

Hanukkah

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. John chapter 10. So the Gospel according to John chapter 10.
- John chapter 10, and we read again at verse 22. At that time, the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem.
- It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, How long will you keep us in suspense?
- If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.
- At this time of year, with the winter upon us, and we're now in the month of December, so it's the run-up to Christmas and also a new year.
- [1 : 1 1] And as you know, there's a lot of excitement and there's a lot of enthusiasm because people are looking forward to the festive season. And at this time of year, as you know, families, they come together and there's lots of food and there's lots of fun for all the children.
- But of course, there's also the other side of the coin because although this time of year is happy for some, it's also a time of year that's heartbreaking for others.
- Because it's often at this time of year when families come together that they're reminded of the empty places and the empty spaces in their homes and in their family.
- And you know, we should always be mindful of that. That this time of year, it's happy for some, but heartbreaking for others. It's happy for some, but heartbreaking for others.
- And that's not only true throughout our island and our nation, but it's also true throughout the nations of the world. Because as you know, over the past couple of months, the eyes of the world have been focused upon one particular nation, the nation of Israel and the conflict in Gaza.
- [2 : 1 9] And I don't need to tell you the details, the gory details, because we've seen all the horrifying pictures and we've heard the harrowing stories of what's going on in the Middle East. But since the conflict began only two months ago, we're told that over 17,000 people have been killed.
- And like us with Christmas and this time of year, at this time of year, in December, the Jews, they also have a winter festival called Hanukkah, or as it is there in John 10, the Feast of Dedication.
- And for many Jews this year, for many Jews at this time of year, Hanukkah will be happy for some and heartbreaking for others.
- Hanukkah will be happy for some and heartbreaking for others. And you know, it's that Jewish winter festival, Hanukkah, or the Feast of Dedication.

That's what John is drawing our attention to here in this passage. But the thing is, John draws our attention to this winter festival, to Hanukkah, not so that we celebrate it, not so that we go out and celebrate this Jewish winter festival, the Feast of Dedication, but that we see that this Jewish festival, as with everything in the gospel, it points us to Jesus.

[3 : 39] So that we don't celebrate Hanukkah as Christians, we celebrate the Christ of Christmas and His coming into the world. And you know, in this passage, John highlights three things for us.

He tells us about the confusion of the Christ, and then the clarity from the Christ, and then there is commitment to the Christ. There's confusion, there's clarity given, and then there's commitment.

So first of all, we see the confusion. There was confusion about the Christ. There was confusion about the Christ, because we read there in verse 22. At that time, the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem.

It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, How long will you keep us in suspense?

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Now this year, the Jewish winter festival of Hanukkah, or the Feast of Dedication, it began last Thursday, Thursday the 7th of December.

[4 : 46] And Hanukkah, it's an eight-day festival that will continue until this Friday, Friday the 15th of December. And many people, they believe that Hanukkah is like a Jewish form of Christmas.

And they think it's a Jewish form of Christmas because Hanukkah begins on the year, or the month, the 25th of Kislev. That's what the Jews call it, the 25th of Kislev, which is, as you know, it's very similar to Christmas, which is the 25th of December.

More than that, during Hanukkah, this Feast of Dedication, like Christmas, families come together, they have a big meal, they exchange gifts, and they play games, which is so like Christmas.

So you can see why people link Hanukkah and Christmas, or they see that they're very similar. But what's interesting is that Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, it actually began long before Christmas.

Long before Jesus Christ was born in a stable in Bethlehem. Because Hanukkah celebrates an event which took place 164 years before Christ was born.

[5 : 57] So 164 BC. And at that time, in 164 BC, the Jews, the Lord's people, they thought that the Lord had abandoned them completely.

Because there had been no prophetic word or message from the Lord since the time of Malachi, which was 400 BC. And there was going to be no prophetic message until the birth of Jesus, which was AD.

And so there's this 400-year period where the Lord is silent. And because of this, the Jews thought that the Lord had completely abandoned them and left them. Especially because at that time, the Jews, they didn't own their own land at the time.

They were under the power and persecution of a Syrian king. A Syrian king called Antioch... I can't even pronounce his name. Antiochis IV.

What was worse was that King Antiochis... I'm probably not pronouncing it right. But he had defiled the temple in Jerusalem. And he commanded the Jews not only that they weren't to read their Bible, the Torah, but they weren't allowed to worship the Lord at all.

[7 : 08] So they were under the power and persecution of this foreign king, a Syrian king. And because they were under his persecution, they were being forced to worship all the Syrian idols.

But in December, December of 164 BC, this small band of pious Jews called the Maccabees...

Maybe you've heard of them. Maybe you've read the book, The Maccabees. There's two books of the Maccabees. And they led this revolt in Jerusalem against the Syrian army. And the Maccabees, they succeeded in driving the Syrian army out of Jerusalem and away from Israel.

And they took over the city again. And after the victory, the first thing the Maccabees did... What do you think the first thing was? They went straight into the temple. They cleansed the temple.

And they rededicated the temple to the Lord. Their priority was worship. Their priority was serving the Lord. And when it came to rededicating the temple and also relighting the menorah, which was like a candelabra, which you've seen them before.

[8 : 16] It's a golden lampstand that was in the temple. So when it came to relighting this menorah in the temple, the Maccabees only found one small jar of oil.

It was a jar of oil enough for one day. But what's remarkable is that that small jar of oil, it didn't last one day or two days.

It lasted eight days until a new supply of oil could be brought. And the fact that the light of the menorah burned for eight days, it always reminded the Jews that even though the Lord was silent, the Lord was still with them.

The fact that the candelabra, the menorah, was lit for eight days, it reminded them that even though the Lord was silent, the Lord was still with them.

And ever since that day in December, the Jews have celebrated the Feast of Dedication, where they rededicated the temple to the Lord. The Feast of Dedication, or Chanukah, which is the Hebrew word for dedication.

[9 : 25] Chanukah. And so every December, Jews, they celebrate this eight-day feast, and they do so by lighting a candle each night on a small candelabra in their house.

Or it was a menorah, a little Chanukah, that's what they're called. But what's also interesting, especially in relation to Jesus and to Christmas, since that day in December and the first Feast of Dedication, 164 BC, since that day in December, 164 BC, since the first Feast of Chanukah, the Jews believed by seeing the lampstand full of light, they believed that that was the advent.

It was a pointer to the advent of Christ, and the arrival of Christ, and the coming of this King. They thought it's imminent, it's on its way, He's coming soon.

And that's the very reason John highlights this feast for us in his Gospel. Because John, he's already told us in his Gospel, as you read through John's Gospel, John has already told us that Jesus is the true light which is coming into the world.

And John has already told us, even back in chapter 8, he's told us that Jesus has declared to everyone that He is the light of the world, and that whoever follows Him will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

[10 : 50] But even with the arrival and the advent of the Christ, even the fact that Jesus is there, there's still confusion. There's still confusion about the Christ.

Which is why when the Jews see Jesus in the temple during the Feast of Dedication, walking in Solomon's colonnade, the first thing the Jews do is they corner Jesus, and they challenge Him.

And they say there in verse 24, how long are you going to keep us in suspense? How long are you going to make us doubt? If you are the Christ, just tell us plainly.

If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. And you know, I love their question. I love the question they ask.

Because when you read their question there in verse 24, when you read it literally, they are asking Jesus, how long are you going to let our souls bother us?

[11 : 54] How long are you going to let our souls bother us? And you know, my unconverted friend, I wonder, does your soul bother you?

Does your soul ever bother you? Do you ever think about your soul? Do you ever think about your eternal well-being? Does your soul bother you?

Do you have a care and a concern for your soul? It won't be news to you for me to say that I have a care and a concern for your soul. But do you have a care and a concern for your soul?

Here's the Jews, they're asking, how long are you going to keep us in suspense, Jesus? How long are you going to make us doubt? How long are you going to let our souls bother us? If you are the Christ, just tell us plainly.

If you're the Christ, give us confidence. Give us assurance that you are the Christ, the one we've been waiting for. The one whom we're looking to, even during this feast of dedication.

[12 : 58] Don't let us go on wondering who you are. If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. But you know, this confusion about the Christ, it was nothing new. It was nothing new.

You see that even in the previous verses. They're talking about him being a demon. And if you go further back in the ministry of Jesus, you'll see that public opinion was always divided over the identity of Jesus.

Some said that he was John the Baptist. Others said he was Elijah. Some said he was Jeremiah. Some said he was one of the prophets. Do you remember what Jesus asked when he was with his disciples?

And he asked that powerful and personal question to his disciples to work out who they thought he was. Jesus asked them, just like he asks all of us, who do you say that I am?

Who do you say that I am? And you remember Peter. Peter, with Peter, there was no confusion about the Christ because in that moment, Peter steps forward and he confesses openly and publicly, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

[14 : 08] He knew who Jesus was. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. But you know, for many of you here this morning, in fact, for all of you here this morning, I know that you're not confused about the Christ.

You're not confused because you know who Jesus is. You know he's the Son of God. You know he's the Savior of sinners.

You know that he came into the world to die upon a cross to take away our sins. You know that he rose again on the third day. You know that he ascended up into heaven. He's at the right hand of the Father.

You know, as we were saying to the children, he's going to come again at the last day. You're not confused about the Christ. You've heard all about the Christ all your life.

And yet, for some of you, your soul doesn't bother you. Your soul doesn't bother you. And I often wonder to myself, well, why doesn't your soul bother you?

[15 : 16] Well, you've got all that you need, don't you? You've got all that you need at the moment. You're comfortable. You're casual. So you're casual about your commitment to Christ. You've got all that you need.

You don't need him yet. Maybe you thought, by now, at the stage and age that you're at in your life, maybe you thought that you would be a Christian by now.

Maybe you thought that you would be following the Lord openly and publicly. But you're not. Why are you not? Are you too casual? Too comfortable in your commitment to Jesus Christ?

And now, here we are in December. Another year is almost over. You're also another year older. And you've still not taken that step of commitment to Christ. Still not. Still sitting where you've been sitting for years.

You're not too late. Because whilst you're on mercy's ground, you're never too late. But is your soul bothering you? You know, if your soul is bothering you, is it not about time that it bothered you enough to do something about it?

[16 : 29] If your soul is bothering you, is it not about time that you bothered doing something about it? Because, you know, even though you don't have confusion about the Christ, maybe what you do need is clarity from the Christ.

You need clarity from this man, from Jesus. That's what we see secondly. Clarity from the Christ. So there was confusion about the Christ. But then secondly, clarity from the Christ.

Look at verse 24. So the Jews gathered around him and said to Jesus, How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you and you do not believe.

The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me. But you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

Now the real reason as to why the Jews cornered Jesus in Solomon's colonnade wasn't because their soul was actually bothering them. They wanted clarity.

[17 : 35] They wanted clarity that Jesus was the Christ. In fact, they wanted more than clarity. They wanted a confession that Jesus was the Christ. They wanted a confession.

They wanted Jesus to say, Yes, I am the Christ. So they could put him to death. But you know, the great irony was that the Jews had come to the temple for Hanukkah, for the Feast of Dedication.

And they had come to the temple as all the Jews came to the temple at that time of year. They came with this promise of Advent, the promise that the Messiah was coming, the arrival of the King.

And they were already thinking about, you could say, they were thinking about the reason for the season. But when they came face to face with the one who is the reason for the season, they passed him by.

When they came face to face with the reason for the season, they passed him by. You could even say that these Jews, when they came to church with their religious front and their facade to show face at the feast, they missed the purpose.

[18 : 42] They missed the point. And they missed the portion of the whole feast. They missed the purpose, the point, and the portion of the whole feast. And, you know, it's safe to say that nothing has changed.

Nothing changes with time. We're still the same human beings. Because is it not the case, my friend, that for some of you, anyway, you come to church, you show face at church, you appear and attend at church, and maybe you come with your religious front and facade, making sure everybody sees I'm here today, and you come face to face with Christ in the gospel.

And he speaks to you so plainly, so clearly, sometimes so directly, and you let him pass you by. And even during the festive season, this season of Christmas, we all hear about the reason for the season.

And as the children were being reminded, the reason for the season is, of course, Jesus. So you hear all about the fact that Jesus is the reason for the season because he's the one who came into the world to seek and to save the lost.

But the thing is, you need clarity about this, Jesus. That's why Jesus said in verse 25, he says there, I told you, and you do not believe.

[20 : 09] The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. Jesus says there, I told you, but you do not believe.

You've heard all this before, but you do not believe. And the thing is, Jesus, he had told them, Jesus has told you all this before. He's told you that he's the Son of God and the only Savior of sinners.

He's told you, he has told you already that he's humbled himself from the crown of glory down to the cradle in Bethlehem, all the way down to the cruel cross of Calvary. Jesus has told you about the kingdom of God, that unless you're born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus has told you that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, and that you need to repent. You need to believe in the gospel. He has told you time and time again that he's the way, he is the truth, he is the life.

No one comes to the Father except through him, and that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life. Jesus has told you all this. That's why he says there, the works I told you and you do not believe.

[21 : 23] I've told you all this before, but you do not believe. Then he goes on to say, the works that I do in my Father's name, they all bear witness about me. Making the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, calming storms, feeding thousands.

The works that I do in my Father's name, they all bear witness about me. I've told you, but you do not believe. I have told you, but you do not believe.

But why don't you believe? That's what Jesus is asking. Why don't you believe? And then he says, you do not believe because you're not part of my flock.

You are not among my sheep. You do not believe because simply you still haven't confessed the Lord as your shepherd.

And you know, Jesus is saying to us so plainly, you need to be part of his flock. You need to be a sheep of the good shepherd. You need to commit to Christ.

[22 : 34] You need to confess the Lord as my shepherd. You need commitment to Christ, which is what I want us to see lastly. You need commitment to Christ.

So there was confusion about the Christ. How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. There was clarity from the Christ that he says, I told you and you do not believe.

But then lastly, there's the call for commitment. Commitment to the Christ. Commitment because Jesus says there in verse 27, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

I give to them eternal life and they will never perish and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

I and the Father are one. You know, as the festive season of Hanukkah got underway here in John chapter 10, Jesus emphasized and explained the need for commitment to the Christ by following the good shepherd.

[23 : 48] Now, as you know, the metaphor for the sheep and the shepherd, it follows on from what Jesus said earlier in John chapter 10, where Jesus said, we read it earlier in John 11, John 10, verse 11, I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

And then again in verse 14, I am the good shepherd, I know my own and my own know me. And what Jesus is emphasizing, what Jesus is explaining is that he alone is the shepherd of the flock.

And as the shepherd of the flock, he's unlike any other shepherd. He's not like the hired hand who sees the wolf coming and flees. No, Jesus, he's a unique shepherd.

He's the good shepherd. If you want to know how good the good shepherd is, Jesus says, I'm the good shepherd. I'm the good shepherd that lays down his life for the sheep.

There's no other shepherd like this shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. That's how good the good shepherd is. But as Jesus emphasizes and as Jesus explains here, being part of his flock, it's not something you're born into.

[24 : 58] Being part of his flock, it's not something you earn. Being part of his flock is not something you work towards, hoping that you'll be there at the end of the day.

Being part of his flock is not about having a front or a facade of religion. No, it's about having a personal relationship with the good shepherd.

Something our presenter prays for you as a congregation, I hope he doesn't mind me saying this, every time Ivan prays, he prays that we will have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

That's what we need. That's what Jesus is telling us we need to have, a personal relationship with a good shepherd. That's what we need. That's why Jesus says, verse 27, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

It's all personal pronouns because it's a personal relationship. And as you know, the wonderful thing about a personal relationship is that there's commitment.

[26 : 06] There's commitment from both parties. If you're married, you have a personal relationship with your husband or your wife. You have a personal relationship with different people in life.

There's commitment from both parties. Because when you commit your life to Jesus Christ, the wonderful thing is he commits his life to you. When you commit your life to Jesus Christ, he commits his life to you.

And you know, I think that what Jesus says here, there's some of the most beautiful words in the gospel. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

And I give to them eternal life and they will never perish. And no one, no one will snatch them out of my hand. My friend, when we make a commitment to Jesus Christ, when we listen to the Lord, when we take that step of faith, when we follow this good shepherd, Jesus lovingly claims us.

And he lovingly confesses about us as his sheep. He says, my sheep are purchased. My sheep are purchased, he says.

[27 : 15] They're my sheep. They're my sheep. If you have sheep of your own at home or if you have cows, you're the only one who can say that they're my sheep.

Because you bought them. You paid for them. That's what Jesus says here. They're my sheep. He's the good shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

He's the good shepherd who went to the auction mart of Calvary not only to bid for you but also to buy you back. And he bought you not with corruptible things, says the Bible, not with silver or gold, but with his own precious blood.

My friend, Jesus says about his sheep, my sheep are purchased. More than that, I love these verses because they say, Jesus is saying here, my sheep are protected. My sheep are protected.

They hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. So they hear my voice and I hear their voice. There's a relationship there.

[28 : 15] My sheep hear my voice and I know them. I know their voice. I know all about them and they follow me. And you know, confessing Jesus as your shepherd, committing your life to him, that's when you have this personal relationship with him as this good shepherd because you'll not only respond to his voice as he invites you to come and follow him as the good shepherd.

You'll also respond to his voice as he instructs you in his word. And you know, the thing about the instruction that Jesus gives us, it's never to harm us, always to help us.

Never to harm, always to help. It's for our good. It's for our protection. It's for our safety. That's why Jesus says, my sheep are purchased.

My sheep are privileged. My sheep are protected. And then he says, lastly, my sheep are privileged. How privileged are you as a sheep of the good shepherd?

Well, Jesus tells you, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. You're privileged. I give to them eternal life. They will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.

[29 : 34] My friend, when you have a personal relationship with the good shepherd, you know that you're purchased. You know that you're protected. And you know that you're privileged.

And you know more and more as you go on as a sheep of the shepherd, you deserve none of it. But you're so thankful for it. Thankful that you're purchased.

Thankful that you're protected. Thankful that you're privileged. All because of Jesus. And your privilege, as Jesus says here, it's the gift of eternal life. It's the promise that you'll never perish.

Your privilege is that nothing and absolutely no one is able to pluck you out of the hand of this good shepherd. You're safe in the hands of Jesus.

Your privilege is that nothing and no one is able to separate you from this good shepherd. That's what Paul was so excited about towards the end of Romans 8.

[30 : 33] He says, I am persuaded. I'm so privileged that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature is able to separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Nothing's able to separate me from my good shepherd. My friend, your privilege is that when you are committed to this good shepherd, this good shepherd is committed to you.

And you might feel even today as a Christian, I don't feel as committed as I should be. And you might say, oh, I'm only 70% committed. But the amazing thing about this good shepherd is he's 100% committed every single day.

That's your privilege. That when you're committed to this good shepherd, he is committed to you. And as you know, that's what David discovered in Psalm 23.

The shepherd's psalm of Psalm 23. David committed his life to the good shepherd and he confesses, the Lord's my shepherd. And when David confessed, the Lord is my shepherd, what did he discover?

[31 : 44] He discovered the good shepherd was one who was committed to leading him. Leading him into green pastures and besides still waters. More than that, the good shepherd was committed to being with him.

When death broke into his home and into his family, when he lost his son, Absalom, David had the commitment of the shepherd walking beside him even though he walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

And he also had the good shepherd committed to following behind him. All the days of his life, that goodness, that mercy of the shepherd always there, always following behind him until at last he would be in God's house forevermore.

That's how good the good shepherd is. He's a personal shepherd who promises that when we confess him and commit our lives to him, he commits himself to us.

And he says, my sheep are purchased, my sheep are protected, my sheep are privileged. That's what Jesus thinks of his sheep. So the question is, do you believe him?

[32 : 56] Because as Jesus said in the previous verse, I told you and you do not believe. The works that I do in my father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you're not among my sheep.

Are you among his sheep? Are you one of the sheep of the good shepherd? Have you come to confess this good shepherd as your shepherd?

And you know, as we conclude this morning, I just want to ask you very simply, how are you going to respond to Jesus? How do you respond to Jesus?

You have to respond to him. We know from verse 31 that the Jews responded to Jesus by wanting to stone him. They wanted to stone Jesus after all that he had just said.

What do you want to do with Jesus after all he has just said to you? Because you know, in this passage, John is drawing our attention to this winter festival of Hanukkah, the feast of dedication, and he wants us to see that it all points to the real reason for the season.

[34 : 11] It all points to Jesus, this Christ of Christmas and his advent, his arrival into the world to save sinners, to bring lost sheep into his fold.

And you know, I hope and pray that our souls bother us enough today, our souls bother us enough that we will commit our lives to this Christ, that we will commit our lives to this shepherd, and that we will claim and confess this shepherd by simply saying with David in Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd.

He is my shepherd. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Word, and we give thanks that Jesus speaks to us so plainly in it.

And Lord, we thank Thee that Jesus is one who tells us plainly that He is the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep, and that those who come to follow this shepherd, that Jesus claims and confesses about them that my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

O Lord, bless Thy truth to us, we pray. Help us, we ask, to not be standing back from the shepherd, but to step forward and be counted as one of His own, to be claimed as the sheep of this Good Shepherd, the one who laid down His life for us.

[35 : 56] Bless us, Lord, together we pray. Bless Thy Word to us that we truly find lodgment in our heart and that our souls ultimately would belong to Thee. Keep us then, we pray, go before us, take away our iniquity, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing that shepherd's psalm, Psalm 23. Psalm 23, page 229 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 23, we're singing the whole psalm. This is His commitment. You commit yourself to the shepherd, this is what He commits to you.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, so you'll never lack. He makes me down to lie, in pastures green He leadeth me, the quiet waters by, my soul He doth restore again, and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, e'en for His own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear none ill, for Thou art with me and Thy rod, and staff me comfort still. And on down to the end of the psalm, where there's that wonderful promise, goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

[37 : 27] The whole psalm to God's praise. The Lord, my shepherd, I am not one.

He makes me down to lie, in pastures green He leadeth me, the quiet waters by, my soul He doth restore again, and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, in for His own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's our will, yet will I fear none ill, for Thou art with me and Thy rod, and staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished in presence of my foes, my head Thou dost with oil anoint, and Thy cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy of my life shall surely follow me, and it goes forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

[40 : 56] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.