

Turn Us Again!

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[0 : 0 0] Well good morning and welcome to our service this morning. We welcome you as we usually do in Barvis Free Church. We welcome you in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I'm glad you could join with us this morning as we come together around God's Word. It's safe to say that I never thought preaching would ever come to this but this is the Lord's providence for us. His ways are not our ways and his thoughts are always much wiser than our thoughts. And as you know the doors of God's house they're closed today but thankfully God's Word isn't closed to us today and that we have this wonderful privilege of coming around God's Word. And that's one thing I don't want us to forget that today is the Lord's Day. Today is the first day of a new week. It's the day of resurrection.

It's the day of renewal. It's the day on which our Lord Jesus Christ rose again from the dead triumphant over death and the grave. And as the psalmist reminds us this is the day that the Lord has made. So let us rejoice and be glad in it. But before we come to read God's Word I want to highlight just a couple of things to you. First of all that today the 22nd of March it is today that our moderator the Free Church of the Free Church of Scotland the Reverend Donny G Macdonald he has called today a national day of prayer. And our moderator he urges us all to pray in our homes throughout the day but particularly to come together this evening at 7pm to pray collectively for our nation. And then secondly the second thing I want to highlight to you is that the Western Isles Presbytery our own presbytery here in Lewis and in the Western Isles they've encouraged us to come aside and pray every Monday evening at 8pm. And I would encourage you to pray with us as we come to pray for our Prime Minister and his government that they would be given wisdom and direction in this time of crisis. Pray for our scientists as they seek a vaccine to this awful pandemic. Pray for our nurses and doctors and carers as they stand on the front line and care for those who are in need.

We are also to pray for our elderly and also those who are vulnerable as they fear what the future could hold for them. Friends I encourage you to pray with us as we pray for the homes and families of our community, our nation and in many ways our world. But most importantly pray that the Lord will turn us back to himself and that we will seek him in faith and in repentance. And that's what we're going to read about this morning from Psalm 80. And we're going to read to the prayer of Asaph who pleaded that the Lord would turn us again. So let's read the Word of God together. It's in the book of Psalms and Psalm 80. Let us hear God's Word. To the choir master, according to the lilies, a testimony of Asaph, a psalm.

Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come and save us. Restore us, O God.

Let your face shine that we may be saved. O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure.

[3 : 5 0] You make us an object of your contention for our neighbours and our enemies laugh among themselves. Restore us, O God of hosts. Let your face shine that we may be saved. You brought a vine out of Egypt.

You drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it and took deep root and filled the land. The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the river. Why then have you broken down its walls so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? The boar from the forest ravages it and all that move in the field feed on it. Turn again, O God of hosts. Look down from heaven and see. Have regard for this vine, the stalk that your right hand planted and for the sun whom you made strong for yourself.

They have burned it with fire. They have cut it down. May they perish at the rebuke of your face. But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself. Then we shall not turn back from you. Give us life and we will call upon your name. Restore us, O Lord God of hosts. Let your face shine that we may be saved. Amen. May the Lord bless that reading of his own holy word. Let's just come before the Lord in prayer.

Let us pray together. Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, in situations such as these, to whom else can we go?

[5 : 38] For thou alone hast the words of eternal life. May bless and praise thee today that we are able to call upon thy name. That thou art the God who is still sitting enthroned on high, where heaven is thy throne, and the earth is thy footstool. How the psalmist could say that the Lord doth reign, and clothed is he with majesty most bright, his works to show him clothed to be, and girt about with might.

The world is also established that it cannot depart. Thy throne is fixed of old, and thou from everlasting art. And Lord, help us, we pray, in this time of uncertainty and chaos and confusion. Help us to know that thou art the one who is still sitting enthroned on high, a God who is ruling over and over ruling in every and any situation in our lives. And Lord, help us then, we pray, to come in utter dependence upon thee, to trust knowing that thou art the God who is sovereign, the God who promises to work all things together for good, to those who love God, and to those who are the called according to his own purpose.

And Lord, we know that this is the Lord's way, as Lord, thy word reminds us that thy ways are not our ways, and thy thoughts are not our thoughts, but Lord, the Lord one who is doing all things well. Help us then, we pray, even as we come together in worship on the Lord's day. Help us, Lord, to know that the Lord one who is still with us, that how the psalmist could say that even though the earth gives way and the mountains be moved into the sea, and the seas foam and roar, that God remains our refuge and our strength.

[7 : 27] And an ever-present help, even in our times of trouble. O Lord, help us to know that the Lord of hosts is with us, and the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Remember us then, Lord, we pray. Remember us in our homes and in our families, in many ways confined to our homes now. But, Lord, we thank thee and we praise thee, that thou art a God who is not confined to walls made with hands, but one who is an ever-present help, a God who is able to meet us at our point of need, a God who is able to provide for us, in us and for us, exceedingly, abundantly, above all, more than we could ask or even think.

Bless us then, Lord, we pray. Remember us at this time. Remember our government. We pray for our Prime Minister. We pray for Boris Johnson. Remember, Lord, his government as well, and even his cabinet, Lord, that thou wouldst bless them.

Give to them wisdom, guidance. Give to them, Lord, the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. O Lord, protect them. Remember also, Lord, our nursing staff.

We pray for our doctors and nurses and carers. Lord, that thou wouldst remember them as they continue their work. And as things escalate in the weeks that lie ahead, Lord, we ask that thou wouldst protect them.

[8 : 49] Remember us, Lord. Remember others who have lost businesses, others who are worried about the future, others, Lord, who are seeing so much change around them. O Lord, help us, we pray, not to look to ourselves or to look even to one another, but to lift our eyes heavenward, to say with the psalmist that I to the hills will lift mine eyes.

From whence doth come my need? My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made. Thou art the one who promises, promises to keep our going out and our coming in, from this time forth and even forevermore.

Help us then, we pray, to lean upon thy promises, to stand upon the promises, to trust in the promises, to know that each and every promise that is given to us in thy word, it is yea and amen in Christ.

Lord, remember us then, we ask. Remember others that might be worried. We pray for the elderly and the vulnerable, those, Lord, who have health issues already and they're worried about this virus that's spreading.

Lord, protect us, we plead, and turn us to thyself. Oh, turn us away from our sin and turn us, Lord, to thee, to the living and through God.

[10:06] We confess, Lord, that we're not what we ought to be, even as a people and as a nation. We confess, Lord, that we don't turn to thee as we ought, but, Lord, we pray that these things, that and this providence in our experience, that it would bring us to our knees, that it would bring us to turn to the Lord, that we would turn to thee.

And thy word reminds us and says to us, look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. Oh, Lord, we ask that thou wouldst bless us, pity us, shine thy face upon us, that the earth, thy way, and nations all would know thy saving grace.

Lord, we give thanks to thee that even though thy church is closed today, we give thanks that we're able to open the word of God, that it is a living word, that it is that lamp unto our feet and the light unto our path, that thou wouldst continue to lead us even in the darkness, continue, Lord, to lead us to the rock that is higher than us, that we would keep trusting in him, this Saviour, who loved us and gave himself for us, that our eyes would be fixed upon Jesus, and that we would all know him and love him as the author and the finisher of our faith.

Lord, remember us then as homes and as families. Bless thy word as we consider it this morning, that we would know thy presence with us, that we would experience blessing, and that Christ would have all the preeminence, that thou, our great God, would have all the glory, and that we, Lord, would know that the Lord is with us and that he has not forsaken us.

Keep us then, we pray, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Well, with the Lord's help this morning, we're going to turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the book of Psalms, in Psalm 80.

[12:01] Psalm 80, and we're going to just read again from the beginning. We're going to consider most of the psalm, but we'll just read again from verse 1, where Asaph writes, Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us. Restore us, O God. Let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Let your face shine, that we may be saved. The world is shutting down.

The world is shutting down. That was one of the news headlines this past week. The world is shutting down. Because as you'll be well aware, there have been closures that have affected almost everyone in our nation.

Schools have closed. Colleges and universities have closed. Local councils are closing. Businesses have closed. Restaurants have closed. Cinemas have closed.

[13:11] Pubs have closed. And even today, the church has closed. The world is shutting down. And all the multi-million pound businesses of music and sport and entertainment, they've all been affected.

All their events have either been postponed or cancelled. My friend, the coronavirus has caused chaos and confusion in our world. And needless to say, with all that's going on, we live in uncertain times.

And we often say that we don't know what a day nor an hour will bring in our lives. But you know, as things stand, those words are fast becoming a reality.

Not only in our little corner of the Isle of Lewis, but all over the world. Because the world is shutting down. Everything as we know it is changing.

And it's changing rapidly. And our world that was once super fast and up to the minute, non-stop and 24-7, it's now grinding to a halt.

[14:16] And we're being made to live in the fear of this virus and what it might do to us. But you know, when we consider what we were like as a nation, only at the beginning of this year, many of us, I'm sure, thought that 2020 was going to be a great year of success and prosperity.

Because, well, Brexit had finally happened and as we were moving into this new chapter as a nation, we thought that we were going to go from strength to strength. And of course, when things are going well in our lives, we think that we don't need God.

Because, well, we know everything and we can cope with anything and we think that we have all the resources to deal with whatever we're confronted with. But you know, when all that we know to be safe and secure is plunged into chaos and confusion, we're made to realise that the governments, the economy, businesses, industries, commerce and even travel, all that once claimed to be made of gold, silver and bronze, is now being made to realise the reality that they're actually made of wood, hay and stubble.

And as you know, over the past number of days and weeks, we've received a lot of helpful advice from our government and from scientists and doctors and they've been telling us what to do in order to deal with this coronavirus.

virus. But you know, the one piece of evidence that we're not being given is to turn back to the Lord. Because the question which comes to my mind in the midst of all of this is, who is on their knees? [16:01] Who is on their knees? We're certainly being brought to our knees, but who is on their knees? Who is turning to the Lord in repentance? Who is seeking the Lord in the midst of all this chaos and confusion?

Who is looking at all this with an eternal perspective? Because that's what we need. We need an eternal perspective. We need to turn from our sin and turn to our saviour and shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you know, that's what Psalm 80 is all about. Because Psalm 80 is a prayer for the nation. Psalm 80 is a prayer for the nation. As we mentioned earlier, this year's moderator of the Free Church General Assembly, he's called today a national day of prayer.

And what Psalm 80 gives to us is a prayer for the nation. And what Asaph, the author of Psalm 80, what Asaph calls us to pray for our nation is that we will turn to the shepherd, turn from our sin and trust in the saviour.

And there are three headings this morning. Turn to our shepherd, turn from our sin and trust in our saviour. So we look first of all at the first heading, turn to our shepherd.

[17:24] Turn to our shepherd. Asaph begins Psalm 80 with the words, Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

You know, when Asaph, the chief worship leader of the Israelites, when Asaph called all of the Lord's people to pray for the nation, he did so not by pointing to the situation they were being faced with, but by pointing to the shepherd who is sovereign over every situation.

For, you know, when you read this psalm in its original text, Asaph begins this prayer for the nation by directing our focus first and foremost to the shepherd.

Because he doesn't actually say, Give ear, O shepherd of Israel. He says, O shepherd of Israel, Give ear. And there is a difference because Asaph's emphasis isn't upon the Lord listening to our prayer for the nation.

No, Asaph's emphasis is that the Lord who is the shepherd of Israel, he's praying that the Lord who is the shepherd of Israel will be a shepherd to the nation. Asaph is praying that the shepherd of Israel will be a shepherd to the nation.

[18:45] And he's praying that prayer because that's what the Lord promised to his people. He promised and covenanted that he would be a shepherd for his people. My friend, the Lord promised and covenanted that he would pastor his flock.

The Lord promised and covenanted that he would provide for his people. The Lord promised and covenanted that he would presence himself among his people and even give protection to his people.

The Lord promised and covenanted that when his people confess the Lord is my shepherd with David in Psalm 23 the Lord promised that he would go before his people he would go before his people into the green pastures he would go beside his people maybe even if they have to walk through the valley of the shadow of death and he would even follow behind his people with his goodness and his mercy that's the shepherd Asaph called the Lord's people to turn to in their time of national crisis and confusion and my friend it's the same shepherd the same shepherd that we need to turn to in our time of national crisis and confusion because our shepherd he hasn't changed and his covenant promises to us haven't changed he has remained and his promises have remained the same yesterday today and forever and the covenant promises of our shepherd is that despite the chaos and the confusion and the crisis in our nation he will never leave us and he will never forsake us he's the shepherd he's the shepherd who loved us and lay down his life for the sheep he's the shepherd who who says to us in his word fear not little flock he's the shepherd who affirms his promise that my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me he's the shepherd this good shepherd he says about his flock I give unto them eternal life and they will never perish neither shall they be plucked out of my hand my friend that's the shepherd that's the shepherd Asaph directed all of the Lord's people to turn to and to pray to for the nation in their time of chaos and confusion and you know my friend that's the shepherd we're being directed to turn to and pray to and pray to for our nation in its time of chaos and confusion we need to pray as Asaph

prayed oh shepherd of Israel hear us oh shepherd of Israel hear us and my friend we're being directed to turn to the shepherd of Israel because as Asaph affirms in verse one it's the Lord who leads Joseph like a flock and it's the Lord who dwells between the cherubim in other words it's the Lord the covenant king and shepherd who leads Joseph Joseph being the covenant people of God he leads them like a flock and it's the Lord the covenant king and shepherd who sits enthroned between the cherubim just like he sat enthroned between the cherubim above the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies my friend Asaph called all of the Lord's people to turn to their shepherd because he sits enthroned on high heaven is his throne the earth is his footstool and as Asaph says in the midst of all the chaos and confusion of the nation he says we need the Lord to shine forth we need the Lord to shine forth give ear oh shepherd of Israel you who lead Joseph like a flock you who are enthroned upon the cherubim shine forth then he says in verse three restore us oh God let your face shine that we may be saved my friend Asaph calls us to pray so that the Lord's face will shine upon our nation of course the Lord's face had been hidden from the nation because of their sin and their disobedience

and we'll consider that in a moment but in order for the Lord to shine his face upon the nation the nation needed to turn from their sin and turn to the shepherd and with these phrases that Asaph uses in verse one shine forth and then in verse three shine your face with these phrases Asaph is directing the Lord's people to pray for the Lord's blessing upon the nation because you know these expressions shine forth and shine your face these expressions they're drawn from the Aaronic blessing back in Numbers chapter 6 you remember there in Numbers chapter 6 that the children of Israel are standing on the banks of the river Jordan they're just about to cross over the river Jordan and Moses asks the high priest to bless the people to pronounce a benediction a prayer of blessing over the people and Aaron lifts his hands and he says the Lord bless you and keep you the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace and you know it's that same imagery of the Lord's blessing it's that same image image imagery that that's used in Psalm 67 when the psalmist prays for gospel blessing upon the nations

Lord bless and pity us shine on us with your face that the earth thy way and nations all may know thy saving grace my friend Asaph uses these phrases shine forth and shine your face in order to direct us to pray for the Lord's blessing to be upon our nation in the midst of chaos and confusion we're to turn to our shepherd because in our current spiritual climate it seems that the Lord has hidden his face from us and his presence and his protection and his promise of blessing it's nowhere to be seen that's why we're being urged and challenged in this global pandemic to turn to our shepherd we're to turn to our shepherd because if we turn to our shepherd we will ultimately turn from our sin and as a nation that's what we need to do we need to turn to our shepherd so that we'll turn from our sin and this is where Asaph leads us secondly he leads us to turn from our sin that's our second heading turn from our sin he says in verse four

[26 : 05] O Lord God of hosts how long will you be angry with your people's prayers you have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure you make us an object of contention for our neighbors and our enemies laugh among themselves restore us O God of hosts let your face shine that we may be saved now in these verses Asaph reminds the nation that in order to turn to our shepherd we must first of all turn from our sin as a nation we need to repent he says because that's what repentance is repentance is actively turning wholeheartedly turning from our sin and turning to our saviour and you know my friend in his day and generation Asaph was encouraging and even challenging the Lord's people to pray for national repentance he was calling for a national day of prayer so that the people of his nation would turn from their sin and turn to the shepherd and you know what's remarkable is that the nation knew that they had sinned against the Lord the nation knew that they had transgressed the laws of a holy God the nation knew that their God was angry with them and his judgment was coming that's why Asaph says in verse four

O Lord O God of hosts how long will you be angry with your people's prayers you have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure you know Asaph he acknowledges that the sin of the nation it has not made them go from strength to strength the sin of the nation has brought upon them sorrow upon sorrow and because the light of the Lord's face has been hidden and the blessing of the Lord has been withdrawn Asaph he calls all of the Lord's people to pray for the spirit of national repentance and that was because as a nation there was

division there was depravity and there was dedication to other idols as a nation there was division depravity and dedication to other gods there was division in the nation of Israel because after the death of King Solomon the nation divided into two kingdoms there was the kingdom of Israel in the north and there was the kingdom of Judah in the south and sadly when you consider the history of this divided nation of Israel you see that with every progressing generation they moved further and further and further away from the Lord and their division as a nation it became evident by their depravity of sin because as the generations passed the divided kingdoms they moved further and further away from the Lord and they forgot the Lord and in their depravity of sin they became more interested in themselves and in their own gain and in their own pursuits and their division it led to depravity which led to their dedication to other gods and you know what's fascinating is that the Lord who had created them and sustained them and provided for them he now wasn't good enough for them because these divided kingdoms and their depravity they turned away from the living and through God and they turned to all their idols and they worshipped these idols made of wood and stone instead of the God who had protected them and provided for their daily needs throughout every generation and you know for Asaph for Asaph as the worship leader in the temple do you know I'm sure that he would have witnessed the change in attendance for those gathering for worship

Asaph was appointed as worship leader during the reign of King David and he would have remained the worship leader under the rule of King Solomon and even when the temple was being built and he would have continued as the worship leader at the temple in Jerusalem after the kingdoms had divided Asaph would have lived through at least three generations and he would have witnessed the change in attendance of those gathering for worship on the Sabbath because with the nation divided the people moving towards more depravity and sin and being dedicated to their idols Asaph would have noticed that attendance at worship services would have been in decline and even though the Lord sent many prophets we see that throughout the Old Testament the Lord sent many prophets to foretell the coming judgment of the Lord and even to foretell the need to turn back to the Lord in repentance but even though the Lord sent prophet after prophet after prophet the people weren't listening they weren't paying attention they weren't taking heed to all these warnings and you know what the Lord did in response to the nation not listening he silenced the prophets and he sent the nation into a long dark period of exile and you know my friend we look at Asaph's day and we look at our own day and you know what we're left saying is there is nothing new under the sun there is nothing new under the sun because in Asaph's day there was division depravity of sin dedication to idols and attendance at worship services was in decline and our nation is no different because sadly the church of Jesus Christ in our nation it has been dividing for generations and division in the church it doesn't please the Lord but we've not only been dividing as a nation we've been sinking deeper and deeper into the depravity of our sin of course our nation calls it liberalism but the Lord calls it lawlessness our nation claims that it's a free nation but the Lord calls it confirms to us that we're in bondage to sin our nation thought it was going from strength to strength but our sin has only brought upon us sorrow upon sorrow my friend our division has led to our depravity and sin which has led to our dedication to our idols because as a nation just like the nation of Israel was the Lord who created us and the Lord who sustains us day by day and the Lord who has provided for us generation after generation he's now the Lord who seems to be not good enough for us and in our depravity we've turned away from the Lord and we've turned to our idols we've turned to our idols we're joined to our idols our idols of sport our idols of entertainment our idols of music our idols of money our idols of self our idols of health and fitness and work and having a good home and having lots of security now don't get me wrong there's nothing wrong with any of these when the Lord is God and when he's king over our lives and when he's first and foremost and when we seek him above everything else but when these things become our idol and they're what we put first and what we live for they don't cause us to go from strength to strength no they will ultimately bring upon us sorrow upon sorrow you know my friend

I hope and pray that with everything that's grinding to a halt and all the idols of our land that you see it they're all being removed from their perch they've been removed for a time and I hope and pray that people will see how empty their lives really are without the Lord do you know my unconverted friend I hope and pray that whatever idol you are clinging you were clinging to before this crisis I hope and pray that you're reminded of what Jesus said what shall it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world and lose his own soul you know the spiritual mess of our nation is just like it was in Asaph's day because there was division depravity of sin there was dedication to idols which led to a

decline in worship services and when the people refused to listen the Lord silenced his prophets because for the first time in history you know we've closed our doors to the public worship of God and the pulpits of our land are empty today and yes we're trying to make do with modern technology but the reality is our pews have been emptying for generations and they've been emptying because of division depravity of sin dedication to idols and it has all led to a decline in worship services and up until now our nation didn't see the need to worship the Lord our nation didn't see the importance of the Lord's day our nation didn't see that this is the first day of the week this is the day that the Lord has made this is the day that Jesus rose triumphant over death and the power of the grave but you know now that our nation is in shutdown and our land is in national crisis and being brought to its knees my friend

Asaph is reminding us that in order for the Lord to shine his face of blessing upon us we need to turn to our shepherd and we need to turn from our sin in faith and repentance because that's what was promised to those living in Asaph's day and generation you know before there was division and depravity of sin and dedication to idols and decline and worship before all that took place the Lord promised Solomon he said to Solomon in 2nd Chronicles chapter 7 when I shut up the heavens so that there's no rain or command locusts to devour the land or send pestilence among my people if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land and you know we often quote the second half of that verse in 2nd Chronicles 7 but the Lord promised Solomon that when there is no rain and when there's locusts and pestilence the Lord said to Solomon that's when the nation needs to realise that he's speaking to them and calling them to turn back to him in repentance and you know my friend when we look at all that's been going on in our world since the beginning of 2020 we've had no rain with all the fires in Australia we've had locusts devour parts of Africa and East Asia and we now have pestilence and if you look up the word pestilence in the dictionary it'll tell you that pestilence is a fatal epidemic disease and it's not what the coronavirus is it's pestilence it's a fatal epidemic disease my friend as the people were spoken to in Asaph's day and generation they were spoken to with no rain locusts and pestilence you know we need to remember the Lord is speaking to us he's speaking to us in our day and generation because all you know all the inhabited continents of our world have been affected and the Lord is speaking to us and the Lord is calling us to repent and the time for national repentance the time for turning to the shepherd and turning from our sin the time is now the time is now because as our

[38 : 45] Bible affirms to us now is the accepted time today is the day of salvation the time to turn to our shepherd and turn from our sin is now this is a national day of repentance we need this my friend my friend the Lord is calling us to turn to our shepherd to turn from our sin and ultimately to trust in our Saviour in fact that's what Asaph affirms to us as he concludes this wonderful psalm Asaph calls us to pray that as a nation we would turn to our shepherd turn from our sin and trust trust in our Saviour that's the last heading I want us to see this morning trust in our Saviour Asaph writes in verse 17 he says but let your hand be on the man of your right hand the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself then we shall not turn back from you give us life and we will call upon your name restore us

O Lord God of hosts let your face shine that we may be saved in verses 8 down to 16 Asaph draws our attention to what our Saviour does because he reminds us that the Lord is able to deliver our nation from bondage and slavery to sin just like he delivered the nation of Israel from bondage and slavery in Egypt Asaph says that the Lord took the nation of Israel out of Egypt and he planted them he planted them in the promised land and Asaph affirms to us that that's what our shepherd and saviour is able to do with our nation because he says when we turn to our shepherd and when we turn from our sin the Lord is able to deliver us from our bondage and slavery to sin and bring forth new life but Asaph not only draws our attention to what our saviour does he also affirms to us in these closing verses who our saviour is because Asaph he beautifully describes our saviour and shepherd he describes him in verse 17 as the man of your right hand and the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself and that phrase the man of your right hand it refers to a position of power and authority it's the position of a king where he's king of kings and lord of lords and is that not how

Jesus is described to us in the new testament because we're told there in Hebrews chapter 12 it was the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross despising its shame and he's now sat

down at the right hand of the throne of God our Jesus the man of God's right hand he has sat down because he has accomplished the work of redemption and he has been given all power and authority in heaven and on earth and today we have the assurance that despite all the chaos and the confusion and the crisis in our nation our covenant saviour and shepherd he promises to us he promises to us my friend that he's working all things together for good to those who love God and those who are called according to his purpose but you know what I find so beautiful about Asaph's description is that he's not only the man of God's right hand and he's not only a king of kings and the lord of lords but he's a man who can relate to us

Asaph describes him in verse 17 as the son of man the son of man and is that not how Jesus often described himself where he described himself as the son of man how often do you hear Jesus in the gospels referring to himself as the son of man Jesus said the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins Jesus said the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again but Jesus he also warned when the son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him then he will sit on his glorious throne and before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats and he will place the sheep on his right but the goats on his left and the son of man will say to those on his right come you blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world then he will say to those on his left depart from me you cursed into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and its angels my friend

Jesus is the son of man Jesus is the one of whom Asaph speaks here he's the one Asaph was looking to and in Psalm 80 in this beautiful Psalm Asaph is giving to us a prayer for our nation Asaph is calling us to pray for our nation in its chaos its confusion and its crisis and Asaph is urging us to turn to our shepherd to turn to him but in turning to him we're to turn from our sin we're to turn from our sin and trust in our saviour because he's a wonderful shepherd he's a wonderful saviour he's the son of man who can relate to us he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities this Jesus he's able to meet us at our point of need and the wonderful assurance that we have in these verses is that this Jesus he can give us life he can shine his face upon us he alone can save us that's why we need to look to this

[45 : 26] Jesus my friend that's why when the world is shutting down around us we need to trust our saviour we need to trust as Solomon himself said we need to trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean lot upon our own understanding but in all our ways to acknowledge him for he shall direct our paths oh my friend when the world is shutting down we need to pray for our nation we need to turn to our shepherd we need to turn from our sin and we need to trust in our saviour we need to trust in this Jesus who saves to the uttermost my friend today is a national day of prayer and so we need to pray with Asaph turn us again Lord God of hosts and upon us vouchsafed to make thy countenance to shine and so we shall be safe well may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh Lord our gracious

God that thou wouldst give to us that burden and that prayer that we might pray for our nation and plead for our neighbours plead for our homes and our families Lord we do not know what a day nor an hour will bring in our lives but we give thanks to thee that we are able to cast every care upon thee assured of the promise that thou art the one who cares for us Lord bless us then we pray that thou wouldst be pleased to shine thy face upon us as a nation a nation Lord that has turned away from thee a nation that is seeking its own way but Lord as we are all being ground to a halt Lord we ask that or that thou wouldst speak to us that thy spirit would work among us that he would move in our midst and in our nation and Lord that thou wouldst give to us even the prayer of Asaph turn us again Lord God of hosts and upon us vows save to make thy countenance to shine and so we shall be saved

Lord bless us then we pray keep us we ask and go before us for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake Amen Amen Thank you.