

God's Funeral

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the gospel according to Mark chapter 15.

And if we just take as our text the words of verse 46, Mark chapter 15, verse 46. And Joseph bought a linen shroud and taking him down, that is Jesus, of course, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock.

And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where he was laid. If there was ever one word I could use to describe what it's like to be a minister, it is the word privilege.

Because it is the greatest privilege to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, it's the highest calling given to mankind to tell lost sinners about their need of a saviour.

And it's a great privilege to be a minister. It's also a great privilege to be your minister. It's a great privilege to speak to you every week about your need to be saved, about your need to seek the Lord, about your need to have Jesus as your saviour and your need to commit your life to him.

[1 : 44] It's a great privilege to teach you and encourage you from God's word, the Bible. Because this book, although it's thousands of years old, it's still a living word.

And it still speaks to us and challenges us and encourages us and comforts us. It has something to say to us, whatever our situation is in life. Whatever we are going through, this book has something to say to us.

And I have been given the greatest privilege in presenting it to you and explaining it to you in the hope that you will discover or rediscover that the God of the Bible really is a great God and a great King.

My dear friend, it's a privilege to be your minister. And there are many privileges in the ministry. There's the privilege of baptism, seeing families promising to bring up their children in the way of the Lord and of his word.

There's the privilege of weddings, witnessing two people coming together in marriage. There's the privilege of speaking to people about their soul and witnessing the word of God having an effect upon them.

[2 : 56] There's the privilege of welcoming people to become members of the Church of Christ. There's the privilege of seeing people growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus. There's the privilege of seeing families coming to church and desiring to be in the house of the Lord on the Lord's day.

If there was one word I could use to describe the ministry, it would be the word privilege. But before I went in for the ministry, I was told that being a minister is a difficult job.

And it is. But there was always one minister who said to me that it is the best job in the world. And that is true. It's not easy. But it is the best job in the world.

Because it is the greatest privilege to be a servant of God. But what makes the ministry difficult is having to deal with death. No one likes to deal with death.

We all want to keep death and the thought of death as far away from us as possible. Because death is our greatest enemy. And it brings nothing good with it.

[4 : 04] All it does is leave behind this trail of destruction and pain and heartache and sorrow. But I have to say that when someone in our congregation or community dies, it's the greatest privilege to be allowed into a family home.

And to pray with them or encourage them from God's word. It's the greatest privilege to conduct a funeral. And bring before that family and before us as a community the beauty of Jesus in the gospel.

It is a great privilege to be involved in the actions of laying to rest a loved one. It is the greatest privilege. Because the last thing we can do for our loved ones who have died is treat their remains with such dignity and such respect.

And for a grieving family, the day of a funeral is a hard day. It's a day of emotion. It's a day of tears. It's a day of closure in one sense. It's a day of brokenness.

And a day of heartache. It's a day that a family will never forget. And yet it's a great privilege to be part of it. And you know, as we come to this section in Mark's gospel, the question I'd like us to ask today is, what kind of day was it on the day of God's funeral?

[5 : 25] What kind of day was it on the day of God's funeral? And I want to suggest that on the day of God's funeral, it was a day of preparation, a day of pleading, and a day of publicity.

A day of preparation, a day of pleading, and a day of publicity. So first of all, if we look and see that the kind of day it was on the day of God's funeral, it was a day of preparation.

A day of preparation. Look at verse 42. And when evening had come, since it was the day of preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

And you know, when we think about it, it's inevitable that we can gauge the kind of person our loved one was in life by the kind of funeral they have at death.

Because if they were well known and well respected and well loved within a community, that's usually demonstrated by the number of people who attend their funeral.

[6 : 36] But when we come to this passage in Mark's gospel, we have already witnessed before the horrific death of Jesus Christ on the cross. And now Mark tells us that when Jesus died, no one wanted to bury him.

No one wanted to perform the final duties that often fall to the family and friends of a loved one. His family didn't want the responsibility of burying him.

His brothers and sisters didn't want the responsibility of burying him. The crowds that followed Jesus throughout his ministry, they didn't want the responsibility of burying him. Those whose life had been transformed by Jesus didn't want the responsibility of burying him.

And even his disciples, those who were closest to him throughout all those years, they didn't want the responsibility of burying Jesus. It was the day of preparation.

And yet no one was prepared to bury Jesus Christ, the Son of God. No one was taking the responsibility for the funeral of Jesus.

[7 : 40] And this is what's so unique. That when it came to Jesus, we could never gauge the kind of person he was in life by the kind of funeral he had at death.

Because in life, as we know, he was perfect. He was without sin. He was, and still is, the sinless Son of God. But more than that, he had a big family.

He had many brothers and sisters. He had many disciples. He had many friends. He had multitudes who followed him to listen to him preach. But not one of them went to his funeral.

And this only emphasizes what was prophesied about Jesus. Because we know in Isaiah chapter 53, we're told that Jesus was a man who would be despised and rejected by men.

A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. And that we would hide our faces from him. And we would not esteem him. And yet Isaiah says about this Jesus, He was the one who bore our griefs.

[8 : 44] He carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. And even though he encountered such rejection and alienation, he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And with his stripes we are healed. My friend, we gain so much from the death of Jesus Christ. But when it came to his funeral, when it came to laying his precious remains to rest, there was no one.

And that's what we were just singing about in Psalm 69. Those messianic words where Jesus was saying, I looked for one to pity me. To pity my remains. But none I found.

Comforters found I none. No one came to the funeral of Jesus. No one came to bury God. And so Mark reminds us that it was the day of preparation.

And yet no one who knew Jesus personally was prepared to bury him. But the reason Mark tells us that it was now the evening of the day of preparation was so that his readers would know the urgency that there was to bury the body of Jesus.

[9 : 59] Because the day of preparation, it was, as it says, it was the day before the Sabbath. And it's now late in the day. Mark has told us already that it was at the ninth hour that Jesus died.

And so there's this urgency. There's only three hours left until the Sabbath begins. Because the Sabbath would begin at sundown. At the twelfth hour. And no one was to be left hanging on the cross on the Sabbath.

But if no one was willing to claim Jesus as their own and perform the duties of burying his body, then his remains would have just been taken down and thrown into a common grave with the other two malefactors.

But as we said, we're asking the question, what kind of day was it on the day of God's funeral? And Mark tells us it was a day of preparation. It was a day of preparation.

And you know, I want to say that this day of preparation, it really was a day of preparation. Because it was one day in this world's history that had been planned and prepared from before the foundation of the world.

[11 : 11] Just like every other day, but this day in particular. Because the events that took place on this one day, from sunrise to sundown, they had been prepared and planned and purposed from all eternity.

In which you could say the Godhead, they had agreed to redeem lost sinners by the way of a ransom. And since the fall of Adam, God's plan and the preparations to execute God's plan, they had been revealed to mankind throughout the generations of history.

Adam in the Garden of Eden was promised that one day, one day there would be someone who would come to crush the head of the serpent. Abraham was told in his day that through his seed, one day there will be a man.

And through him, all the nations of the earth will be blessed. David was assured that one day there will be a king. There will be this king who will have an eternal kingdom and his reign will be over all people.

And you know, the people of God, they even knew that God was preparing and devising this plan of redemption for saving sinners through this Messiah figure. But what no one ever expected was that God himself would come in the form of a servant.

[12 : 30] What the people of God weren't prepared for was that God himself would die in the place of sinners. What people weren't prepared for was that God himself would have a funeral.

But this was God's plan. And this is what God had prepared in order to save sinners like you and me. God prepared himself.

He prepared himself. And you know, the writer to the Hebrews, he speaks about the preparations God made in order to secure our salvation.

Because in Hebrews chapter 10, the writer to the Hebrews, he emphasizes that Jesus, he was the ultimate sacrifice for sin. And he says that sacrifices, well, they were continually offered upon the altar in order that sinners could approach a holy God.

But he says that the blood of the bulls and the goats and the lambs, that was useless to take away our sin. And yet they were always pointing, always straining forward to that one great sacrifice which was offered and consumed at Calvary.

[13 : 40] Which was, of course, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. But what's amazing is that when the writer to the Hebrews speaks about all these preparations which God made in order to secure our redemption, he says that when Christ came into the world, God was preparing his body as a sacrifice.

And he says, quoting some of the words from, that we were singing in Psalm 40, that sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me.

In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Behold, this is Jesus speaking, behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.

My friend, this is the wonder of the day of preparation that God the Father had prepared a body for his son in order that he would be sacrificed in the place of sinners.

He prepared a body in order to be our substitute. And the preparation of that body was the beginning of the humiliation of Jesus Christ.

[14 : 52] Christ. So you know, the incarnation, God becoming man, that was the humiliation, the beginning of the humiliation. From the crown to the cradle in Bethlehem.

It was the first step you could say downwards. It was the first step in preparing the body for sacrifice. But the preparation of Jesus' body for sacrifice wasn't just that he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh.

It was the fact that in his body, in the likeness of sinful flesh, he was obedient. He lived a life of obedience by living a life of perfection and holiness.

He lived in obedience to his Father's will by going the way of the cross. And he confessed that he has come not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And despite all the temptations Jesus had to deviate from the Father's will, the temptations by Satan, the temptations by the disciples, the temptations by his own human weakness, Jesus still affirmed to his Father not my will but thine be done.

[16:04] And in preparing a body for sacrifice, Jesus humbled himself by being obedient unto death, even the death of a cross. And this was the preparation that God the Father was making for sinners that God the Son would experience humiliation on our behalf.

And the humiliation of Jesus, it's wonderful when you consider it. What Jesus did, the catechism puts it so beautifully that our Jesus he was born and that of a low condition made under the law undergoing the miseries of this life and the wrath of God and the cursed death of the cross in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time.

My friend, the humiliation of Jesus Christ was down, down, down all the way to the grave. It was from glory to Golgotha to the grave.

and it was all prepared so that we could be saved, so that we could have our sins forgiven, so that we could have peace with God, so that we could have this relationship with God himself, so that we would know the wonder and glory of God's salvation.

God prepared it all. He prepared it all. But you know, what we see at the close of this day of preparation is that even though none of Jesus' family, friends, followers, and even disciples, even though none of them were prepared to bury Jesus, God had also prepared a man who was willing to claim Jesus as his own and perform the duties of burying his body.

[17:55] God not only prepared the body of Jesus for sacrifice, but he also prepared a man to come and bury the body of Jesus.

And he came, this man came, to plead for the body of Jesus. And so what kind of day was it on the day of God's funeral? It was a day of preparation.

But secondly, it was a day of pleading. A day of pleading. We look again at verse 42. And when evening had come since it was the day of preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, he took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

Mark tells us that whilst Jesus was nailed and left hanging upon the cross, a Roman cross, Pilate didn't hang around to ensure that Jesus died.

[19:14] Pilate had ensured that Jesus would be put to death. Pilate had ensured that Jesus would be mocked and beaten and tortured before his crucifixion. Pilate had ensured that there would be this superscription written above Jesus.

This is the king of the Jews. But what Pilate didn't ensure was that the Jesus he knew to be the son of God, he didn't ensure that he had actually died.

No, the news of Jesus' death came from a man called Joseph, who was from a little town about 20 miles northwest of Jerusalem, a town called Arimathea.

And we're told that Joseph of Arimathea, he was a respected member of the Jewish council, which means that he was in a prominent and powerful position within the Jewish Sanhedrin.

He was part of this assembly of Jewish men who ruled and established laws within the land of Israel. And I suppose the modern equivalent would be that Joseph of Arimathea was a member of parliament.

[20:19] He was a member of the Jewish assembly, which sat together to make decisions and establish laws. And therefore as a Jew, he was a lawmaker, and as a lawmaker, he would have been a Pharisee.

But the reason Joseph came and presented himself to Pilate wasn't because he had an issue with the death of Jesus. It wasn't because he wanted to talk to Jesus about the oppression of Rome over the Jews.

It wasn't even because he knew Pilate. And wanted to be his friend. No, Joseph of Arimathea came to Pilate because as it says, he was waiting for the kingdom of God.

He had been looking for the kingdom of God. And this is what's remarkable because although his position as a member of this great Jewish parliament and his association with all the other Pharisees in Israel, although it pointed, his job pointed to the hatred of Jesus, the opposite was true of him.

Even though many of the religious leaders in Israel had closed their eyes to Jesus and hated him and despised him and even killed him and rejected him, even though they did all these things, Joseph, it says, was still waiting for the kingdom of God.

[21 : 41] Joseph was waiting for the fulfillment of the messianic hope. Joseph's heart was still searching for Jesus. Despite his outward appearance and what he portrayed to others as a member of the Jewish parliament and as a Pharisee, despite the exterior of position and power and prominence, Joseph was searching for Jesus.

Joseph was searching for Jesus. And you know, my friend, I look at some of you here and I think you are just like Joseph.

Just like Joseph. You have this outward appearance which you present to others, maybe to your family, to your friends, to your neighbors, to your colleagues, to your peers, and it's this appearance of not being that interested in Jesus and the gospel.

It's an appearance and a presentation of holding Jesus at arm's length so that no one will ever suspect what is really going on in your heart.

But the truth is you're just like Joseph because Joseph was searching for Jesus. and I'm quite sure that if I had the ability to look into your heart today, I would see a heart that is searching for Jesus.

[23 : 18] And if that's the case, for you, my friend, if you are searching for him, keep searching for him until you find him. Keep asking him to reveal himself to you until he does.

Keep praying that he will forgive you, and cleanse you until you have peace in your heart. Keep knocking until that door swings wide open. My friend, I believe that you must be like Joseph because Joseph was searching for Jesus.

But in order to find Jesus and perform the duties of burial, Joseph had to first plead for his body. He came to Pilate and he asked for the body of Jesus. And we're told that Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus had already died.

And that's because the crucifixion, it was Rome's form of capital punishment. And it had been invented by the Romans not only to inflict the most excruciating pain and cause the most horrendous humiliation for its victim, but it was also used to prolong the agony and death of a victim.

Sometimes victims who were crucified would, they would survive for days, hanging upon a cross. And even after they had died, the Romans would often leave the victim's body just hanging on the cross and decomposing.

[24 : 46] And they would do that as this warning to all the other criminals and slaves who were going to be rebellious. Crucifixion, it was an awful way to die. You can hardly get your mind around it or understand it fully.

And so because crucifixion was this prolonged form of punishment, Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus had died already. But as we know, Jesus, when he died, he gave up his own spirit.

Death never overcame him. He committed himself to death after he had finished the work of redemption. But in order to know if Joseph of Arimathea was telling Pilate the truth about Jesus, it also highlights that tension between the Romans and the Jews, Pilate had to find out the truth.

But he went, as we're told, he went to summon the centurion. And we can presume that Pilate summoned the centurion who had been in charge of the crucifixion and the execution of Jesus.

And Pilate asks him if it was true. He says, was Jesus really dead? And as we know from verse 39, the centurion at the crucifixion of Jesus not only heard the cry of Jesus, but he saw how he died.

[26 : 06] And he also confessed that the death of Jesus was like no other. Because the centurion said about Jesus, truly this man was the son of God.

Which means that it was only when Jesus died that this hardened Roman centurion knew that Jesus was different. It was only when Jesus died that he knew that Jesus wasn't actually worthy of death.

It was only when Jesus died that he realized that Jesus didn't deserve to be punished the way he was. It was only when Jesus died that the centurion came to know who Jesus actually was. And you know the same could be said about all three of these men in this passage. Because Pilate, the centurion, and Joseph, they all had an involvement in the cross of Jesus Christ. Pilate was the one who put Jesus on the cross. The centurion was the one who watched Jesus being nailed to the cross. And Joseph of Arimathea was the man who took Jesus down from the cross.

[27 : 11] They all had an involvement in the cross of Jesus Christ. But it was only when Jesus died that they came to know who Jesus was. But for Pilate, it was too late.

He had missed his opportunity. He passed Jesus by and just disposed of him. He sent him to Calvary. For the centurion, his life changed when he confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And for Joseph, he was still seeking to do for Jesus what no one else was willing to do. Joseph wanted to bury Jesus. Joseph wanted to bury him.

And he wanted to bury him according to Jewish law. Because even though the Romans would often leave their victims just hanging upon the cross for days to decompose, the Jewish law stated that the burial of the dead, even dead criminals, it was to be treated with the utmost respect.

And that even if a criminal was executed for a capital offence, usually by stoning, they would hang them upon a tree, and their body would then be removed before sunset.

[28 : 28] And the Jews took this command given in the book of Deuteronomy, they took it very, very seriously. But you know, don't you find it so interesting that a law which was written in the book of Deuteronomy nearly 1500 years before this day of preparation.

And yet it would be the reason why Jesus Christ would be laid in the tomb of a Jewish ruler. And this is also what Isaiah prophesied 700 years earlier, that Jesus would make his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence and there was no deceit found in his mouth.

And so we can ask our question, what kind of day was it? On the day of God's funeral. On the day of God's funeral, it was a day of preparation. It was a day of pleading.

And lastly, we see that it was a day of publicity. A day of publicity. Look again at verse 45. And when he learned from the, that's Pilate, when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

And Joseph bought a linen shroud and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where he was laid.

[30 : 01] There's a book by a man, I try and pronounce his name, Friedrich Wilhelm Kramacher. Kramacher was a German theologian and he was said to be one of the greatest preachers on the continent of Europe during the middle of the 19th century.

And as you would expect from a renowned theologian, Kramacher wrote many books and one book in particular was called *The Suffering Saviour*. And it's a great book, I'd recommend it to you, *The Suffering Saviour*, and it's very easy to read because Kramacher in the book he's retelling the story of the moments that lead up to the death and burial of Jesus.

And he doesn't detract from the Gospels in any way, but in order to make the accounts more vivid, Kramacher tells the story in the form of a narrative.

And the last chapter of his book, *The Suffering Saviour*, it's entitled *The Internment*. And of course he's speaking about the burial of Jesus. But I just want to read a couple of extracts from that chapter where Kramacher writes, he says, The crowd have vacated the summit of Calvary.

The Roman guard, however, remains. Profound silence reigns around. The bodies of the two malefactors are taken down from their crosses and their graves are being dug.

[31 : 23] The crucified redeemer with his head crowned with thorns still hangs between heaven and earth. And Kramacher asks, who is to interre him? According to the law, it was the duty of the executioners to bury him, but God had ordained it otherwise.

And then later on in the chapter, after Joseph of Arimathea has gone to Pilate, which we've just read, to ask for the body of Jesus, Kramacher then writes, he says, Joseph heartily thanks the

governor and hastens from him as joyfully as if he had gained a great treasure.

And first of all, he goes to purchase the finest linen and at the same time the most costly ointment and spices. And if the whole world should wish to know for whom they were intended, he would have testified aloud that they were for his lord and king.

And though the Sanhedrin should warn or go as far as to threaten him with a removal from office or even something worse, Joseph will still more loudly exclaim that it is for his king, his lord, and his prince of peace that he is making these funeral arrangements.

And after that, when Joseph of Arimathea arrives at the cross, Crummacher says that there is someone already there. And Crummacher asks, who is this stranger?

[32 : 43] And he says, it is Nicodemus, Joseph's colleague in office, and that Pharisee who came to Jesus by night. He too has thrown aside the disgraceful fetters which bound him.

You know, this is the bit I love in the chapter. When Crummacher writes, after Joseph and Nicodemus have meditated a while with unspeakable emotion, at the sight of the cross, they begin their mournful labours.

Ladders are fetched and planted against the cross of the Prince of Peace, and they reverentially ascend to the corpse, feeling at the same time as if they were mounting the steps of some sacred temple.

The two friends reach their departed master's wounded feet. There they devoutly bow their heads and cover them with kisses and tears, because he is worthy of it. Then they ascend higher to his lacerated head, and they begin, tenderly and gently, to draw out the nails from his hands and feet. The precious corpse reclines upon their shoulders, and after they have wrapped it in linen, they gently let it down from the cross to the ground. And then Crummacher applies the narrative so beautifully.

[33 : 59] He says, let us imitate their example. Let us ascend the cross on the spiritual ladder of sorrow for sin, longing for mercy, and belief in the efficacy and the sufferings of his death.

And he says, let us detach him from the accursed tree and deposit him in our hearts as our only consolation in life and in death.

My friend, Crummacher's words, they paint for us so beautifully the wonder and glory of Jesus Christ. That the only people at the funeral of Jesus were the two undertakers.

And they were undertaking the great responsibility of laying the remains of God to rest. But more than that, these undertakers were also the disciples of Jesus.

because for some time Joseph and Nicodemus were secret disciples of Jesus. But on the day of God's funeral, they made their love for Jesus a day of publicity.

[35 : 12] A day of publicity in which they made known to the onlooking world that they are one of the Lord's people. people. And you know, the reason Mark records this passage for us is because Mark is trying to highlight this contrast that there is between Joseph, Nicodemus, and Pilate.

Because as we know, when Pilate was given the opportunity to do what was right and to stand up for the truth, he didn't. And he didn't because he was afraid of the crowd.

He was afraid of what other people thought. He was afraid of what other people would say about him because these things were important to him. He had status, he had power, he had recognition, and they were his world.

That was Pilate's world, and he didn't want to lose that. He wanted to gain his world and hold on to his world, even at the expense of losing his own soul.

Pilate knew what was right, but because of the fear of the crowd, he did nothing. He didn't come out on the side of the Lord, he didn't commit his life to loving, following, and serving Jesus Christ.

[36 : 26] He did nothing. But on the other hand, we see Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

They were colleagues and members of this Jewish parliament, they were Pharisees, friends, and neighbors, and yet without knowing what was going on in each other's heart, they were both secretly seeking Jesus.

But when they were confronted with his death, when they heard about the death of Jesus, it caused them, well, now's the time to make a stand. They were confronted with the death of Jesus, and it caused them to publicly make themselves known as a disciple of Jesus.

And you know, that's the greatest honor to the death of Jesus. the greatest honor to the death of Jesus is to make yourself known as his disciple.

My friend, I look at you, and I know that you're just like Joseph, as we said, and just like Nicodemus, and I know that you can see yourself in them so readily.

You can see yourself the secret disciple, the secret seeker, but the question is, are you really like them?

[37 : 46] Are you really like them? Because when they were confronted with the death of Jesus, it caused them to come out on the side of Jesus. It caused them to publicly make themselves known as a Christian and a disciple of Jesus.

And, well, from God's word this morning, you too have been confronted with the death of Jesus. But, will his death cause you to come out on his side and publicly make yourself known as one of his disciples?

Will the death of Jesus cause you to confess to the onlooking world, God, I am a Christian.

I hope so. I hope his death will not cause you to remain as a secret disciple, that you will come out on his side.

Because, you know, there is no better thing you can do with your life and your death than to commit and to entrust it to Jesus Christ.

[39 : 08] My friend, you make sure that like Joseph and Nicodemus, that today is your day of publicity, the day you come out on the side of the Lord, the day you honour the death of Jesus, and publicly make yourself known as one of his people.

May that be true of each and every one of us. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee that thy word is one that speaks to us and it challenges us as to where we are with Jesus.

And Lord, we do pray that we would all be found on the side of Christ, that we would no longer sit on the fence as it were, that we would no longer halt between two opinions, but that we would come out on the Lord's side, proclaiming that we are in the Lord's army, that we are pressing on towards Zion, knowing that that is a place which has been prepared for the Lord's people, not because we are worthy of it, but because Jesus through his blood has made us all Lord, help us to cling to Jesus, because without him we can do nothing, but with him all things are possible, keep us Lord, we pray, for all we know that we cannot keep ourselves, bless this day to us, the Lord's day, help us to rest in it, to wait patiently upon thee, go before us we ask, for Jesus' sake, amen.

We shall conclude by singing the words of Psalm 40, Psalm 40 page 259, we're singing the first four verses, Psalm 40, a clear testimony of the Christian, a disciple of Jesus, I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear, at length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear, he took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay and on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way, he put a new song in my mouth, our God to magnify, many shall see it and shall fear and on the Lord rely, O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies, respecting not the proud nor such as turn aside to lies.

These verses of Psalm 40 to God's praise. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently tempest have been to me he did by my voice sunrise through air He drew me from my fear hope and from the mighty clay and on a rock he set my feet established in my grace raspberry up and walk and be

[43 : 16] Barry GORDONreck — Remeau Rabbit shall see it and shall fear, and on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the hunter's trust, upon the Lord relies, respecting not the proud nor such as turn aside to life.

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.