it wasn't just a look. It was a look of faith. Trusting in the Lord's provision. And as you look to the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to look at him in the same way.

You don't just look at him academically. You don't just look at him from a distance in the sense of not wanting to trust in this man. You look at him with the eye of faith, laying hold of him, trusting in him, and accepting him as your Lord and your Saviour.

believing that he has cleansed you from all of your sin. Look to him and live.

And of course, that bronze serpent was there on the pole all the time. All the time. The Israelites, they would have seen the bronze serpent the whole day.

They would have been going around their daily activities, doing what they normally do, and they would have been very busy, going around all their activities, and they would have seen that bronze serpent from time to time. They would have looked, they would have clocked it.

[ 32 : 41 ] And it's a reminder to them, continually. They wouldn't just have looked at that bronze serpent when they were bitten. They would have kept looking. Kept looking at that serpent and remembering the goodness of the Lord and remembering the salvation of the Lord.

And so too, we must continually look to Christ on the cross. You see, some Christians fall into the trap of thinking, the cross, and Christ on the cross, that's for my salvation, but I actually don't need it after that.

That's not the case. Our eyes must be constantly fixed on the cross of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We look to the cross and we remember the grace and the mercy of God.

We look to the cross daily and we remember the salvation that we have in Christ. Now, this weekend, it's obviously the Lord's Supper weekend and in a very real way, you'll be all remembering the Lord in a particular way this weekend and his death on the cross.

But we shouldn't just wait for Communion Sundays to do that. We should always be looking to the cross, always remembering, because we need that strengthening. We need that reminding of what it is the Lord has done.

[ 33 : 53 ] The moment you stop looking to the cross, you will struggle. I guarantee you that. You'll struggle. You'll struggle and you'll get very discouraged in the faith. The moment you take your eye off, you'll get discouraged.

And usually what happens is, when that discouragement settles in, that's what leads to this bitter and complaining spirit that we see in the people of Israel here.

We must keep focused on the one who has been lifted up. He's been lifted up for a reason, lifted up so that we might keep seeing and keep looking to Him.

So look to Him and keep looking to Him. Well, this is a very simple way of healing, a very simple and effective means of salvation here with the people of Israel.

And the Gospel is a very simple and a very effective means of salvation for the Lord's people. You see, when you feel that burning sting of sin, when sin bites you with conviction, you'll feel that heat, as it were, spiritually around your body.

[ 35 : 03 ] You'll feel that burning sensation. And what happens is, as it takes hold of you, it starts to kind of choke you. It chokes you. You're not quite as free and you don't have the same peace as you had before.

And the more that happens, you then get these cords of death just wrapping around you and they get tighter and tighter. They don't get any looser. Tighter and tighter. And these chains of conviction, they start wrapping around you.

They're very heavy indeed. And when that happens, when you're in that state, tangled and stuck and nowhere to go, you can't but look to Christ. And when you look to Christ, that burning sensation will disappear.

The burning sensation of sin will disappear. Those cords of death, which wrap around you, they will loosen. They will loosen in a moment. And those heavy weights of conviction, those chains of conviction, which wrap themselves around us, they'll just fall.

They'll fall to the floor and you'll know the healing of the Lord. You'll know that sense of the peace of the Lord. And this weekend, as you gather for worship and as you gather particularly to celebrate the Lord's Supper, my prayer is that your heads would be lifted up beyond the difficulties and the struggles of your own pilgrimage as Christians, beyond your own trials, perhaps, and no doubt many of you are going through lots of different trials.

[ 36 : 32 ] My prayer is that our eyes would be lifted away from ourselves. It is right in our looking at ourselves and in our preparation to the table to examine ourselves, but our eyes shouldn't be fixed on ourselves.

It's so that once we've looked at ourselves, then our eyes will be lifted up and our eyes may look to the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is surely the prayer of each one of us here tonight, that this weekend would be a weekend that we see the Lord lifted up and that we might have a sense of that life-giving power that he gives.

Because he gives life and he gives it abundantly. He gives it to the full. And I hope and pray that every one of us would know that for ourselves. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the Gospel and that we find the Gospel not only in the pages of the New Testament, not even only in the pages of the Gospel themselves, but we find the Gospel right throughout Scripture.

And even there in the depths and in the heart of the book of Numbers, there is the Gospel. There were the people in the wilderness walking and they looked up and they saw a picture of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One lifted up, the One through whom they would look with the eye of faith and have salvation.

[ 38 : 01 ] And our prayer tonight is that all of us would know that for ourselves. And that if there are some still outside of Christ, that when that sting of sin begins to burn, that they might see that the only way that they might find healing is to look to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So strengthen us now. Go before us and cleanse us from that sin. Keep us looking to Jesus. And it's in His name we ask it. Amen. Amen. We'll close now by singing to God's praise in Psalm 24 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 24. And we'll sing verse 7 to 10.

This is the triumphant words, the picture of our king lifted up, not in suffering as such, but lifted up in glorification and exaltation. And there's a picture of Him entering into the glory of the holy place itself.

Ye gates lift up your heads on high, ye doors that last foray. Be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me. But who of glory is the king? The mighty Lord is this.

[ 39 : 21 ] Even that same Lord that great in might and strong in battle is. It's a victory sign. Ye gates lift up your heads, ye doors. Doors that do last foray. Be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me.

But who is he that is the king of glory? Who is this? The Lord of hosts and none but he the king of glory is.

So we'll sing these words of victory to the praise of God. Ye gates lift up your heads, the Lord of hosts on high.

Ye doors that last foray. Be lifted up that so the king of glory enter me.

But who of glory is the king? But my dear Lord is this.

[ 40 : 30 ] In that same Lord that great in might and strong in battle is. In that same Lord that great in might and strong in battle is.

Ye gates lift up your heads, ye doors, ye doors, O's that do last foray.

Be lifted up, that so the king of glory enter me.

But who is he that is the king? The king of glory, who is this?

The Lord of hosts and none but he the king of glory is. The Lord of hosts and none but he the king of glory is.

[ 41 : 48 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen Amen Amen The grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit continue with you all now and forevermore. Amen.