

Guest Preacher Mr. Donald M Mackinnon

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Preacher: Mr. Donald M Mackinnon

[0 : 00] Can we then turn back for a time this evening to the passage of Scripture that we read together? The Old Testament, the book of Ruth, chapter 1.

And for a text we can take the words of verse 6. The book of Ruth, chapter 1 and verse 6. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab.

For she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food.

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Warren Weersbe, the author, has a book looking at this passage of Scripture, the book of Ruth.

And in it he gives a designation to the four chapters of the book. So he calls the first chapter the weeping chapter.

[1 : 20] The second chapter he calls the working chapter. The third chapter is the waiting chapter. And the fourth chapter is the wedding chapter.

And so we are coming to what we should be designated as the weeping chapter. And it's a solemn passage of Scripture for us to read.

Because it is set against a very dark background. I don't know if any of you have ever been in a jewellers.

Either looking at or purchasing a diamond ring or a diamond necklace. But often a jeweller will take out a black cloth.

And he will lay it on the counter. And the purpose of laying the black cloth is because it's designed to bring out the beauty of the diamonds.

[2 : 22] It's designed to enhance and show the beauty of the diamond as they catch the light. As he may move the cloth and it reflects the light. And it just brings it out so much more.

And in many ways that corresponds to what we have in this chapter. Because there is a black background here to this chapter.

And yet in the chapter we have the diamonds. And the diamonds are the graces and the attributes of God. As they shine and sparkle against that dark and black background.

And we'll see more of that as we go on. And so as we look at the beginning of the chapter. And how this narrative is introduced to us.

We are told that this event and events that are recorded for us here. Began in the days when the judges ruled.

[3 : 30] Bible commentators reckon that that covers a period of some 300 years. And exactly when this narrative sits in that history they're not sure.

But they do take up and make this point. That they believe it to be early in the period. Because of the person that is introduced to us in the following chapter.

Boaz. Because we know Boaz is the son of Rahab. And you will remember how very early on in the book of Joshua.

Rahab is introduced to us. And subsequently she has a son Boaz. But at any rate it is introduced for us in these days.

When the judges ruled. And of course that is where the narrative is looking back to the preceding book that we have.

[4 : 35] The book of Judges. And if you look back through the book of Judges. And if you read the book of Judges. Over and over and over again.

You will see these words repeated. Time and time again. As you look at the book of Judges. And how that narrative unfolds.

The history of the children of Israel. Over and over and over again. You will see this cycle. Of sin. Of rebellion. Of rejection. Of disobedience.

And the common thread that runs through the book of Judges. Time and time and time again. Are these words. And the children of Israel. Did evil again.

In the sight of the Lord. And so. As the book of Ruth opens. And says. In the days. These were days. Of spiritual decline.

[5 : 34] Disobedience. And judgment. And just to illustrate. One single incident of that. In the sixth. In the sixth chapter. Sorry. Of the book of Judges. We have an account there. And it opens. With the words that I've just spoken about.

The people of Israel did what was evil. In the sight of the Lord. And the result of their disobedience was. That the Lord.

Gave them into the hand of Midian. For seven years. And what Midian did. Was that.

They watched. The whole land. As they engaged. At this time of year. In everything that was.

[6 : 32] Undertaken by them. In the planting. And the sowing. Of their crops. This remember. Is an Economy. That is entirely. Dependent. On agriculture.

Both. To sustain themselves. Their own lives. And the lives. Of their animals. And so. The Midianites. Watched them. Unaware.

Unaware. To the children of Israel. That they were being watched. And they watched their planting. And they watched their sowing. And they waited. Until. The time.

Of harvest. When all the efforts. And all the energy. And everything that had been undertaken. Was about to come. To the full fruition. And then. The Midianites came.

And took the whole lot away. And left them. With nothing. Nothing. And I really.

[7 : 28] Really. Feel. That. For us to. Grasp. The enormity. Of that. We almost have to apply it. And think of it as happening. In our own island. And so.

Think just now. Of Barvis. 70 years ago. Late April. 1954. Just think of the amount of activity. That would have been undertaken. In this village. And every other village. Across the island. A time where people are. Their minds. Thinking of. Plowing.

Of planting. Of sowing. Of cutting peats. All the vegetables that were planted. All the potatoes that were planted. All the carrots. And the cabbage. And everything. And then the subsequent months. The amount of prayer. We believe. That these people. Put into. The prosperity. And how they were so dependent. On that. So.

[8 : 27] So. Conscious. Of the need. Of the blessing of God. In order. For their labor. To prosper. And so. All through May. And all through June. And July. The Lord's people.

Pleading. With the Lord. To prosper them. And what a great day. It was for them. In these days. When in the late autumn.

They had their thanksgiving service. And how full of thanks. They were. For the blessing. And the prosperity. Of the Lord. On their labor. Today.

Let's be honest. That's a day. That we hardly observe. And yet. Do we ever stop to think. Of how thankful. Individually. And collectively. We should be. With blessings. In our lives. That these people.

[9 : 28] Couldn't even dream about. The ways. That we have been prospered. How many times. Have I heard. Your own minister. Making the comment. When the cupboards. Were bare. The church. Was full. What a comment.

That is. Today. Today. The cupboards. The cupboards. Are full. But the churches. Are beginning to show. Increasing bareness. So think of.

All that activity. And then. One morning. The unimaginable. Discovery. Is made. That all the peats. And the moor. Are gone. Every field. Of potatoes. Has been taken. Every planting. Of vegetables. Of crops. The whole lot.

[10 : 28] Is gone. Too late. Now. To sow anymore. The growing season. Has passed. And the people. Of Barvis. Looking.

At a winter. Divided. Of all. That. And it. Brings. To our minds. And helps us. To understand. Something.

Of what. The disobedience. And the defiance. Of. The people. Had brought. Upon them. And the way. God judged them. But if it's.

Heavy enough. To think of that. Actually happening. How much more. For you. Then. To imagine. Standing there. Looking out. Over that.

Barren. Wilderness. Where there had been. So much. Prosperity. And blessing. And to think. Of all that. Coming upon you. Because of disobedience.

[11:26] Disobedience. To God. It's almost. Impossible. For us. To understand. What it must have meant. For these people. In that day.

When because of disobedience. God gave them over. And surely. As we. Reflect. Upon that. We should remind ourselves.

The last time. We were together. And we were looking at. The rent veil. We spoke about. What came into. Man's experience. Through disobedience. In the garden.

And remember. What we thought about. The words. Sin separates. And sin has consequences. And how down. Through the Bible. That follows on. Sin separates. Sin separates. Because their sin. Sin separates them from God. And from the blessing of God.

[12:26] Sin has consequences. Them losing. The entire. Harvest. And as we come back to this narrative.

It is almost. Breathtaking. And unbelievable. Unbelievable for us. To read. Now. The words. With which. The narrative begins.

In the days. When the judges ruled. There was. A famine. In the land. What does that tell us? It tells us.

That the whole cycle. Has come round again. So that again. It's a time of.

Spiritual decline. A time of disobedience. And a time of judgment. And the judgment. This time. Is not that the Midianites. Are going. Given over. And the harvest.

[13:25] Is allowed to be taken. This time. There's not even a harvest. This time. There's no harvest. This time.

The judgment. Has come. As God said. That were they guilty. Of disobedience. He would make the heavens.

As brass. And the earth. To be. As iron. And exercise themselves. As they would. Nothing. Would prosper.

There would be. No harvest. There would be. A famine. And perhaps. Even more. Remarkably. For. Them. As they. Observed. That judgment. What it must have been. For them. To see. How localized. That judgment.

[14:19] Was. Because. As this narrative. Is about to tell us. Whilst there was a famine. In the land. There was no famine.

In Moab. And if you know. Your Old Testament. History. You will know. That Moab. Were the sworn.

Enemies. And desired. The downfall. Of. The children. Of Israel. That was their desire. And yet. Remarkably.

We find. That whilst there is famine. In one place. There is no famine. In the other place. Where you would expect it.

To be the other way around. When God judges. And how that ought to solemnize us. That he can isolate us. As individuals. That he can isolate us.

[15:14] As a community. As an island. As a nation. Because if we are determined. To go on. In a course of decline. And disobedience. Then. As scripture tells us.

We shall reap. What we sow. Sin separates. And sin. Has consequences. And so. As this narrative begins.

We are then. Introduced. To those. Who are going to. Play. A great. Great. Part. In this. Remarkable narrative. As it unfolds.

In. Verse 1. A person. Is identified. For us. A man. Of Bethlehem. In Judah. And then.

In verse 2. The man. Is named. For us. Elimelech. And in verse 3. He leaves. The narrative. He dies.

[16:13] And then. The narrative. Focuses in. On the person. That we want to look at. Tonight. The person. That is introduced.

To us. Along. With Elimelech. In chapter 2. His wife. Naomi. Because she. Then. Becomes. The central focus.

Of this chapter. And as we'll see. Many. Many. Place. A great. Great. Significance. Being. Revealed. To us. In.

What these words. Contain. Naomi. And. Elimelech. And we're looking.

At. Their. Response. To this. Judgment. To this. Famine. The judgment. As every.
 [17:07] Judgment. Had a voice. And in the. Unfolding. Of providence. In our own. Lives.
 Individually.

And collectively. God. Speaks. To us. In providence. In so. So. Many. Ways. God. Speaks. To us.
 In providence. And we ought.
 To be. Alert. And close. Observers. Of how. Providence. Unfolds. In our lives. And what. God. Is
 saying. To us. In providence.
 Yourselves. As a congregation. Ourselves. As a congregation. In Tolstah. Now. More than ever.
 The only time. We see. The church. Filled.
 To capacity. Or near capacity. Is at the time. When providence. Unfolds. Death. In a congregation.
 And in a community. But the solemn question.
 [18:05] For us. Is this. Do we hear. The voice. That speaks. To us. In that providence. Speaks.
 To each one of us.

Says. To us. You are now. Observing. An appointed. Day. A day. Appointed. In the councils. Of
 eternity.
 When this life. That began. Was appointed. To conclude. On this day. And you are now here.
 Observing that day. And you also must pass this way. And everything that. We feel. When we do
 come.
 To the house of mourning. Do we hear the voice? Do we receive. The blessing. That scripture.
 [18:58] Speaks of. When it says. It is better. For us to go. To the house of mourning. Because if
 we do. Go to the house of mourning. And we do understand. And we do hear.

The voice of providence. Then that is blessed. To us. But instead of Naomi. Hearing the voice. The
 voice.
 That said to her. So profoundly. So clearly. So distinctly. To do. What had occurred. So many times
 before. In the narrative. Of the previous book.
 And in the narrative. Of our own experience. The voice that said to her. Above everything else. Turn
 to me. Turn to me. It's the voice that speaks to us.
 In the doctrine of repentance. Repentance. You know how. Repentance is. Recorded for us. In the
 shorter catechism. Repentance unto life. Is a saving grace.
 [20:01] One of the great diamonds. That is about to sparkle. So brightly. Against the dark.
 Backdrop. Of this chapter.

Repentance unto life. Is a saving grace. Whereby a sinner. Out of a true sense. Of his sin. Or her
 sin. And an apprehension. Of the mercy of God. In Christ Jesus.
 Doth with grief. And hatred. Of his sin. Turned from it. Unto God. With full purpose of. And
 endeavor. After new obedience. That was the voice.
 That spoke. So profoundly. Clearly. To Naomi. What did Naomi do? She never. Heard. The voice.
 Instead of turning to God. She turned. From God. They went. Into. The country.
 [20:56] Of Moab. And they remained. There. And as we read. That opening section. What ought.
 To be alarming. To every one of us. Is. That Naomi. Is identified. And only Naomi.
 There is no mention. Of God. There is no mention. Of prayer. There is no mention. Of seeking. The
 guidance. Of the Lord. None of it. Instead.
 She's doing all this. In her own strength. The last time. We were together. When we were thinking.
 Of the rent veil.
 We were thinking. At one point. Of what. The Lord. Had revealed. To Moses. In the mount. That
 was to have.
 [21:56] An established. Place. In the daily. Worship. Of the people. The morning. Sacrifice. And
 the evening. Sacrifice. And that. To be attended.

With prayer. Where the priests. In the morning. Worship. Would seek. The help. Of the omnipotent.
 Power. Of God. Over. Their enemies.
 Without. And within. And then. At the evening. At the time. Of the evening. Sacrifice. Again. The
 priests. Would engage. Would engage.
 In prayer. On behalf. Of the people. Praying. That sin. Committed. Throughout the day. Would be
 forgiven. And we need. For a moment.
 To remind. Ourselves. Of that. Essential. Requirement. For us. As we. Step out.

[22 : 50] Into a day. As you. Step out. Tomorrow. How will you. Step out. Will you. Begin. Tomorrow. By.

Before you. Step. Into the day. Coming. To the Lord. And. In acknowledgement. Of past. Failure. And. In acknowledgement.

Of times. When you have. Gone out. In your own strength. Say. Not with your lips. But with your heart. Heart. Without you. Lord. I can do nothing.

Or. Will you. Go. In the spirit. Of Naomi. Because. Naomi. Stepped. Into this day. And she said. Without you. Lord. I can do anything. There is.

A Chinese. Proverb. And it. Says this. The journey. Of a thousand. Miles. Begins. Begins. With one step. But how solemn.

[23 : 51] For us. It is. To be. Observers. Of a journey. That began. With one step. And what a step. It was. What a step.

It was. As Naomi. Step. Now. Out. And. She believed. As she believed.

In all her fullness. And turning her back. On God. Went. To Moab. Some might argue.

That the decision. Is commendable. Because. Did not she. And Elimelech. Have a right. To protect. The life. Of Mahalon.

And Kilion. The family. That the Lord. Had given them. Now that there was. Judgment. In the land. Did they not have a right. To protect life. And the problem.

[24 : 54] With that argument. Is. That for all the ways. In which. You might. Justify that action. It was not. An action. That the Lord.

Commended to them. And sometimes. We can take actions. And we can justify them. In that way. And all the time. As be walking. Against the revealed will. Of God. For our lives. And the revealed. Word of God. That is to be.

Our only guide. And we can go against that. But oh. Oh. What we reap. By sowing that.

By sowing that. They went out. With the purpose. Of preserving life. And instead of life. Naomi.

[25 : 53] Sees death. What it must have been. For her. As she began. To see. Elimelech. Becoming unwell.

Increasingly unwell. And then. Passing from time. Into the eternal realm. And all the time. So far away.

From the home. That they had meant to leave. Just for a short while. And never ever ever. Thinking that this was how. The providence.

Would unfold. What it was. For us to look. For Naomi. To look. At the open grave. Of her beloved husband. As his. Remains were lowered. Into the ground.

Of Moab. And the voice. That spoke to her there. And she never heard it.

[26 : 50] And then. For that to be repeated. It's one thing.

To lay your husband. In the grave. It's another thing. To. Stand over the grave. Of your own flesh. And blood. And lay beside.

The remains of your husband. Your beloved son. And the voice. That spoke to her again. But she never heard it.

And then for that to be repeated. And for her to stand. For the third time. Before an open grave.

And beside. The husband and the son. That she had laid in the grave. Now to lay another one.

Three graves. Three graves. Three graves. Three graves.

[27 : 51] Three graves. In Moab. Experiences. That are hard on flesh and blood. And hard on grace.

And yet it seems that even the third time. The voice that spoke to her. Was not heard. And that gives us something.

Of an understanding. Of the dark background. With which this narrative opens. And brings to our understanding. But then.

We begin to see. The diamonds. Beginning to shine. Because. In the verse that we've chosen.

Verse six. And if you'll allow me. I want to read it from the authorized version. Because in the authorized version. It reads. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law.

[28 : 54] That she might return from the country of Moab. For she had heard in the country of Moab. How the Lord had visited his people. In giving them bread. That word.

Bread. Has great significance in this chapter. Because the Bethlehem. That they had left. Was known. As the house of bread.

And now. We are told. In this verse. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law.

To return from the country of Moab. For she had heard. Now she's hearing something. And what is she hearing?

She's hearing. That in the land that she left. There is no bread. And what does that mean?

[29 : 55] It means this. That the people. That she had left. Who were under the judgment of God. Heard. The voice.

And they turned. To God. And God saw. And God heard. And he saw their sorrow. And he restored his blessing on the land.

So that once again. It was a land. Where there was harvest. Once again. It was a land. Where there was bread. And that news. Somehow or other.

Goes into Moab. And she hears. About repentance. And she hears. About turning to God.

And so she herself now. Now. After all this time. Of being so far away. Now. infused into her desire.

[30 : 55] There is that. Grace. Of repentance. And what a beautiful diamond. That is. As it sparkles. So brightly. In the unfolding.

Of this. Narrative. And how much does that. Have a parallel. To another passage. In scripture. That. Every one of us.

Knows. So well. Somebody else. In a far country. Somebody else. In a far country.

Having. Displayed. Defiance. And disobedience. And then. Comes. To himself. And says. How many. Hired. Servants. Of my father.

Have bread. And enough. To eat. And I am here. And we are told. He arose. And he said.

[31 : 50] I will come. To my father. And I will say. Father. I have sinned. Against thee. And before heaven. And how much. Of that. Is there here. As Naomi now.

Recognizes. That she needs. To return. In the same spirit. And taking up that. She now. Turns. And sets her face.

Towards the land. That she had left. With her. Is the blessing. Of God. In giving her. A companion. What a thing. It would have been. For her. To undertake. That journey. On her own. But not only.

Did the Lord. Give her. A daughter-in-law.

He gave her. A daughter-in-law. In the Lord. And so. As she makes. This return journey. She has. One beside her.

[32 : 49] And as you. Observe. The faithfulness. And the commitment. Of the daughter. That accompanies her. You cannot. But. Be taken.

With the understanding. That daughter has. And the commitment. That she displays. The understanding. She has. Of the covenant. Blessings. That are spoken of.

Elsewhere. In scripture. Because when she. Takes up the words. And she exhorts. Naomi. And saying. I will not leave you. Because. For where you go.

I will go. And where you lodge. I will lodge. And then she takes up. Words. That the Lord. Himself. Had said. I will be your God.

And you will be my people. And for. Naomi. That must have been. A great encouragement. But at the same time.

[33 : 50] What a rebuke. It was for her. As she saw. The faithfulness. Of this young girl. Desiring. To return. And what it was. For Naomi.

Now. To turn her back. On Moab. And leave there. Three graves. I'm sure you know. Just as well as I do. How difficult it can be.

To leave the cemetery. When you're laying. Somebody within. Your immediate. Or close family circle. And that moment. When you know that. Your duties are complete.

And now you have to leave. And you leave the cemetery. And everything. That's in your heart. And everything. That's in your spirit. Can we understand.

Something of what it was. For Naomi. To turn her back. On that land. Where as a result. Of her own disobedience. She was now leaving. Three graves. Her beloved husband.

[34 : 47] And her two boys. And now she turns. She turns back. Hearing.

And turning. And then. The narrative. Moves forward. To the point. Where. Her and Ruth.

Come back. The journey. Must have been a hard one. For Naomi. She must have seen. Many many places. On the journey. Where. Where. She was reminded.

Of conversations. She had with Elimelech. When they went out. With their fullness. Discussions. She had. With Mahalon. And Killian. Times they stopped. To refresh the body. With food. And with sleep. And with rest. How much of all that. Spoke to her. And yet. She comes back. With all her heaviness.

[35 : 43] And we are told. How she comes back. And being met. By those. Who knew her. And reminded. The prosperity.

That she displayed. When she went out. And the narrative. Here now. Begins to suggest. To her minds. In the address. And the way. In which Naomi. Is addressed. That she was. A woman. Of no small means. Herself. And Elimelech. Because it. Suggests. That they had. The financial means. To be able to. Take the journey. In the first place. To be able to. Subsidize. As it were. The journey. And be able to. Support. A new life. In this far country. That they went into. And she herself. Talking about. Her fullness. We believe. That the narrative. Suggests. That they were observers. Of that fullness. And now. They're observers. Of the emptiness.

[36 : 43] And so. Naomi declares. I went out. How that corresponds.

With what we were thinking. Of earlier on. The decision. No Lord. Wasn't that. The Lord was with her.

The Lord had guided her. It's. I went out. There's no blame here. She doesn't start. Blaming others. She lays no blame. On Elimelech.

Which again. Supports the view. That. Her input. Into the decision. In the beginning. Was not small. Indeed. She may very well. Have been. The driving force.

Behind. The decision. To leave. In the first place. Because she says. I went out. Not Elimelech. Not the boys. I went out.

[37 : 36] It was me. It was me. It was me. That did it. I went out. How. When we're coming. To the Lord. We need to.

Be reminded. That he is. The observer. Of the thoughts. And the intents. Of the heart. And that when we are coming. To confess our sin.

And seeking. To be restored. To a right. Walk. And communion. And fellowship. We need to be full. And we need to be frank. And we need to be honest. Because we.

What we can hide. From others. We cannot hide. From God. And so we need to be full. And we need to be honest. And how honest is Naomi. When she says. I went out.

But what a difference now. And what she then goes on to say. I went out. But somebody went out with me.

[38 : 34] I may have thinking. I may have thought. That I was turning my back on God. That I was turning my back on death.

But instead I found death. But the God that she turned her back on. Had never turned his back on her. And found her in that far country.

And there. She says. He brought me back. He brought me back. I said earlier on. About three graves.

In Moab. Is there not a fourth? Is there not a grave in Moab? That is the Naomi that went out. In all her pride. In all her self-sufficiency. In all her disobedience. In all her spiritual decline. And everything. The Naomi.

[39 : 38] That comes back. Leaves all that behind. Because it all died. In Moab. It's in a grave. In Moab. Because she comes back.

And leaves these words. With which we are so familiar. I went away full. And the Lord has brought me back. Empty.

Physically. She went out in her fullness. I went out full. And the Lord has brought me back empty. But is it not the case friends.

That when we look at how the narrative. Unfolds. And we look at it through the lens of spirituality. Did she not go out empty.

And come back full. Did she not go out in all her spiritual emptiness. And now. Her coming back.

[40 : 46] Is displaying the diamonds. Of God's long suffering. Of God's mercy. Of God's grace. Of God's goodness. Of God's unfolding of that goodness.

And grace. And mercy. In her life. The remarkable. Providence. Ordered by God.

Emptying her. In order. That he can fill her. And so we need to. Take with us.

The teaching. Of this. Passage of scripture. And surely. One of the many teachings. That we take out of this.

Passage. Is this. That failure. Is never final. That our sins.

[41 : 44] Are no barrier. To the exercise. Of God's grace. In our lives. That failure. Is not final. Naomi.

Took evil. Out of good. But God. To good. Out of evil. And the remarkable.

Remarkable. Events. That follow on. From this narrative. The American. Theologian. John Piper. Has a lecture online. And the title. Of the lecture is. God. God is always doing. 10,000 things. In your life.

And he goes on. To speak. How. In our lives. Every one of us. God is doing. 10,000 things. In our lives. And we know.

[42 : 42] Three of them. We know. Three of them. Because. In the life.

Of Naomi. God was doing. 10,000 things. But Naomi. Only knew. Three of them. And to illustrate. That. Piper.

Begins. To take examples. From scripture. That. Show. Exactly. What he means. By that. And he takes. Examples. Of. Personal lives.

Where. That truth. Unfolds itself. And speaking of. Individual instances. He says this. You may find yourself. With a painful thorn. And God.

May be making. The power of Christ. More beautiful. In your weakness. You may find yourself. With a dead brother. That Jesus.

[43 : 36] Could have healed. And God. May be preparing you. To show you. His glory. You may find yourself. Sold into slavery.

Accused falsely. Of. Sexual abuse. And forgotten. In a prison cell. And God. May be preparing you. To rule a nation.

And then. Piper. Says this. You may walk. Through famine. You may be driven. From your homeland. You may lose.

Your husband. And your sons. You may be left. Desolate. With one foreign. Daughter-in-law. And God. May be making you. The ancestor.

Of our king. And what a remarkable. Thought. That is for us. As we reflect upon. The life of Naomi.

[44 : 33] You may be here. Tonight. And the unfolding. Of providence. Is a mystery. To you. Because. So often.

When we are. Going through. Providence. That is difficult. For us. To discern. People. Meaning good. But nonetheless. May come alongside you. And say. From the words of.

Romans chapter 8. All things. Work together. For good. To them. Who are the called. Of God. To them. Who are the called. According to his purpose.

People can say that to us. So easy. To. Trip off the lips. All things. Work together. For good. To them. That love God. To them.

Who are the called. According to our purpose. To his purpose. But to quote the text. In that way. Is to misquote it. Because there's a world.

[45 : 30] Of a difference. In saying that. That. And then going back. To scripture. And repeating it. In the way. That the apostle. Wrote it.

Because that's not what he said. He said. We know. We know. That all things work together for good.

The things. Are not good. That's not what he says. The things are not good. Does no more say. That the things are good. But that they work together.

For good. In the unfolding. Purposes of God. Because he's doing. Ten thousand things. In our lives. And you and I. Know. Three of them. And what we take away.

From this passage. In conclusion. Is this. The diamonds. That I spoke about. At the beginning. And how they shine so brightly. Against the backdrop. Of the.

[46 : 29] Decline. And the disobedience. And the defiance. And the depression. And the death. That. Is through this.

And against that backdrop. The diamonds. Of God's faithfulness. How it reminds us. Of what we read. In the gospel of John.

None. None. Shall pluck them. Out of my hand. And to that. We add. Not even themselves. Because there are times.

When we feel. Because of our own. Spiritual declensions. And wonderings. That we have. Plucked ourselves. Out of that hand. But if this passage.

Teaches us. One thing. Whilst it. Teaches us. That sin separates. And sin has consequences. It reminds us.

[47 : 29] That the saints. Are held up. And they will persevere. And they will prevail. And so may. As we close our thoughts. On this.

Narrative. With which we are so familiar. May it work in us. The wisdom. To see. That on the morrow.

We begin our journey again. And the wisdom of. Having what is. Brought before us. In the book of Proverbs. Trust in the Lord.

With all thine heart. And lean not. Unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways. Acknowledge him. And sing praise.

To the diamonds of God. His wonderful attributes. As they shine so brightly. Against the dark. Background. Of our own lives.

[48 : 30] May he bless these thoughts. On his word. And we'll bow our heads. Eternal and. Sovereign father. In heaven. We do give thanks unto thee.

For the great truths. Of thy word. That bring out. Time and again. To us. The greatness. Of thy goodness. The wonderful.

Mercy. Loving kindness. That thou dost. Bestow upon us. And that with thy word. As our warrant. We can say that.

With all our unfitness. With all our unworthiness. With all our uncleanness. Thy word is our warrant. That we are not unwelcome. And we pray oh Lord. For the wisdom. In the journey of life. To cleave close to thee. In our earthly pilgrimage.

[49 : 30] And the praise shall be thine. Forever in Christ. Amen. We conclude at this time. Singing from Psalm 102. Psalm 102.

In the Scottish Psalter. The first version. From the beginning of the psalm. On page 364. Psalm 102.

From the beginning of the psalm. O Lord unto my prayer. Give ear. My cry let come to thee. And in the day of my distress. Hide not thy face from me.

Give ear to me. What time I call. To answer me. Make haste. For as on earth. My bones are burnt. My day is like smoke to waste. My heart within me smitten is.

And it is withered. Like very grass. So that I do forget. To eat my bread. By reason of my groaning voice. My bones cleave to my skin.

[50 : 40] Like pelican in wilderness. Forsaken. I have been. We'll sing these verses. To God's praise. From Psalm 102. From the Scottish Psalter. Page 364.

O Lord unto my prayer. Give ear. O Lord unto my prayer. O Lord unto my prayer.

Give ear. My cry. My cry. And in the day of my distress.

I knock thy face from me. Give ear to me.

What time I call. To answer me. Make haste.

[51 : 46] For as on heart. My bones are burnt. My days like smoke to waste.

My heart within me. Smitten is. And it is withered.

Like very grass. So that I do.

Forget to eat my bread. By reason of my groaning voice.

My bones cleave to my skin. Like pelican.

[52 : 57] God in wilderness. Forsaken I have been.

I bowing our heads. For a word of prayer. Sovereign and eternal Father. We do give thanks unto thee. For this thy day. For its blessings.

And for the desire. That thou hast infused into us. To draw near to thee. And to worship thy great. And high and holy name. And now Lord. As we take our leave. Of the house of worship.

We pray that we would do so. Filled with the fullness. Of the way. In which we began tonight.

Singing Lord thee my God. I'll early seek. My soul doth thirst for thee.

And may that seeking. And that thirst. Be the warp. And the weft of our lives. To thy praise. Honor and glory. Bless this place. And thy people within it. And hear us.

[53 : 56] And help us. Leave us not to ourselves. Furnish us with the wisdom. To cleave close. And the praise shall be thine. Forever in Christ. Amen.■■■■