

# The Good News

*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: 17 December 2017

Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help, this evening, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the Gospel according to Luke, Luke chapter 2, and I'd like us to look at the whole passage, but if we just read again at verse 13, Luke chapter 2 and verse 13.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased. When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us. And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger, and so on. Now, in this past week, I was buying a 60th birthday present for my father. His birthday is in January. And I'll tell you what I bought him on one condition that you don't tell him. Because it's so hard to buy a present for someone who seems to have everything.

[ 1 : 2 8 ] And I'm sure you're finding that out in the run-up to Christmas. You don't want to buy the same thing every Christmas. You want to give something that's different, maybe something that's unique, maybe something that's a little quirky.

Well, for my father's 60th, I bought him a newspaper. But not any newspaper. An old newspaper. But not any old newspaper.

It was the newspaper that was printed on the day that he was born, which was the 12th of January, 1958. But it's not the only thing I want to get him for his birthday.

I'll get him something else. But buying a newspaper with news on it that is 60 years old, well, it might seem a bit daft. And it's daft because, well, most things that happened back in 1958, they probably mean nothing to us now.

But I suppose it allows my father to read about what was happening in the world the day that he entered into it. And to be honest, I can't imagine that there's going to be anything special in that newspaper on the 12th of January, 1958, apart from the fact that my father was born on that date.

[ 2 : 3 3 ] But, you know, I was thinking that if newspapers were produced during the period of the Roman Empire, and if we were to get a hold of a copy of a newspaper that was printed on the day that Jesus Christ was born, as those gathered in church in Barvis in the 21st century, 21 centuries later, we would expect the birth of Jesus to be headline news.

We would expect it to be the greatest event in history. We would expect the birth of the Saviour of Sinners to be on the front page everywhere, all over the front page. But as we know, the day on which Jesus was born, it wasn't recognised.

It was a momentous occasion. It was a life-changing and world-transforming date in history. But in reality, if we had been given a copy of a newspaper on the day on which Jesus was born, there would have been no reference to Jesus, and no mention of Mary or Joseph, or to any of the prophecies about the birth of Christ.

There would have been nothing written in any newspaper throughout the entire Roman Empire that would have reported on the birth of Jesus.

Instead, there would have probably been a headline about the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, and a census that was taking place at the time. But you know, what I want us to consider this evening is that Luke's Gospel is like a local newspaper.

[ 4 : 0 1 ] And I don't say that flippantly, because Luke says himself in the opening verses of his Gospel, verses 1 to 4 in chapter 1, he says that he's written his Gospel like a reporter.

And he says that he's taken notes of what has happened, and he's interviewed eyewitnesses, and he has recorded their account of these particular events.

And Luke says himself that he has written this orderly account of what has happened. And so in a sense, you could say that Luke is a newspaper reporter, and he's giving to us the headline news as it happened.

He's giving to us eyewitness accounts of events that unfolded during his time. And you know, in my mind, I have this thought that if Luke was similar to a newspaper reporter, then I would like to think that the name of his newspaper would have been called simply The Good News.

That's what he wanted to report, The Good News. Because that's Luke's desire. That's what he's desperate to share with everyone. He wants to share The Good News, The Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 10 ] And so as we consider this passage this evening, I want us to view it as a newspaper. We're reading Luke's newspaper, The Good News.

And on this particular day, Luke gives to us three news articles in his newspaper. And these three news articles, they have three headlines. And these three headlines, they are The Sovereign Situation, The Singing Seraphim, and The Seeking Shepherds.

Three articles, three headlines. The Sovereign Situation, The Singing Seraphim, and The Seeking Shepherds. So if we look at the first article, The Sovereign Situation.

The Sovereign Situation. Look at verse 1. Look at verse 1. It says there, In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This was the first registration when Quirius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And so as a good news reporter, Luke sets everything in context.

[ 6 : 17 ] Because in these opening verses, before he comes to the personal situation of Mary and Joseph, Luke first of all reminds us of the political situation that was going on in Israel.

And he says that the political situation in Israel was that Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire. The Israelites, as you know, they were God's chosen people. They were to be ruled and governed by the laws of God.

But Luke says here, in verse 1, In those days, in those days, the Israelites, they were under the dominion and the rule of the Roman Empire.

Because in those days, the Roman Empire, as you know, it had expanded greatly. The Romans had conquered many nations and the empire was vast.

It had spread throughout the nations of Europe and throughout the Middle East. And where there were once great kingdoms, like the nations of Egypt and Assyria and Babylon and Persia and Greece, all these nations and kingdoms, they had fallen and they were now under the rule of the Roman Empire.

[ 7 : 24 ] So in those days, the empire was huge. And in those days, there was also this thing called a Pax Romana, a Roman peace.

There were no wars being fought by the Roman military. And the Roman Empire, it had stopped expanding by that point. It had reached its climax. And there was this Pax Romana, this period of peace and peacefulness.

But even though there were no wars being fought in Israel, there was this, still a lot of tension and disruption going on. There was a lot of unrest because of the presence of the Romans in Israel.

In fact, the Herod, which Matthew tells us about, the Herod who tried to kill the baby Jesus, he was just a puppet in the Roman Empire. Herod had no real power.

She was just this political puppet who was in place to keep the Jews happy. But as Luke sets the context for us, he says that the Roman Emperor, who has brought about this Pax Romana, this Roman peace, he says he is Caesar Augustus.

[ 8 : 30 ] And as the Roman Emperor, he has decreed that the whole world, which meaning the entire Roman Empire, they should be all registered. They should all be registered.

Now the authorised version, it says that Caesar Augustus decreed that the Roman Empire should be taxed, which is correct. Because the reason everyone was to be registered, they were all to be registered within the Roman Empire, it was so that they would all be taxed by the Roman Empire. But you know, even though the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, and the governor of Syria, this man called Quirinius, and there was also King Herod in Israel, even though all these political powers thought that they were governing and directing all the events that would take stage on the political history, not one of them was in control.

All these political powers thought that they were in control of their own lives, and their own kingdoms, and their own political situations. But Luke wants to remind us in his report that this situation, in those days, it was a sovereign situation.

He's saying the Lord was in control. The king of all the earth was still sitting enthroned on high, and he was still ruling over and overruling all things.

[ 9 : 54 ] The political situation at the time was a sovereign situation. And you know, this should be the greatest comfort to us when we consider the political situations of our own day.

Whether it's the prospect of Brexit, or the laws that are being passed in our parliament that are contrary to God's word, or the unrest that's going on in Israel, or the constant threat of terror, or the unending war against the Islamic State.

All these things. Luke is reminding us here that all these political situations, they are sovereign situations. And as much as it may seem to us and to our eyes that these things look like chaos, in fact, these political situations, they're not random events.

They're not a result of chaos. They're not out of control. Because each and every one of them is a sovereign situation in which the Lord is in control, and he's working all things together for good, and ultimately for his own glory.

But you know, Luke also reminds us here that the Lord is not only sovereign in our political situations, he's also sovereign in all our personal situations.

[ 11 : 11 ] Because Luke reports to us of the personal situation of Mary and Joseph. And that it was because of the political situation and the decree from Caesar Augustus that the personal situation of Mary and Joseph changed.

Where they had to travel to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem in order to be registered. And Luke tells us about that in verse 4. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And so the political situation at the time, it transformed Mary and Joseph's personal situation.

Because they had to travel about 80 miles from Nazareth and Galilee to Bethlehem.

And as you know, traveling 80 miles in those days, it wasn't going to be a journey of a couple of hours. It was going to be a three-day journey. And for Mary, who as we've read, she was heavily pregnant at the time.

She's about to give birth. And as you would expect, well, it would have been a very uncomfortable journey for her. But you know, it wasn't going to get any better when they arrived in Bethlehem.

[ 12 : 24 ] Because as we know and as we read, there was no room for them in the inn. And so Mary and Joseph, they were given this barn to sleep in. Mary had to give birth on the hay that was for the animals.

And well, she had to just lay her newborn son in a feeding trough. And you know, when you think about it, we often complain about the NHS. But when the King of Glory was born into the world, he was born in complete humiliation.

Down, down, down. And someone once said that when Christ came among us, we pushed him into an outhouse. And we have done our best to keep him there ever since.

But you know, even though the political situation had transformed Mary and Joseph's personal situation, Mary and Joseph both knew that this was a sovereign situation.

And they knew that it was a sovereign situation because the birth of the Saviour in the little town of Bethlehem, that's what had been, it had been prophesied 650 years earlier by the prophet Micah.

[ 13 : 36 ] Because when we read Micah chapter 5, the Lord says, But you, O Bethlehem, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

And you know, isn't it amazing? The political situation in Israel, although it may have seemed like chaos, and the personal situation of Mary and Joseph, that seemed like chaos.

It was all a sovereign situation. And you know, it should make us realize that the Lord is in control of every situation in our lives, and that whatever is going on, politically or personally, the Lord is in it.

The Lord is in control. The Lord is sovereign. And He's there to help us when we feel helpless. He's there to guide us when we feel lost. He's there to assure us of His presence when we feel lonely.

The Lord is there. He's in your situation. He's in our situations. He wants to help you and guide you and assure you in your situation. Because He knows the way that you take.

[ 14 : 48 ] That's why Jesus says to us in the Gospel, is it not, come to me, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Because He knows our situations. He's sovereign in all our situations. And you know, it's a great reminder to know that Jesus is sovereign in every situation that's going on in our lives.

And so Luke, in his newspaper, Luke reports to us on the sovereign situation. But secondly, he reports on the singing seraphim. The singing seraphim.

If you look at verse 8. And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Now in this article of his newspaper, Luke gives to us a first-hand witness account of what happened out in the hill country of Bethlehem.

[ 16 : 03 ] And Luke reports that in the same region there were shepherds out in the fields and they were keeping watch over their flock by night. But I don't want to focus upon the shepherds just yet because, well simply because Luke doesn't do that.

But we'll come to the shepherds in a moment. But first of all, Luke draws our attention to the angels. And in particular he draws our attention to an angel of the Lord.

It says there in verse 9, And an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were filled with fear. And so as the shepherds, he's giving to us this report,

As the shepherds camped out in the fields and an angel of the Lord encamped round about them.

Now again, the authorised version says that the angel of the Lord appeared. But there's no definite article in the original language. Meaning that it must be translated as an angel of the Lord.

And there is a difference. It's often said that large doors swing on small hinges. Well, in the Bible, large theological truths, they swing on small words. Because when the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, when it speaks about the angel of the Lord, it's referring to the Lord himself.

[ 17 : 23 ] It's referring to the second person of the Godhead, God the Son. It's referring to the angel of the Lord as you could say a pre-incarnate Christ. And that's what we were singing about in Psalm 34.

David blesses the Lord. He expresses praise to the Lord because even in times of trouble, he says, the angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear and them deliver it.

David knew the presence and the blessing of the angel of the Lord. But the shepherds encountered an angel of the Lord. And it was an angel of the Lord because it couldn't have been the angel of the Lord.

It couldn't have been a pre-incarnate Christ because Luke has just told us in verse 7 about the incarnation. Luke has just told us that Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger.

And although it may seem like an insignificant little word, the angel who appeared before the shepherds, he was an angel of the Lord and not the angel.

[ 18 : 31 ] But Luke also tells us about this angel that when the angel appeared before the shepherds, the glory of the Lord shone around them. And that statement implies to us that this angel of the Lord was an archangel.

It was an angel that was situated near or dwelt near to the throne of God. And because this archangel was situated in close proximity to the throne of God, you could say that it absorbed the glory of God.

And so when this archangel, when the angel of the Lord appears before the shepherds, the glory of the Lord shines around them because the angel has absorbed the Lord's glory and he's now reflecting the Lord's glory.

That's what the angels do. They reflect the Lord's glory and it's shining around the shepherds. And this is what I find fascinating. The Bible only refers to two archangels.

It doesn't say who it is here. There's two archangels, Gabriel and Michael. And Gabriel appears on two occasions in the Bible. First of all, in the book of Daniel, when Gabriel gives Daniel a message about the promised Messiah.

[ 19 : 50 ] and we were looking at that message a few weeks ago in the prayer meeting, the prophecy of the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9. But Gabriel, he appears again here in Luke's gospel

in chapter 1, the time of the birth of Jesus.

And in chapter 1, we're told that Gabriel appeared to Mary and informed her that she would conceive and bear a son. And so the archangel Gabriel seems to be a messenger.

But the archangel Michael seems to be a warrior. This, I find, just looking at angels. We don't know much about them.

We're even told in Hebrews chapter 13, well, watch out when you entertain strangers. You might be entertaining angels without even knowing it. And so the archangel Michael, he seems to be a warrior because in the letter of Jude, we're told that the archangel Michael, he contended with the devil.

And that would make sense because in the book of Revelation, we're told that the archangel Michael and all his angels, they fought against the dragon, meaning Satan. And so the archangel Gabriel is a messenger, but the archangel Michael is a warrior.

[ 21 : 02 ] And so, well, we have to conclude that the angel who appeared to the shepherds was Gabriel. And like as at other times, the archangel Gabriel, he had a message.

It says in verse 10, and the angel said to them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior who is Christ the Lord.

Luke reports that the archangel Gabriel brought a message of good news. And you know, I love what J.C. Ryle says in his commentary.

We need not wonder at these words. The spiritual darkness which had covered the earth for thousands of years, he says, it was about to be rolled away.

The way to pardon and peace with God was about to be thrown wide open. The head of Satan was about to be bruised. Liberty was about to be proclaimed to the captives.

[ 22 : 01 ] The recovering of sight to the blind. Salvation was no longer to be seen through types and shadows in the Old Testament, but openly and face to face. The knowledge of God, he says, it was no longer to be confined to the Jews but offered to the whole world.

My friend, the message which the archangel Gabriel brought to the shepherds from the throne of God itself, it was the gospel of Jesus Christ. You know, that's an amazing thought.

The gospel came from the throne of God itself. And the message was, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour who is Christ the Lord.

You know, it's the best news that anyone could ever hear. The best news that Christ the saviour has been born. The best news that anyone could ever hear.

And you know, some of you have had the privilege of hearing this good news all your life and you still do nothing with it. And you know, I wonder when that will change.

[ 23 : 11 ] When will that change? Or will it ever change? Will it ever change for you? Will you ever embrace this good news? Because it is good news.

Unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour who is Christ the Lord. But you know, Luke, he doesn't leave it there because he not only reports on the message of Gabriel, he also reports on the singing seraphim.

And we're told that after Gabriel had delivered his message, we're told in verse 13, And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

And what Luke reports to us is something remarkable. Not only because he has reported on the message of the archangel Gabriel, but also this multitude of heavenly hosts who are praising the newborn saviour.

And although there are different types of angels mentioned in the Bible, I believe that this heavenly host of angels is seraphim. And I say that because the Bible mentions seraphim and cherubim.

[ 24 : 31 ] In the Bible, it talks about angels all the time. You just have to see it. But the role of cherubim, I believe that their role was to guard the things of God that are holy.

They were cherubim, as you know, they guarded the tree of life, the way to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. They guarded it with a flaming sword when Adam and Eve were put out.

They were cherubim that were woven into the inner covering of the tabernacle that guarded the way into the Holy of Holies. They were cherubim that even overshadowed the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies.

And so it seems that the role of the cherubim was to guard the way to the things of God that are holy. But the role of the seraphim was to praise God.

And we see that in Isaiah's vision in Isaiah chapter 6. When Isaiah says, in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up, sitting upon a throne.

[ 25 : 33 ] And he says, the train of his robe, it filled the temple. And above it stood, above the throne stood the seraphim. And each one, he says, had six wings.

With two, he covered his face. With two, he covered his feet. And with two, he flew. And one was crying to the other, crying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And so the role of these magnificent creatures, the role of the seraphim, was and is to praise the Lord for his wondrous works.

And here Luke records what the shepherds heard from heaven itself. That there was this multitude of heavenly hosts singing and praising Jesus as the saviour of his people.

And you know what the shepherds heard? It must have been incredible. Because Luke tells us that there was a multitude, an innumerable multitude.

[ 26 : 30 ] In the book of Revelation it says that around the throne of God are angels. And the number of them he says is ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands.

And when you do the maths, you're into the billions. It's amazing. Billions and billions of seraphim praising and singing the saviour.

And they're all singing. And the shepherds are hearing them singing glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased. And you know it's no wonder Charles

Wesley wrote that famous Christmas carol Hark the herald angels sing glory to the newborn king.

The angels had reason to rejoice. And we have reason to rejoice. Because salvation has come to a lost humanity. salvation has come to us.

And you know when we speak about all these angels and archangels and seraphim and cherubim we have to remember that there were many angels who fell from their estate of perfection.

[ 27 : 46 ] Because the origin of sin was not the garden of Eden. There was sin in the universe before Adam fell. The angels had fallen. Satan was there in the garden of Eden as a serpent.

And a great number of angels they had rebelled against God with them. And yet the most extraordinary thing as you see angels praising God is that fallen angels they have no gospel.

Fallen angels have no gospel. They have no good news. They have no saviour. Because God

never sent his son for fallen angels. But God has sent his son for fallen sinners like you and me.

And you know it should make us realise that God didn't need to save us. God wasn't obligated in any way to save us. He didn't have to provide a redemption through his son. But out of his great love for us and his mercy towards us and his grace God sought to do everything in order to save us.

And you know it's no wonder the seraphim are singing glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace and good will towards men. Because God didn't provide the fallen angels with a saviour.

[ 29 : 07 ] He didn't provide good news for them. But the wonder of it is that he has provided good news for us. God has provided salvation and peace with him through his son Jesus Christ.

And as a fallen sinner we are urged to embrace this good news as it is freely offered to us in the gospel.

It's a wonder of wonders. God provided salvation for sinners and not fallen angels. but in his newspaper report Luke has one more article to share with us.

He's mentioned the sovereign situation and the singing seraphim but lastly the last article he tells us about is the seeking shepherds.

The seeking shepherds. Look at verse 15. When the angels went away from them into heaven the shepherds said to one another let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.

[ 30 : 22 ] And so in this closing article Luke draws attention to three things about the shepherds in the fields. The first is that they received a sign because in verse 12 Gabriel gave the shepherds a sign and this will be a sign for you it says you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

And then in verse 16 we're told and they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. And what's interesting is that Luke mentions the manger three times in this chapter.

He mentions it in verse 7 verse 12 and then again in verse 16. He's mentioned it in all three articles you could say. And you could say that that day's newspaper it was all about the manger and it was all about the contents of the manger.

And so it should be because the good news is the news of the manger. But you know what's fascinating is that Luke not only repeatedly mentions the manger he also repeatedly mentions the swaddling clothes or the cloths.

And that's a fascinating point because it's said that the swaddling cloths they were cloths that were used to embalm a dead body. And so the swaddling cloths they were grave cloths.

[ 31 : 44 ] And you know looking at it that from the cradle in Bethlehem Luke is pointing us towards the cross of Calvary already.

From the cradle to the cross Luke is pointing us and he's doing that because he's saying well this is why Jesus was born. That's the good news.

Jesus was born to die for our sin. We saw that this morning. God prepared a body for him. The sacrifice for sin. He came not to be served but to serve and to give us life as a ransom for many. The beauty of it. From the cradle to the cross. And so the shepherds received a sign. And note they didn't ask for a sign. They never asked for a sign.

Because Jesus is clear. Those who refuse to believe and commit their life to the Lord until they receive a sign. Those who ask for a sign says Jesus. No sign shall be given.

[ 32 : 48 ] No sign shall be given. Why? Because like the shepherds we are to respond to what we hear and seek the Lord. So those of you who want a sign in order to know that you're either a Christian or that the Lord exists, Jesus says no sign shall be given.

But we're to do what the shepherds did. We're to respond to what we hear and seek the Lord.

Because that's what the shepherds did do. They were given a sign but the sign wasn't confirmed until they sought the Lord.

The shepherds were given a sign and they responded by seeking the Lord. They went immediately with haste to find Jesus. And when they sought the Lord with all their heart, when they moved, they found him just as it had been promised.

And you know, for you as someone who's unconverted, the same promise is given to you when you respond to what you've heard. Because when you seek the Lord with all your heart, you will find him just as he has promised.

Because the promise is, as Jesus says himself, ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, the one who seeks finds, the one who knocks, it will be opened.

[ 34 : 18 ] But you know, put it this way, if the shepherds had done nothing with what they heard, and just stayed in the fields where they were with the sheep, and they just went to sleep that night without having done anything, then what do you think would have happened?

If they hadn't responded to what they heard, and they didn't seek the Lord, do you think they would have ever found Jesus? no. So the question is, why do you think that you'll be saved by not seeking Jesus with all your heart?

Why do you think that it will one day click or just fall into place, drop into your lap without having sought the Lord with all your heart?

It doesn't happen like that. You have to seek the Lord with all your heart. Unless you seek the Lord, you will not be saved. It's as simple as that.

Unless you seek the Lord, you will not be saved. That's what the Bible says. Seek the Lord while he's to be found. The only way to find something is to seek it with all your heart.

[ 35 : 35 ] But you know, when the shepherds received a sign and when they sought the Lord, they began spreading the word. They received the sign, they sought the Lord, they began to spread the word.

That's what we see in verse 17. When they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning the child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

And then in verse 20, when the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen as it had been told them. When the shepherds sought the Lord and when the shepherds found the Lord as it had been promised, they began to spread the message about the Lord.

They began to tell people about the good news of Jesus Christ and they told people as it says with boldness. They encouraged, they invited them to come and worship the Saviour with them. And that's what we're to do. We're to seek the Lord. And when we find the Lord, we're to spread the good news about the Saviour.

[ 36 : 42 ] We're to speak about Jesus with boldness and invite people to come and worship Jesus. Why? Because he is Christ the Lord.

He is Christ the Lord. And so we've completed reading Luke's newspaper, the good news. And we've read in these three articles, the headlines, the sovereign situation, the singing seraphim, and the seeking shepherds.

But you know, having read it, having read the newspaper and having heard what it's all about, what do we do? We have to seek to live our lives in light of what we've heard.

We have to respond to what we've heard, live our lives in light of eternity, and live our lives for the glory of God. So let's do that for the glory of God.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee this evening for the beauty of Jesus, that even heaven itself rejoiced at the birth of a saviour, and help us, Lord, to rejoice that he came into the world to seek and to save the lost, and that we might be like those shepherds who sought the Lord with all their heart, who went to find the saviour who was born, and to know him and to love him as Christ the Lord, and that we as those who have found Jesus, that we might be like the shepherds in spreading the word, that we might tell it to others, those in the workplace, those, Lord, in our homes and our families, those, Lord, who need to hear, to hear that their soul may live.

[ 38 : 42 ] O Lord, give to us a boldness, a boldness to speak on behalf of Christ, even to speak to one person tomorrow, that we, O Lord, would speak the words of Jesus, and encourage them to seek the Lord while he's to be found.

Bind us together, we pray, bless us in the week that lies ahead, oh, a week that is unknown to us, but we give thanks to thee that thou art one who is sovereign, sovereign in every situation, whatever situation comes our way, help us to trust thee, and to lean upon thee, go before us then, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name, and for his sake, amen.

We shall conclude our worship this evening by singing to God's praise in Psalm 148. Psalm 148, page 448, in the blue Psalm book, we're singing from the beginning down to the verse marked five, three stanzas, and as it says at the very beginning, praise God, the hallelujah, it's a hallel Psalm, praise God from heavens, praise the Lord, in heights, praise to him be, all ye his angels, praise ye him, his hosts, all praise him ye, down to the verse marked five, to God's praise.

praise God from heaven, praise the Lord, in heights, praise to him be, all ye his who just praise ye heaven, praise all the great of heaven, o praise ye him, both sun and moon, praise him, all stars of light, ye ye heavens of heavens in christened clouds above the heavens height, that all the creatures praise christened of heart almighty lord, for he who man did and they were created by his word.

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.