

Hear Israel's Shepherd!

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this evening, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the book of the prophets Zechariah and chapter 10.

Zechariah chapter 10, and if we just read again from the beginning. Ask rain from the Lord in the season of the spring rain, from the Lord who makes the storm clouds.

And he will give them showers of rain to everyone, the vegetation in the field. For the household gods utter nonsense, and the diviners see lies.

They tell false dreams and give empty consolation. Therefore the people wander like sheep. They are afflicted for lack of a shepherd. My anger is hot against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders.

For the Lord of hosts cares for his flock, the house of Judah. And will make them like his majestic steed in battle. And so on.

[1 : 0 3] You know, while preparing to preach upon this passage, I was reminded of the prayer that we were singing earlier in Psalm 80. Because Psalm 80, as we said, it's a prayer for the nation.

Psalm 80 is a prayer for the nation. And this prayer, Psalm 80, was applicable to the return remnant. And it's applicable to us tonight as we continue looking and living beyond lockdown.

Because Psalm 80 is a prayer for the nation. That we would listen, love, look, and lean upon the good shepherd, Jesus Christ. Because, as we'll see this evening, there are many false and flawed and even failing under-shepherds.

Which is why we must always pay attention to the voice of the one good shepherd, Jesus Christ. And that's what Asaph in Psalm 80, that's what he encourages us and exhorts us to do.

When he says, Hear, Israel's shepherd, like a flock, thou that dost Joseph guide, shine forth, O thou that dost between the cherubims abide.

[2 : 1 2] Asaph called the Lord's people to pray for the nation. Not by pointing to the situation. But by pointing to the shepherd who is sovereign over the situation.

And you know, it's by listening and loving and looking and leaning upon the good shepherd. That we must echo the words of that prayer for the nation.

Those precious words. Turn us again, O God of hosts. And upon us, vows save. To make thy countenance to shine. And so we shall be saved.

You know, it's a powerful prayer for our nation as we continue living and looking beyond lockdown. But it's that exhortation and encouragement to listen and love and look and lean upon the good shepherd.

It's that encouragement and exhortation that this return remnant receive in this chapter. Because they're exhorted and they're encouraged in chapter 10 to hear Israel's shepherd like a flock.

[3 : 21] Hear Israel's shepherd like a flock. And in this chapter we hear, we hear three things. We hear about the shepherdless people, the shepherd's priorities and the shepherd's promise.

We hear three things. We hear about the shepherdless people, the shepherd's priorities and the shepherd's promise. So first of all, the shepherdless people.

The shepherdless people. Look again at verse 1. It says, They are the shepherdless people.

But you know, as we've discovered in our study of this book, You remember that Zechariah, he was called and commissioned and commanded to comfort and challenge God's people with God's word as they began living and looking beyond lockdown.

The Israelites, you remember, they had spent 70 years living in lockdown in Babylon due to their rebellion and their rejection of the Lord. But by God's grace, this remnant, they returned to the promised land of Israel to rebuild and restore and renew and rededicate their lives to the Lord.

[5 : 00] And in chapters 1 to 6, as we've studied them, the Lord spoke to this return remnant through Zechariah's eight night visions. And these night visions, they were to remind and reassure this return remnant that even though they were unsettled and unsure and uncertain about their future, the Lord was still with them.

Then in chapters 7 and 8, the return remnant, they received a lesson about covenant commitment. Because the Lord wanted to remind this return remnant about his covenant commitment towards them.

And then in chapter 9, as we saw last Lord's day, we entered into what was the second half of the book of Zechariah. And the second half of the book of Zechariah, it was written 15 to 20 years after the temple had been completed.

So it was written around 500 BC. And by this point in their history, the return remnant, they have now been back in the promised land for about 35 years.

But even though the temple has now been rebuilt and rededicated to the Lord, not everything was back to normal yet. Things weren't back to the way they were before they were living in lockdown.

[6 : 22] Because, as we said, the glory of the Lord hadn't returned to the temple. The walls of the city of Jerusalem, they were still in ruins. And the people, well, the people were becoming restless.

Which is why in chapter 9, Zechariah, he exhorted and he encouraged the return remnant to keep looking to the coming king. Keep looking to the coming king.

But now in chapter 10, Zechariah, he exhorts and he encourages the return remnant to hear Israel's shepherd like a flock. Hear Israel's shepherd like a flock.

They're to look and listen to the shepherd king. Because they're a shepherdless people. They're living like sheep without a shepherd.

And that's what we read in these opening verses. We read that they're living without a shepherd. The household gods were told in verse 2, And so what does Zechariah do?

[7 : 34] Zechariah exhorts and encourages the return remnant. He says to them, Ask the Lord for rain during the spring season.

Ask the Lord for rain during the spring season. Because it's the Lord, the covenant king. He's the one who keeps covenant.

He's the one, we're told in verse 1. He's the one who creates the storm. He's the one who sends showers of rain. He's the one who provides a crop and a good harvest.

It's the Lord who gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater. But as Zechariah says, The household gods, they utter nonsense.

The Baals, they are useless. They're dumb idols. Because they promise blessing, but they provide nothing. They provide cursing.

[8 : 31] You know, Baal, he was said to be the god of fertility and rain. So if you wanted a good harvest, you would pray to Baal. You would worship Baal.

You would make offerings to Baal. And throughout their history, the people of Israel, they fell into this trap of thinking that if they turned away from the Lord, and if they turned to Baal for help, then Baal would bless them.

And you know, sometimes the Israelites, they were guilty of syncretism, where they worshipped both the Lord and Baal at the same time, which of course was complete blasphemy.

It broke the first commandment. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. And you know, the Lord had said to his people, he had said to them in the law of Moses, in Deuteronomy 11, if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul, he will give rain for your land in its season.

The early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. You know, the Lord promised blessing upon both people and pasture, if they love, worship, and serve only him.

[9 : 57] But if they failed in their covenant commitment, the Lord would bring cursing upon both people and pasture. And that's how the Israelites always knew where they stood with the Lord.

All they had to do was look at the land around them, because the Lord would show favour and the Lord would bless the land with harvest, if they were faithful to the covenant.

But the Lord would chastise his people and curse the land with famine, if they were unfaithful to the covenant. That was the condition of the covenant. Obedience will bring blessing, but disobedience will bring cursing.

Obedience will bring blessing, but disobedience will bring cursing. And now as this return remnant, as they're living and looking beyond lockdown, they were becoming apathetic and absent in their attendance.

They were becoming distant and detached in their discipleship. They were becoming lazy and lethargic and lukewarm in their love for the Lord. They were a shepherdless people.

[11 : 05] They were willingly wondering. And it was going to leave them, as we're told there, it was going to leave them troubled and afflicted. They were willingly wondering.

The people wonder like sheep, we're told. They're afflicted for lack of a shepherd. But you know, the thing is, it's not that the return remnant didn't have a shepherd.

They did. Because the Lord was their shepherd. He was the shepherd king. But the thing was, they weren't living as though the Lord was their shepherd.

They had a shepherd, but they weren't living like the Lord was their shepherd. Because they weren't looking to the Lord, and they weren't listening to the Lord as their shepherd. Instead, they were looking and listening to all the other voices.

That all these voices that were trying to distract and direct them away from the voice of the good shepherd. And that's why Zechariah says in verse 1, Ask the Lord for rain.

[12 : 09] Ask for the Lord's blessing. Ask the Lord to direct you, he's saying. Ask the Lord to lead you. Ask the Lord to guide you. Ask the Lord to shepherd you. Ask the Lord to show you his way and his path.

Because if you don't, Zechariah is telling them, If you don't, you'll wander away from the Lord. And you'll become harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

And you know, my friend, what Zechariah was reminding this return remnant, and us this evening, what he's reminding us, is the simple truth of discipleship. Because without the Lord as our shepherd, without shepherding taking place in our experience, we'll be like lost sheep, wandering aimlessly in this world.

And you know, we need to seek the leading, and the guiding, and the direction of the shepherd's word. Not from the world.

We need to be listening to the shepherd. We need to love the shepherd, and look to the shepherd, and lean upon the shepherd, and listen to the shepherd. We need to live in dependence upon the shepherd, and live trusting the shepherd.

[13 : 27] Because as Jesus says, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. And my sheep, they hear my voice.

And I know them. And they follow me. And I give to them eternal life, says Jesus. And they will never perish. Neither will they be plucked out of my hand.

And you know, the thing is, Jesus knew the importance of discipleship. Jesus knew the importance of fellowship among the flock.

Jesus knew the importance of following the good shepherd. Because we're told at the end of Matthew chapter 9, that as Jesus went about the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness, we're told that when he saw the crowds, when he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them.

Why? Because they were like sheep without a shepherd. They were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. You know, my Christian friend, Jesus knows that you need him as your shepherd.

[14 : 45] Jesus knows that you need fellowship within the flock. Jesus knows you need him to lead you and guide you. Because without him, you will be harassed and helpless in this world.

And you know, my unconverted friend, Jesus knows that you need him as your shepherd. Because without him, without him, you're lost.

You're lost. You're lost. You know, what a condition to be in tonight. To have heard about this good shepherd all your life.

You might know Psalm 23 off by heart. You might be able to sing it out loud. And yet, you know that you still need this shepherd.

You know that you're still lost without this shepherd. And you know tonight, my unconverted friend, that you need to come to this shepherd. And commit your life to this shepherd.

[15 : 48] And confess the Lord as your shepherd. You need to take Psalm 23 from your head to your heart. And say, the Lord is my shepherd.

shepherd. But you know, when Jesus had compassion on the crowds because they were like sheep without a shepherd, he reminded his disciples in Matthew 9 that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Pray to the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers into the harvest field. But the question that this passage draws our attention to is, what if the laborers have lost sight of their priorities?

What if the undershepherds have lost sight of their principles? Which is what had happened in Israel. And that's what we see secondly, the shepherd's priorities.

So the shepherdless people and the shepherd's priorities. The shepherdless people and the shepherd's priorities. So the shepherd's priorities.

[17 : 02] We read in verse 3, My anger is hot against the shepherds and I will punish the leaders for the Lord of hosts cares for his flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like his majestic steed in battle.

Now I'm sure that you all remember our study of the Pilgrim's Progress. I thoroughly enjoyed studying the Pilgrim's Progress. You remember that as Christian he journeyed from the city of destruction and he was going on towards the celestial city, that he came to the delectable mountains where he met four shepherds.

Four shepherds called knowledge, experience, watchfulness, and sincerity. Knowledge, experience, watchfulness, and sincerity. And of course Bunyan gave the shepherds these names because he knew what the biblical characteristics of a pastor should be.

He knew that these were biblical characteristics that a pastor should seek and strive to possess in their ministry. Needless to say, it's a high calling because a pastor must seek and strive to possess knowledge, experience, watchfulness, and sincerity.

A pastor is to be an under-shepherd. He's to be a shepherd under the good shepherd. He's to be a pastor under the pastor of pastors, Jesus Christ.

[18 : 31] But what Zechariah says here is that the Lord was angry with his under-shepherds. He was fuming with them. In fact, the imagery that's being used here in verse 3 is like those cartoons you often see where you see someone in the cartoon that gets so angry that their face goes red and steam comes out their nose and out their ears.

And that's actually literally what it says here in the Hebrew. That the Lord was angry with the under-shepherds. He was fuming with them. And it was all because the under-shepherds, they had lost sight of their pastoral principles and priorities.

They had lost sight of their pastoral principles and priorities. And it was all because they weren't warning the congregation about being wayward or wondering.

They weren't directing the congregation through discipline and discipleship. They weren't exhorting and encouraging and enabling the congregation to follow the good shepherd.

Instead, they had just neglected them. They left them to it. They didn't say what they were meant to say to them. They didn't speak and instead they remained silent.

[19 : 45] They neglected their pastoral principles and priorities. And that's why these people were a shepherdless people. That's why they were like sheep without a shepherd.

The under-shepherd, the pastors, had lost sight of their principles and priorities. But what's so solemn about the way the Lord describes these pastors is that he says they're not even under-shepherds.

In fact, he says they're not even sheep. The word in verse 3 for leaders, I will punish the leaders, is literally he says I will punish the goats.

I will punish the goats. He doesn't even call them sheep or under-shepherds. He calls them goats. He calls the leaders of God's people goats.

That's what the Lord thought of them because as under-shepherds they had lost sight of their principles and priorities. But you know this problem with pastors, it wasn't a new problem.

[20 : 54] It wasn't a new problem because this problem is it had been there 70 years earlier in Ezekiel's day. The problem with pastors, it was there long before they were living in lockdown in Babylon.

Because like Zechariah, Ezekiel, he had to prophesy against problematic and pathetic pastors who had neglected their principles and their priorities.

You know when you read in Ezekiel 34, you read that the shepherds in Israel, they were meant to feed the flock of God but instead they were only feeding themselves.

And the Lord said to them, the Lord said to them, the weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, and the lost you have not sought.

The under-shepherds had neglected the flock, they had lost sight of their principles and their priorities as pastors. And you know, as you would expect, this passage, it confronts and challenges me as an under-shepherd and as a pastor in this congregation.

[22 : 12] But you know, I was reminded of the principles and priorities of a pastor recently at the induction in Carloway. I was also watching online in this past week the induction of Ben Fidion to the congregation of Laird and Boner Bridge Free Church.

And you know, listening to the vows that were put to these ministers at their inductions, it reminded me not only of the need to adhere to the Word of God and to the confession of faith and the doctrines of Scripture and the practice of the church, but it also reminded me of the need to keep my principles and my priorities as a pastor in check.

Because you know, the questions that are put to ministers at an induction are so solemn and so serious. Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to Jesus Christ and desire of saving souls your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of the holy ministry and not worldly designs and interests.

And they are. They are. Because to God be the glory. May Christ have the preeminence and by his grace may we receive the blessing.

Another question that's asked is, do you engage in the strength and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord and Master to rule well your own family, to live a holy and circumspect life and faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work to the edification of the body of Christ?

[24 : 03] I do. But it's a tall order and it's a high calling to be an under-shepherd of the good shepherd and a pastor of the pastor of pastors. But the last question at an induction is one that always brings me back to my own induction here in Barvis.

Do you accept off and close with the call to be pastor of this congregation and promise through grace to perform all the duties of a faithful minister of the gospel among this people?

I do. I hope and pray that I do. But you know, having recently retired as an interim moderator in Carloway, I've not only been reminded of the role of the under-shepherd, but also the responsibility of the sheep.

You know, the onus isn't just on the minister living up to the expectations of a congregation. It's not only the minister who makes vows to the good shepherd and to the sheep of the congregation.

You know, in signing a call, the sheep make vows to the good shepherd and the sheep make vows to the under-shepherd who is over them. But you know, let's make this a bit more personal and practical for us as a congregation.

[25 : 27] You know, when you signed my call to be your minister, you promised as elders, as deacons, as members and as adherents. You promised that as you were under-shepherd, I would be given charge of your soul, which, as you know, is a serious and solemn responsibility.

Because the thing is, in signing that call, you have given me permission. You have given me permission to preach and proclaim the whole counsel of God's word to you with no stone left unturned.

And you have given me consent. You have given me consent to confront and challenge you, not to guilt-trip you or to get at you, but to directly and yet lovingly to exhort and encourage and enable you to live a Christ-centered life.

Therefore, whatever is sent to you, whatever is sent to you from the pulpit or in private, it is always said, my friend, it is always said out of a genuine care, compassion and concern for your soul.

It's always said out of a desire for you to, first of all, follow Christ. But, secondly, to know him and to live for him in this world.

[26 : 55] But, you know, more than that, when you sign that call, you promised as a congregation to show your minister all dutiful respect, encouragement and obedience in the Lord.

That's what you vowed as a congregation. You promised that your under-shepherd be given charge over your soul. And, you know, my friend, as we have both made vows, we should never take our vows lightly.

But, you know, also, similar vows are made before the Kirk Session when you become a member in the congregation and you profess your faith in Jesus Christ.

Because, when someone comes before our Kirk Session, and our Kirk Session, by the way, they're not a bunch of scary elders. They're actually a very warm and welcoming group of men.

And they'd be delighted to see anyone in the congregation come and profess their faith in Jesus Christ at any time. It doesn't have to be at a communion season. It can be any time throughout the year.

[27 : 59] But, you know, when you meet with a Kirk Session, you'll be asked to explain, first of all, why you want to profess your faith in Christ. And you'll say to the Kirk Session that it's not because you're now good enough or you're worthy enough or you're fit enough.

It's simply because you love the Lord. That's why you profess your faith in Jesus Christ. You love the Lord. You love Him because He first loved you. And then, when you meet the Kirk Session, you'll be asked five questions about your faith, five vows that you have to make in the presence of the Kirk Session.

Question one, do you acknowledge the Bible to be the Word of God and your only guide in all matters of faith and conduct? Yes. Do you confess God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as revealed in Scripture to be your God?

Yes. Do you profess faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior of sinners and as your Savior and Lord? Yes.

Do you promise that depending upon God's promised help, you will faithfully obey and serve the Lord Jesus Christ and to love His people within the fellowship of this church?

[29 : 18] Yes. Do you promise to submit in the Lord to the government of this church, to participate faithfully in its worship, ministry and support and to heed its discipline?

Yes. and you know, I believe that there are a number of people in our congregation who could and should make a profession of their faith and I want to say to you tonight, because you know who you are, I want to say to you that the longer you leave it, the harder it will become.

The longer you leave it, the harder it will become. So don't put it off. Don't put off coming out on the side of Christ. Don't put off making a confession and a profession of your faith in Jesus Christ.

But you know, these vows that we've just considered, they should also be a reminder of our role and our responsibility in a congregation. That we're not to be absent or apathetic Christians, but we're to be active Christians.

We're not to be casual or consumerist Christians, but we're to be committed Christians. We're to be committed to Christ. We're to be committed to our congregation and we're to be committed in our Christian witness living in this community.

- [30 : 43] My friend, there's a role and a responsibility for both pastor and people. The people must proclaim and profess Jesus Christ as Lord.

The pastor must maintain his principles and his priorities. Because as we read, the Lord cares for his flock.

The Lord cares for his flock. Which is why we're being exhorted and encouraged this evening to hear Israel's shepherd like a flock.

Hear Israel's shepherd like a flock. Because in this chapter, in chapter 10, we hear about the shepherdless people, the shepherd's priorities, and lastly, the shepherd's promise.

So the shepherdless people, the shepherd's priorities, and the shepherd's promise. So the shepherd's promise. Now look at verse 4.

- [31 : 42] We're told that from him shall come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler, all of them together.

They shall be like mighty men in battle, trampling the foe in the mud of the streets. They shall fight because the Lord is with them, and they shall put to shame the riders on horses. I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph.

I will bring them back because I have compassion on them, and they shall be as though I had not rejected them, for I am the Lord their God, and I will answer them.

You know, unlike the under-shepherds in Israel who had failed in their pastoral principles and priorities, we read that Israel's good shepherd, the Lord, the covenant king, the one who keeps covenant, he cares for his flock.

He has a concern for his flock. He has compassion towards his flock. We're told that he loves his flock to the point that he will lay down his life for his flock.

- [32 : 46] Jesus said, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. But you know, I always love what Jesus says in Luke's gospel.

When he's speaking with his sheep, and Jesus says to his flock, he says, fear not, little flock. Fear not, little flock.

It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And you know, as the covenant king, as the shepherd king, the Lord not only promised his people that he would pastor his flock and provide for his flock and protect his flock and presents himself amongst his flock.

The shepherd king also promised, as we see in this in verse 4, he promised stability, strength, security, and sovereignty over his flock.

The shepherd king promised stability, security, strength, and sovereignty over his flock. We're told in verse 4, from him shall come from him shall come the cornerstone, from him the tent peg, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler, all of them together.

- [34 : 03] The shepherd king will be the cornerstone. He will provide stability for the flock. The shepherd king will be the tent peg, providing security for his flock.

The shepherd king will be the battle bow, providing strength for his flock. The shepherd king will also be the ruler, providing sovereignty over his flock.

The shepherd king will provide his promised stability, security, strength, and sovereignty over his own flock. But more than that, more than that, we're told that when the shepherd king comes, he will strengthen the house of Judah, and he will save the house of Joseph.

The house of Judah and the house of Joseph, they were the northern and southern kingdoms that are divided after the death of King Solomon. And yet the shepherd king, he promises his flock, he says to them, I will bring them back, because I have had compassion on them, and they shall be as though as I had not rejected them.

For I am the Lord their God, who will answer them, and their hearts shall rejoice in the Lord. But you know what's remarkable about the shepherd's promise to his flock is that in verses four to seven, it's all about the first advent of the shepherd king.

[35 : 29] The first coming of the shepherd king is described there as one of invasion, where the shepherd king, he will punish his enemies and provide for his flock.

He will provide for his flock by laying down his life for the sheep. The shepherd king will defeat death and sin and Satan. He will deliver his people, providing stability and security and strength and sovereignty.

But then in verses eight to twelve, verse eight to the end of the chapter, it's no longer about the first advent. It's now about the second advent of the shepherd king.

It's all about the second coming of the shepherd king, where his arrival will not be seen as one of invasion, but in gathering. It will be in gathering.

The shepherd king says in verse eight, I will whistle for them like a shepherd. I will whistle for them like a shepherd whistling for his flock to come to him.

[36 : 36] And I will gather them in, for I have redeemed them. And though they have been scattered throughout the nations, he says, I will bring them, I will bring them home from the land of Egypt.

I will gather them from Assyria. I will bring them from Gilead and Lebanon. And you know, the promise of Jesus, our shepherd king, is that at his second advent, at his second coming, he will gather in his flock.

He will gather in his flock. And you know, that's what Jesus, that's what Jesus reminds us and reassures us in Matthew's gospel.

Jesus says in Matthew 25, when the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory.

And before him, he says, shall be gathered all the nations. And he shall separate them one from another. He will separate them. How?

[37 : 43] Like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he shall set his sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.

And the shepherd king will say to those on his right, come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared from before the foundation of the world.

And he will say to those on his left, depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. You know, my friend, when this shepherd king comes again, the question is, will you be ready?

We're no longer considering his first advent. we are now thinking about his second advent, his second coming. Jesus is going to come again.

But will you be listening, loving, looking, and leaning upon the Lord as your shepherd? Will you be waiting for this shepherd to come?

[38 : 49] Will this shepherd king be your shepherd king? Do you know, as the hymn writer asks, when the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more and the morning breaks eternal bright and fair and when the saved of earth gather over on the other shore and the role is called up yonder, will you be there?

Will you be there? He goes on to say, on that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise and the glory of his resurrection share, when his chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies and the role is called up yonder.

Will you be there? Will you be there? Will you be written in the Lamb's book of life? My friend, you need to come. You need to come to your shepherd king.

You need to commit to your shepherd king. You need to confess this shepherd king as your shepherd king. You need to say with David, the Lord is my shepherd.

And it's also that you'll be able to say with the hymn writer, let us labor for the master from the dawn till setting sun. Let us talk of all his wondrous love and care.

[40 : 12] Then when all of life is over and our work on earth is done and when the role is called up yonder, I'll be there.

I'll be there. Will you be there, my friend? Will you be there? Let's make sure this evening that we do as Psalm 80 has exhorted and encouraged us to do, to hear Israel's shepherd like a flock.

Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us and let us pray. O Lord, our God, we give thanks that thou art the shepherd of thy people and we do pray that as we are shepherded by thee that we would listen to thy voice, that we would love our shepherd, that we would look to him and lean upon him day by day, that he is the shepherd who will guide us and direct us and lead us into all our experiences, but he is one shepherd who will never leave us and never forsake us.

Help us this evening to hear Israel's shepherd and to hear him like a flock, to hear him knowing that he speaks. He speaks to us powerfully, but he also speaks to us personally.

O Lord, bless us then, we pray. Bless thy truth to us, that it would be of benefit to us as we go into another week. A week that is unknown to us, known only to thee, and who better to look to and lean upon and love and listen to than our good shepherd.

[41 : 53] Go before us and we pray, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the concluding words of Psalm 80.

Psalm 80, we're singing in the Scottish Psalter again, and we're singing from verse 15 down to the end of the psalm. Psalm 80 from verse 15, this vineyard which thine own right hand hath planted us among, and that same branch which for thyself thou hast made to be strong.

And down to the end of the psalm, where it says once again, turn us again, Lord God of hosts, and upon us vows safe, to make thy countenance to shine, and so we shall be safe.

These verses of Psalm 80, to God's praise. of sport, God, save God, which for night's hell, the past picture be strong.

Burned up his distance, living by his own soul, isen■ Uhen.

[43 : 47] Me, O O let I am be still upon the night of my right hand.

The Son of my good Lord I shall, thy greatest condition.

O let I am be still upon the night of my right hand.

Waken us and we upon thy name will come.

Turn us again, Lord God of hosts.

[45 : 50] And upon our mercy, do me thy God to shine.

And so we shall be still. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.