

# Guest Preacher - Rev R J Campbell

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Preacher: Rev. RJ Campbell

- [ 0 : 00 ] Seeking the Lord's help and blessing, I just turn back to the portion of scripture that we read together in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 15, and we'll read from verse 20.
- And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him.
- And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Bring quickly the best robe and put it on him.
- And put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it and let us eat and celebrate.
- For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found. And they began to celebrate. What we have here before us is a very popular parable, which I'm sure you would have heard, been preached upon many times.
- [ 1 : 23 ] It is usually referred to as a three-part parable. But I prefer to think of it as a five-part parable.
- Now you may ask, well, what is a parable? A parable is a story which illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles.
- And in this five-part parable, we have first a shepherd who goes out and finds a lost sheep and brings it home rejoicing.
- The second part, we have the story of a woman who lost but found her missing coin. And in the third part, we have that which is commonly called the prodigal son.
- Who, after a life away from the father's house, returns home. And then we have the fourth part, where the father runs out to embrace him and brings him home.
- [ 2 : 28 ] And then we have the final part about the older son, where there is also something that is lost. But you notice that the conclusion of that part of the story is open-ended.
- The first four parts have the same theme. Something is lost and is found. And then there is rejoicing. The final part, something is lost.
- But the story is left open-ended. We do not know whether he really did enter into the father's house eventually. Now Jesus spoke this parable because the scribes and the Pharisees were deeply offended by the fact that Jesus associated himself with those whom they regarded as sinners.
- That is, those who did not keep the law in the way that they did. In other words, they were looked upon as religious outsiders. And Luke here records for us, now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him.
- And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them. But from verse 4 to the end of the chapter, we have that which is commonly known, as we said, the parable of the prodigal son.

- [ 3 : 55 ] And here we are told that the younger son of the house wanted to share of the inheritance. And the father gave it to him. Soon after the son left home and he spent it all. And to add to all his troubles, there arose a mighty famine in the land. And in the end, he was found wanting and came to realize that he was lost.
- He had hit rock bottom. And he realized that if he continued on the road that he had embarked upon, that it would be sure destruction for him.
- His world was turned upside down. And his only hope was to turn his face towards his father. To swallow up his pride and to go to the father and plead for the father's forgiveness.
- He began to think of his father's house and the privileges that he had despised. He resolved to return to his father's house and he rehearsed in his mind what he would say to his father.
- [ 5 : 02 ] Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.
- But it all could have remained there. Simply good intentions. But then we read, and this is the hinge upon which the whole story turns.
- And he arose and came to his father. He not only resolved, but he put his resolution into action.
- This young man did what he had resolved to do. He started out and kept going. For him to have any meaningful life and hope was to return to the father's home.
- And to be reconciled to his father. And to receive his father's forgiveness. His return trip may have been difficult.
- [ 6 : 08 ] There may have been many stumbling blocks in the way. But his deep desire was to be reconciled to his father. To receive his father's forgiveness.
- To know his peace. And so he persevered. How many are lost? Yes, they may have good intentions. They may have made good resolutions.
- That one day they would trust and follow Jesus Christ. Be committed to Jesus Christ. They may even have started their journey.
- They may have started their journey well. But along the way, they got weary. They never persevered. They never endured.
- And so many remained lost. But our focus this morning is going to be upon the father.
- [ 7 : 10 ] We read, These words, A great way of, must have a wonderful meaning for the son when he came to reflect upon his experience.
- While the son was a great way of, His father saw him. This goes to show us that the father was concerned for his son.
- This was not out of sight, out of mind situation at all. The son was in his father's thoughts all the time.
- When the son was in the far country and in the peaks die, He thought no one cared. But there was one that was concerned and who cared about him, Although it was unknown to him.
- And that is part of our Christian experience. That while we were out upon the mountains of rebellion, While we were found in the things of this world, Immersed in the things of this world, When we thought that nobody cared, Yet there was one whose eye was upon us And who protected us.

[ 8 : 45 ] And this is what is true here regarding this son, The rebellious son, Who has gone out into the far country. He thinks no one cares, But the eye of the father was always looking out for him.

Spiritually, we are all a great way off. And that measurement is from God's standpoint. It is amazing thought that even when we are a great way off, That the Lord is concerned and cares for us.

We are told by Peter, That the Lord is longsuffering to usward, Not willing that any should perish, But that all should come to repentance.

Although we are so great a distance, We are not to be discouraged. In Acts chapter 2, verse 39, We read that the promise of salvation Goes to all that are afar off.

In Ephesians chapter 2, We are told, But now in Christ Jesus, You who sometimes were far off, Are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

[ 9 : 57 ] And we are told that Jesus came And preached peace to you, Which were afar off. It never is a question with the Lord, How far off we are, Or how deeply we have sinned.

It is a remarkable thing, That it is those, That it was a great way off, That he came to seek, And to save. For he says, I came not to call the righteous, But sinners to repentance.

However far off you are today, However deep you may be in sin today, The Lord is ready to demonstrate to you His willingness to forgive you, To accept you, To be reconciled to you, To be at peace with you.

Here we read, That the Father saw the Son A great way off. A starting thought, That even when we are A great way off, That the Lord sees us.

This thought startled David, As in the psalm that we have sung, In Psalm 139, Where he says, O Lord, thou hast searched and known me, Thou knowest my down-sitting And my uprising, Thou understandest my thoughts afar off, Thou compassest my path And my light down, And acquainted with all my ways, For there is not a word in my tongue, But to you, O Lord, Thou knowest it All together.

[ 11 : 40 ] In the case of the Son, Here he is, Not in the position of the man Who is careless and entirely Regardless of God, He remembered his father's house.

You notice that the son here Is represented now as having come to himself And is returning to his father's house.

It is neither the position of those Whom Jesus are addressing at this moment, The Pharisees and the scribes, Who think themselves entirely righteous, And has never learned to confess their sin, Or even had a thought to return to God, A return to the father's house.

Maybe the son here is an image of yourself, Who is not careless and entirely regardless of God.

You believe in God, You believe that there is a God, You believe there is a creator, Redeemer, Through the Lord Jesus Christ. Or maybe, You are of those, Like the Pharisees and scribes, Who think that you are righteous enough, That you are just enough, That you don't need to return To the father's house.

[ 12 : 58 ] When you think of this young man Coming back in rags, With no shoes on his feet, He is the most wretched, Pitiful figure.

The whole scene before us here, In this parable, Looks so tragic, And heart-rending. But he is coming back to his father's house.

And he is coming back to his father's house, Because he has experienced the emptiness, Of a life away, From the father's house. And as he makes his journey, Many thoughts may be going through his mind.

There was the cutting of ceremony, Which we shall look after later on. But I am sure that the most prominent thought, And his greatest desire, Would be to know the heart, Of his father towards him.

Would his father receive him? Would the father forgive him? He had squandered all the property, That the father had given to him.

[ 14 : 09 ] All the gifts that the father had given to him. He had squandered it all. He had lived a reckless life. He was empty.

His life had been turned upside down. He was a broken man. Oh, would the father forgive him? Would the father receive him?

Maybe that is the question, That is lying heavy on your own heart today. In your mind today. After your reckless living. After the sins that you have committed.

After the way that you have squandered, The gifts that the father has, Temporarily bestowed upon you. You have squandered them all.

Will he receive me? Will he forgive me? Well, here we read. That when he was yet a great way off, His father saw him, And had compassion, And ran and fell on his neck, And kissed him.

[ 15 : 14 ] When the father saw him, We are told that he had compassion on him. How do we define compassion? The dictionary says that it is a strong feeling of sympathy, And sadness for the suffering of others, And a wish to help them.

This is more than empathy. There is a difference between compassion and empathy. Although both concepts are related. Empathy refers to our ability to take the perspective of, And feel the emotions of another person.

But compassion is when these feelings and thoughts include the desire, To help that person. Again, we see the workings of grace here.

When you think of what the son did, The way in which he squandered the inheritance, Nevertheless, The father had compassion upon him.

That can only manifest to us, The father's undeserved favor, And his tender heart, His compassionate heart, With regard to the needs of his son.

[ 16 : 34 ] The Bible often speaks of the compassion of God. And the compassion of God, The fact that we have a compassionate God, Is a great encouragement for us.

It is an encouragement for us in preaching the gospel. That we preach the gospel of a compassionate God. In Psalm 145, In Psalm 145, Which we shall sing at the end of our service, It says, The Lord is gracious, And full of compassion, Slow to anger, And of great mercy.

Psalm 103, That we sung, David reveals, The Lord is one who grants forgiveness, Who brings healing, Who executes justice, And righteousness for all.

Then he declares to us, The apex of God's goodness to us, The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, And abounding, In steadfast love.

He will not always chide, Nor will he keep his anger for ever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, Nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him, As far as the east is from the west, So far does he remove our transgressions from us.

[ 17 : 56 ] Then David goes on and discusses the riches of his grace, And the compassion in these terms, As a father shows compassion to his children, So the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

The Old Testament records for us many instances, Where God's grace and compassion is shown forth to our people, Who were disobedient and who were rebellious.

For instance, Nehemiah in chapter 9, Briefly summarizes for us the whole history of Israel. He brings before us what the Lord did for them, And how they rebelled against the Lord.

And this is the way he concludes, But you are a God ready to forgive, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, And did not forsake them.

Even when they were rebellious, When they were disobedient, He did not forsake them. Even when his people are unfaithful, Even maybe rebellious, The Lord remains a God of graciousness, And a God of compassion.

[ 19 : 12 ] The New Testament also records for us many instances of the grace and compassion of God. You will recall that on one occasion, And contrary to the customs of the day, That Jesus responded to the plea of a leper who begged for healing, Having been moved with compassion, Jesus stretched forth the hand, And touched, Touched the leper, And healed him.

He touched the leper, And healed him. Again, regarding one of the most well-known miracles, The feeding of the great multitude, When they had nothing to eat, We are told that Jesus had compassion upon them, And miraculously, He provided food for them.

Compassion was a distinctive mark of the character of Jesus, And Jesus is God manifest in the flesh. Jesus brings before us the compassion that is part of God, The compassionate God.

The story that we are focusing upon today teaches us, As a father, As a father in our story, Had a concern and compassion for his son.

Likewise, God has a concern and compassion for a lost world. He reveals himself to a lost world as a God who is full of grace, Who is full of mercy, Who is full of compassion.

[ 20 : 44 ] How despite how deep we have been in sin, Or how far backslidden we have from him, However unfaithful we have been, He stands ready to forgive.

He stands ready to receive a repentant person. In our story, We are told, When he was yet a great way off, His father saw a man at compassion, And ran and fell on his neck, And kissed him.

In the ancient world of the East, It was considered to be a very undignified thing for a man, Especially one who had become elderly, To be seen running.

Aristotle writes, Great men never run in public. And the word that we have here for run, Was usually a word that was reserved for those who took place in a running race.

So why are we told that the father ran to meet his son? What is so significant about that fact, That here is an elderly man, And he's doing that which was not customary, In that part of the world.

[ 21 : 57 ] He is running as if he was in a race. Why? Well, Jewish scholars tell us, That among the Jewish community, There was a custom, Which developed, That was called the Kesa ceremony, Or simply, The cutting off ceremony, To which we made reference earlier.

Any Jewish boy who lost his inheritance among Gentiles, Faced the ceremony, The Kesa, If he dared return to his home village.

The ceremony was quite simple. The villagers would fill a large pot, With burnt nuts, And burnt corn, And break it in front of the guilty individual.

Thus symbolising the broken relationship, That now existed between the community, And this individual. While doing this, They would shout out, So and so, Is cut off, From his people.

They would name the person, And say, That he is cut off, From his people. And from that point onwards, The village would have nothing to do, With that person.

[ 23 : 11 ] They separated him from his family, From his community, And his faith. So when we are told here, That the father runs, It is because he wants to reach the son, Before the rest of the village, Can get to him.

He is literally running, To save him. Instead of subjecting him, To the utter shame, Of the Kesa, He embraces him.

Now, This is an amazing scene, That is set, Here before us. I think we can now, Have a better understanding, Of those words, That the father saw him, A great way of.

The father waits, Day after day, Scanning the horizon, Staring down the road, Which his son took, The day he left home, With concern, And hope, That one day, His son would return.

But the father also knew, Of the Kesa ceremony, And how the villagers, Would treat his son, On his return. So he scans the horizon, And he sees a figure appearing, And he knew that it was, His son, His lost son, And full of compassion, Towards his son, He gathered up his robes, And began to run, Towards the son.

[ 24 : 38 ] He did not wait, For the son to come to him, Instead he took the initiative, He went to where, The son was. It mattered little, To his father, How undignified, The scene might look.

He loved his son, He had compassion, On his son, And he was ready, To grant him mercy, And forgiveness. He was ready, To be reconciled, To his son, Before the villagers, Would even think, Of cutting him off.

Such was his concern, Such was his compassion, Such was his grace, Such was his love, Toward, The son.

The Lord may be scanning, The horizon today, He's looking for his, Lost son, Or lost daughter, He's looking for, A lost person, The villagers, Must have been, Totally surprised, As the scene unfolded, Before their very eyes, An old man, Running through the streets, To meet his rebellious son, And seeing him, Falling upon his son's neck, And kissing him, And the word for kiss here, Means, That he kept on, Kissing him, It was not one kiss, But he kept on, Kissing him, The father, Did not speak to him, With scorn, He did not say, I told you so, He did not, Humiliate the son, Instead, The father, Humbled himself, He ran, And fell on his neck, And kissed him, And if it was a surprise, For the villagers, To see this, What about the son?

What thoughts, Must have raced, Through his mind, As he saw his father, Running towards him, He was probably, Quite scared, But almost, Before he knew, What was happening, He found himself, In his father's arms, With his father, Kissing him, You know that, Today, God the father, Is ready, And willing, To receive you, He speaks to us, In the most gracious words, In the overtures, And in the offers, Of the gospel, He is waiting, He is scanning, Looking with concern, For your soul, In the hope, That you will return, To him, Before you are cut off, Such as his concern, His compassion, His grace, And mercy, Towards you, He is longing,

[ 27 : 22 ] To receive you, He is ready, To forgive you, He is ready, To be gracious, To you, He is ready, To receive you, And be reconciled, To you, He is ready, To receive, And accept you, As his son, Oh, That you would return, To him, Before you are cut off, If the villagers, Had met his son, Before the father did, The case of ceremony, Would have taken place, He would have been cut off, From the village, From his family, And from his people, The villagers, Would no longer, Accept him, But my friend, There is a cutting off, In my life, And in your life, Called death, Death cuts us off,

From any thought, Of grace, Or mercy, Or forgiveness, But that you may meet, A gracious God, A merciful God, A loving God, A compassionate God, A God who is ready, To forgive you, A God who is ready, To adopt you, Into his own family, Before the cut off point, Comes in your life, The Lord is not out, To humiliate you, But instead, He humbled himself, And became obedient, Into death, Even the death of the cross, Why?

So that I and you, Could be reconciled to God, And all peace with God, As sinners, We are out of fellowship with God, The Bible says, That we are the enemies of God, That we are ungodly, But God humbled himself, In the person of son, Jesus Christ, To restore us back, Into fellowship with himself, To be reconciled to him, And to be at peace, With him, The son here, Must have been overwhelmed, By his father, Schwalke, Charles Spurgeon, Preached many sermons, On the prodigal son, Which can still be found in print, Or on various websites, However, In March 1891, He preached a seven point sermon, On the text, And kissed him, Illustrating what it means, To be restored to God, The father, I am going to summarize, The seven points, Which I think is the best summary, Of what is taking place, Here outside the village, He said, That the kiss has revealed, Much love, Much forgiveness,

A full restoration, Exceeding joy, Overflowing comfort, Strong assurance of salvation, And intimate communion, With his beloved son, Spurgeon preaches, It means much love, Truly felt, For God never gives, An expression of love, Without feeling it, In his infinite heart, God will never give, A Judas kiss, And betray those, Whom he embraces, There is no hypocrisy, With God, He never kisses, Those for whom, He has no love, When his father kissed him, Much the prodigal, Knew, If never before, That his father loved him, He had no doubt about it, He had a clear, Perception of it, No wonder the church, In the song of Solomon, Pleads, Let him kiss me, With his kisses, Of his mouth, For thy love, Is better than wine, She wants, Not merely,

One discovery, And manifestation, Of his love, And grace to us, But she wants, A repeated discovery, One after another, Nothing is sweeter, Or more precious, To our souls, Than the kisses of mercy, Of love, Of grace, A kiss from his mouth, Is evidence of, Complete pardon, Complete forgiveness, Complete acceptance, You may ask, Well how does the church, Receive those kisses, May I suggest, That she receives those kisses, And his surety engagements, In the covenant of redemption, The covenant in which, He became her surety, Her mediator, And her saviour, He showed it in his assumption, Of human nature and time, And he gave a full display, Of it in laying down, His life for the church, In offering himself,

[ 32 : 06 ] As a sacrifice, For her sins, He loved her, And died for her, He shed his precious blood, So that in his blood, That her sins, Would be washed away, And now he shows, That he still loves her, By appearing, In the presence of God, For her, There as her advocate, With the father, In preparing glory, For her, In preparing glory, He will come again, To take her, To himself, That where he is, She may be also, His people, His church, May be also, To have more knowledge, Of his love, That is without beginning, That is without change, That is without measure, And that is without end, We love him, Because he first, Loved us, This is a true testimony, Of every true believer, His love for us,

Preceded, Our love for him, His love for us, Causes, Our love, For him, May I suggest, That the church, Knows his kisses, When she makes, A fresh discovery of it, In the various effects, Of his love, In all the blessings, Of grace, That flow from his love, Such as effectual calling, Justification, Sanctification, Adoption, And finally, Glorification, All these blessings, Flow from the much less, And boundless love, Of the triune God, Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, May I suggest, That the church, Makes a discovery of it, And that she finds it, In its immeasurable, Inconceivable, It passes, The perfect knowledge, Of men, And angels, It is a love, That has heights, And depths, And lengths, And breadth, As the father,

Kissed him, The son, Tried to speak out, His rehearsed speech, He said, Father, I have sinned, Against heaven, And in thy sight, And I'm no more, Worthy to be called, Thy son, But then the father, Gives him another kiss, You can almost hear, The son saying, Father, What about the past, Oh, The past, If only, I could, Obliterate the past, If only I could, Do away, With those wasted years, The manner, In which I wasted, The inheritance, And the gifts, That you gave me, But then the father, Would kiss him again, As if to say, Never mind the past, I have forgotten it, I forgive, Today the past, May be a burden to you, The devil has a way, Of always bringing the past, Before you, Even in the psalm,

The psalmist, Cried out, And he wanted his sins of youth, To be forgotten, Yes the devil always has a way, Of bringing them before you, But let's hear what the Lord, Has to say, To all those, Who have trusted in Jesus Christ, In Micah chapter 7, We read, Who is a God like you, Pardoning iniquity, And passing over transgression, For the remnant of his inheritance, He does not retain his anger forever, Because he delights in steadfast love, He will again have compassion on us, He will tread our iniquities underfoot, You will cast all our sins, In the depths of the sea, Oh my father, What about the past, What about my past sins, What about the way, That I have wished at your gifts, Son, I have cast them, In the depths, Of the sea, The Lord says,

By his servant Jeremiah, In chapter 50, In those days, And in that time, Declares the Lord, Iniquity shall be sought in Israel, And there shall be none, And sin in Judah, And none shall be found, For I will pardon those, Whom I leave as a remnant, But father, What about the present, That's the past, What about the present, Look at my clothes, They are filthy rags, And the father would kiss him again, As if to say, I am content to have you, As you are, With your filthy clothes, I am content to have you, As you are, Because I love you, I am willing to take your rags, Husks, And all, This is the way that the Lord wants me and you, Just as we are, Confessing, That we are sinners,

[ 37 : 13 ] In need of him, Oh, That is the past, And that is the past, But father, What about the future, Then would come another kiss, Son, I will take care, Of the future, We find Paul writing, But my God shall supply all your need, According to his riches and glory, By Christ Jesus, He was already given to us, He has already given to us, The greatest gift of all, Writing to the church at Rome, Paul says, What shall we say then to these things, If God be for us, Who can be against us, He that spared not his own son, But delivered him up for us all, How shall he not with him also freely, Give us all things, The father did not say to the son, You smell, Son, You smell, You need to make yourself more respectable, You must go and be washed first, No,

Instead the father says to the servants, Bring quickly the best robe, And put it on him, Put a ring on his hand, And shoes on his feet, The returning son, Has nothing to give, He comes empty handed, And this is the way that we must come to Jesus, As it was empty handed, As the hymn writer says, Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to thy cross I cling, Naked came, Come to thee for dress, Helpless look to thee for grace, The son has nothing to give his father, But one thing, And what is that?

His need, The son has nothing to give his father, But his need, And this is the way that I and you must come to Jesus, Bring nothing, But our need, For his grace, And quickly, The significance of the gifts, That his father gave the son, And all the gifts there, Speaks of sonship, The son stands before the father in his rags, But the father called for the best robe to be put on him, The father was placing the mantle on his son, While the son wore the rags with which he came to the father, He would still be looked upon as a slave, But having put on him the finest robe from his father's house, He would be recognized as a son, So it is with us, When we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, We are given the best robe from the father's house, We are robed with the righteousness of Christ,

The righteousness of Christ being reckoned to us, Being imputed to us, The garment of our salvation, No longer looked upon as a slave to sin, But now we are reckoned before God as a son, As a son.

But he was not simply given a robe, But he was given a ring, And this would be a signet ring, And for the son that meant an emblem of authority, And restoration of his inheritance.

[ 40 : 30 ] And we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, Who serves as a signet ring of God for his people. As Paul writes to the Ephesians, he says, In whom ye also trusted, After ye have heard the word of truth, The gospel of your salvation, In whom also, After ye believed, You were sealed With the Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance, Until the redemption of the purchased possession, And to the praise of his glory.



We have received the seal from the Father, That is, the Holy Spirit. Again, with a robe and ring, He was given shoes for his feet.

Now in those days, Servant or slaves did not wear shoes, But sons, Those who belonged to the household, Did wear shoes. And this boy is given shoes.

He has been given shoes, Because he has been received, Not as a slave and as a servant, But as a son. Paul says in Ephesians, That our feet are shod, For the gospel of peace.

And then the father says, And bring the fattened calf, And kill it, And let us eat and celebrate, For this my son was dead, And is alive again. He was lost and is found, And they began to celebrate.

[ 41 : 55 ] The fattened calf, Which the family would have been saving, For a special occasion. It was now killed. This was a feast, Of fellowship.

The son was brought, Into fellowship, With the family. Again, We have the theme of joy, Just as we saw in the case of the lost sheep, And the shepherd called together his friends and neighbours, And in the case of the lost coin, The woman called her neighbours together, So in this case.

For he says, For this my son was dead, And is alive again. He was lost and is found, And they began to celebrate. Others are called to share in the joy, That chiefly belongs to the father.

Oh, what an encouragement there is here for sinners. The joy of the Lord should give every sinner, Confidence in coming to God, Through Jesus Christ.

Like the son in the story, You say, I have sinned. The Lord says, I freely forgive. The father rejoices, The son rejoices, And the servants rejoice.

[ 43 : 06 ] And they began to celebrate. He was received, Accepted, Brought again into sonship, Sharing with the father, And with the servants of the household.

Rejoicing, And having fellowship with them. These are the great blessings, That belong to those, Who will come to the father, Who will see the father's forgiveness, And the father's mercy, And love.

May this story, Regarding the father, Response to the son, The rebellious son, Who is returning to him. May that story be an encouragement, For you today.

Wherever you are, Wherever you are, To come, To the father of all mercy, And the father of all grace, Who will receive you, And who will give the benefits, Of the household to you, The best robe, The signet ring, And shoes, Bringing into, His sonship.

May the Lord bless our thoughts, Let us pray, Eternal and ever, Blessed God, We give thanks, That your steadfast love, Endures forever.

[ 44 : 33 ] May that be an encouragement, For us today. Wherever we stand, Outside of Christ, Whether we are deep in sin, Or whether we have backslidden, Whether we have fallen away from the way, O Lord, Thou art a God, Who freely loves, Thou art a God, Who will accept, If we come and confess, Our sinnership to thee, O Lord, We give praise to thee, For thy goodness, And kindness to us, As presented to us, In and through thy loving son, Jesus Christ, We pray that thou would continue with us, And bless us, We pray thee, And forgive us all our sins, In Jesus name, Amen.

We shall conclude, By singing to the Lord's praise, From Psalm 145, The first version of the psalm, On page 442, And at verse 6, Men of high knacks, The might shall show, Thy knacks, Thy dreadful art, And I thy glory to advance, Thy greatness will declare, The memory of thy goodness, Great, They largely shall express, With songs of praise, They shall extol, Thy perfect righteousness, The Lord is very gracious, In him compassions flow, In mercy he is very great, And is to angels flow, The Lord Jehovah unto all, His goodness doth declare, And over all his other works, His tender mercy sire, We shall sing these verses, To the Lord's praise, Psalm 145, First version of the psalm, From verse 6 to 9, Men of thine acts, The might shall show, Thine acts,

The might shall show, Thine acts, A dreadful art, And I thy glory to advance, Thy greatness will declare, The memory of thy goodness, The Lord is great, They largely shall express, With songs of praise, They shall extol, Thy perfect righteousness,

The Lord is very gracious, In him compassions flow, In mercy he is very great, And is to angels flow, The Lord Jehovah unto all, His goodness doth declare, And over all his other works,

His tender mercy sire. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with you all, Now and forevermore.

[ 48 : 59 ]    Amen.