

The Rejection of God's Word - Rev. Mark Macleod

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[0 : 00] Well, you can maybe turn back to Jeremiah and chapter 37-38, that section that we read a few moments ago.

! It's been the case throughout history, and it's certainly the case today as well. If you articulate maybe certain biblical truths, it can get you in a lot of trouble.

Just merely articulating a biblical truth can get you in trouble. It can turn people against you sometimes. In the more sort of extreme cases, it can even result in people losing jobs, and we've seen that in the past.

There's a sense in which articulating some of the truths of the Word of God can even, in some cases, disqualify someone from a kind of role of leadership and a kind of public-facing role in politics or something like that.

Again, that's something we've seen in the last number of years as well. But then as you keep on going to the extreme end of these things, sometimes the more extreme you get, when you actually articulate the truths of the Word of God, you can find yourself actually being attacked.

[1 : 33] And that's the case in some countries. You're physically attacked, physically persecuted, and even put to death and murdered as well. And again, that is not just something that's unique to our day. That's even not just something that's unique to recent history.

That has always been true. And since the very time of the prophets themselves, as we're reading there in Jeremiah 37 and 38, for all time, people have sought to silence the Word of God and sought to silence the messengers of the Word of God as well.

And I wanted to think about that theme really today as we take a few moments to think really about the life of one of the more famous of the Old Testament prophets, prophets, this prophet here that we have a reasonably large book with his name on it, and that is this prophet Jeremiah.

And I know we've read from chapter 37 and 38 there, but really what I want to do is almost do a biography of his life, or not so much a biography, but just to think about aspects of his life, because we're given some narrative within the prophecy.

You don't always get a lot of narrative within prophecies. It's usually just the prophetic word itself, obviously. But there is narrative in it. And what I wanted to do was really gather together what we can glean from the narrative and think about the life of Jeremiah, you know, the different stages of his life.

[3 : 08] And then to see the parallels between that and between what he was going through early on, later on as well, and how we can relate that to ourselves. And also, not just the parallels between Jeremiah and us, but as I mentioned in prayer, also the parallels between Jeremiah and Christ. Because, you know, whenever you come across these Old Testament passages, you should always be asking, you know, where's Christ here? In what way does this point me forward to the Lord Jesus Christ?

Because he's the ultimate prophet. He's the prophet himself. So, we'll do some of those things as we look into the life of Jeremiah.

So, what do we know about Jeremiah? Well, at the very beginning of the book of Jeremiah, so in chapter 1, we actually find out that Jeremiah's called to the work of prophecy at a very young age. He's very young when he's actually called to this role. So, we read this in chapter 1, verse 5. Before, and this is the Lord speaking, Before I formed you to Jeremiah, before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

And before you were born, I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations. And then Jeremiah says, Ah, Lord God, behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.

[4 : 30] So, we see there from the beginning, he was a very young man, when he actually is called to this role, and when he actually begins to speak the words of the Lord. And clearly, he's worried about that. He's worried because of the fact that he's young.

He's worried about whether he can be a spokesperson, an effective spokesperson for God. And God is effectively saying to him, you know, don't worry about that. You know, I'll be with you. I'm calling you to this work, and I'm doing so, yes, at a young age.

I'm calling you to this work, and I will be with you. So, he's very young when he starts. And Jeremiah, he's prophesying during a difficult time in Judah. I mean, you could argue it was always a difficult time in the time of the prophets, I suppose.

But this is a really turbulent time for Judah. It's in the lead up to the Babylonians or the Chaldeans, basically the same name for different groups.

The Babylonians are besieging the city, and eventually they're going to conquer the city and destroy the city as well. So, politically, all of that's in the background.

[5 : 37] So, that's a major thing. Politically, there's all sorts going on around the land and around Judah. And then, spiritually, also, things aren't very good. All sorts of immorality, all sorts of idolatry going on as well.

So, in terms of the political sphere of things, what's going on, and the spiritual sphere as well, it's problematic. There's lots of difficulties in the life of the Lord's people here.

And that's the setting. That's the kind of context that Jeremiah is speaking into. And you have to remember the role of the prophet, in one way, it's easy, so easy.

You just say what God says. In a sense, that's the easiest thing ever. God tells you to say something, and then you just say it.

Now, of course, the reality is obviously very different. But, in essence, that's the job of a prophet. Just be the mouthpiece of the Lord. And actually, although we don't have prophets nowadays, there is a sense in which the preaching of the word is the same.

[6 : 39] The job of the preaching of the word is to just expound what it is that the Bible says. It's not to put our own personal interpretation and to twist things here and there to make it say what we want to say.

The job of the preacher of the word is just say what it is that God is saying in the Bible. So, in that sense, preaching, again, ought to be a straightforward thing.

You're just explaining what it is that's in the text. And that's Jeremiah's job. Tell the people what it is that God is saying to him. And that was very important in this particular day because you have to remember, and we sometimes lose sight of this, but you have to remember they don't have a full canon of Scripture.

They don't have, you all have Bibles in front of you. They don't have a Bible with all the books that we have before us now. Now, yes, there was obviously access to certain books and scrolls, but they did not have the completed canon of Scripture.

They did not have what we have today. So, that means because of that, the job of the prophet, the role of the prophet was going to be very, very important, hugely important.

[7 : 52] What the prophet said was essentially, well, not essentially, it was the word of God. So, that's how important the job of the prophet was. And Jeremiah's main message, if you've ever read through the whole book, you know, it's a good thing to do, by the way, just to sit down and read through whole books.

I know we're in the habit of doing chapter here, chapter there, but see, sometimes it's helpful just to sit down and read a whole book. And with the prophecies, I think it can be quite good to do that. And when you do that, you see that Jeremiah's main theme, the main message that comes across is warning.

And it's warning people, really, of impending judgment because of their sin, because of their immorality, because of their idolatry as well. And what he's doing is he's urging them to repent. He's preaching this message of judgment, urging them to repent, urging them to return to the law of God as their standard, to urge them not to live the way in which pleases them their own fleshly desires, but rather to live the way that God calls them to live.

And that's the main essence of the message. It was warning, you know, definitely warning there.

But it wasn't just that. It wasn't all sort of doom and gloom and the negative side of things. There was also, he spoke about hope and the future restoration and speak about the love of God and the

mercy of God.

[9:09] So, you know, these things are absolutely there as well. But it definitely was predominantly this message of warning, this alarm that he's sounding. And early on in the ministry of Jeremiah, it was very obvious that this message that he was giving, which is ultimately from God, it's not his own message, that this message that he was delivering was really being rejected.

And that's the first of three short points that I want to look at. First point is the truth of God's word rejected. The truth of God's word rejected.

See, the thing is, the people did not want to hear the truths that Jeremiah is actually telling them. Those words were an offense, an offense.

They did not want to hear it. They did not want to hear it. And I suspect that for many of us in here, we know what that's like ourselves as well, this idea of rejecting the truth of God's word.

Now, everyone's journey to faith is different. That's true. And I suspect that there's probably some Christians in here who can never remember a time when they ever rejected the word of God.

[10:17] And that's a tremendous blessing when that is the case, when you've never rejected the word of God. But I know as well that there'll be some, the Lord's people, myself included as well, who can remember a time when we did just that.

We rejected the word of God. And if the word of God came to us, and if it sort of pricked our conscience, if it kind of offended us in some way, or maybe if it just convicted you of your sin, you maybe remember a time when you thought, just kind of push that thought away.

I don't want to hear this. I don't want these thoughts to be in my head at all. You didn't want to hear the truth. In a way, you knew it was the truth. You knew it was the truth. And that's why it clicked your conscience, but you didn't want to hear it.

It's like you're just batting that thought away. It was an uncomfortable truth. Just rejecting the truth altogether. And maybe for some of us in here, maybe, perhaps even it's not just that that used to be the case, maybe for some of us that's actually still the case.

Maybe there are certain truths in the word of God and you don't want to hear it. And the reason you don't want to hear it maybe is because it's close to home. Or maybe you don't want to hear the word of God because it reminds you that you're lost and you don't want to hear that side of it.

[11:25] I don't want to be reminded that I'm lost, that without Christ I'm heading for a lost eternity. I don't want to hear that because Scripture very clearly teaches about judgment. It speaks about a judgment coming if we reject the Lord Jesus Christ.

And people don't like to hear that. People don't want to hear things like that, things about judgment and these kind of warnings that people are given. Even though the reason these warnings that are in these prophecies are so that you'll come and receive salvation, the warnings aren't there to scare people and to offend people.

They're there to draw you in and so that you'll lay hold of the salvation in Christ that's available. But nevertheless, even though it's for a good reason the warning is there, people don't want to hear it. People do not want to hear these warnings.

They don't want to hear anything about judgment. And here in Jeremiah's day, they did not like the truth. They did not like the truth of God's word. And sometimes that's the thing about the truth.

Sometimes the truth is hard. It's, in fact, very often the truth can be hard and they didn't want to hear it. So, early on in Jeremiah's ministry, they turn against him.

[12:33] So, when he's very young, they turn against him. And they actually plotted against him almost to do him harm in the early days. And even his own family are involved in this. So, in Jeremiah chapter 12 and verse 6, we read this, For even your brothers in the house of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you.

They are in full cry after you. So, the sad thing is, even members of his own family are actually turning on him and wanting to silence him and stop him speaking in this way.

And at that point, you're starting to see perhaps some of the links between Jeremiah and Christ. Because remember, as I said, Christ, he is the ultimate prophet, the voice of God.

He is one who comes through that message of hope. He's the one that comes through that message of salvation as well. But we know how that went down with a lot of people. It offended a lot of people.

And what was the response they seek to? To silence him. They turn against him big time. And even his own family. So, just like with Jeremiah, his own brothers turning against him. We know that in

the life of Christ, same thing happens.

[13:37] His own family, his own brothers start to turn against him. So, you begin, even kind of early on in the life of Jeremiah there, you start to see some similarities there between Jeremiah and between the Lord Jesus Christ as well.

But that initial rejection that you see early on when he's young, that's going to get much worse later on. And we will come to that in a moment. But I want to look at our second point now.

So, the first point is just the truth of God being rejected. You see that at the very beginning of his life. The truth of what he's saying, it's been rejected. People don't want to hear it. But the second point that I want to think about is the people's desire for lies.

So, they're rejecting the truth. Rejecting the truth. And now their desire for lies. So, we've seen them rejecting what it is that Jeremiah has been saying.

They don't like to hear that they're living in a wrong way. People don't like to hear that. People don't like to hear those kind of words. They don't want to hear about the law of God. They don't want to hear about righteousness.

[14:41] They don't want to hear that stuff. And they certainly, as I said there, they don't want to hear about judgment. They don't want to hear anything about this idea of judgment coming. And in this context, the very specific judgment that was coming was to do with the Babylonian army.

So, that was the judgment that was before them. The Babylonians were going to come. That was a judgment. The Babylonians were going to come. And Jerusalem was going to fall to the Babylonians. And you get a flavor of that.

Even the section that we read in chapter 37 and 38. They don't want to hear that. They don't want to hear that. And what they wanted was they wanted false prophets to rise up and lie to them.

That's effectively what they wanted. They wanted false prophets to rise up and tell them that everything was fine. Don't want to hear the truth. So, rather, false prophets rising up telling us everything is going to be fine.

That's what we want. And that's what they got. They got what they wanted. So, false prophets did rise up. And false prophets did tell them, Okay, Babylonians are no problem. Everything is going to be fine. And the Lord speaks of these false prophets back in Jeremiah chapter 6 and verse 14.

[15:47] And he says that these false prophets, They have healed the wound of my people lightly, Saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace. So, these false prophets, they're going around lying.

That's what the people wanted. They're going around saying, peace, peace, everything's going to be fine. When there was a lie. It was an absolute lie. I mean, it was a lie that made the people feel better.

It's a lie that they wanted to hear. It's a lie that perhaps made them feel a little bit more comfortable. But it was a lie. It wasn't the truth. It was a lie.

And that's exactly what the people wanted. They wanted this lie. And the reality is, the sad reality is, that that's the day that we're in as well. The world is, as I was saying at the beginning, offended by the truth of Scripture.

So, what the world does is, it raises false prophets of different kinds. And these false prophets effectively rise up, and they tell the world really what it is that the world wants to hear.

[16:52] So, the false prophets will say, don't worry. Don't worry about this sin stuff. Don't worry about judgment. You know, don't worry about inequity and idolatry and immorality and all of that.

It's all fine. Just don't worry about that. Don't worry about the truths of Scripture. I mean, the Bible, it's from a bygone era. We don't really have to take these things seriously and literally anymore. And that message, which comes at us from lots of different directions in our day and age, that message, it makes people feel better. It is absolutely what people want to hear.

And it gives them a sense of freedom. It gives them a sense of, yeah, I can basically do anything I want. I can do whatever it is that I feel like doing. But it's an illusion. It's an illusion. And then the piece that's offered in that is an illusion as well.

And it's worse than an illusion. It would be one thing if it was just an illusion. But it's a lie. It is something that is a lie. And it's a lie that eventually, if you believe that lie, it ends in catastrophe.

[17:52] So, it might leave you feeling okay for a while. And if you believe that lie, that can be the case. You can feel quite comfortable and relaxed for a while. But it always ends in catastrophe.

When society thinks that it knows better than God's word. And when society thinks it knows better than the wisdom of God, which is basically where we are just now as a culture and a society.

It always ends up in catastrophe for people. We can lie to ourselves and tell ourselves that we know better than God and that everything is fine.

But by doing that, we are believing a lie. We are telling ourselves a lie. And we are believing that lie as well. And eventually, the thing about these lies, eventually they show themselves to be lies.

It's always the case. It might give you a false sense of comfort for a while. But eventually, it will show itself to be a lie. So, for example, for these false prophets here, they were proven eventually to be liars.

[18:51] Because we know that the Babylonians did come. And Jerusalem did fall. So, it was quite evident. Of course, it was too late by that point. But it was evident. It was evident to them that what these false prophets were saying were lies.

But that's the thing about these lying false prophets. Believing them, yeah, it might give you a sense of false comfort for a while. But it ends in disaster. There's always disaster down the line.

And spiritually, if we kind of take that forward into the spiritual realm, then that means that if we keep believing the lie that the world says, it eventually leads us into a lost eternity. It might lead you there feeling comfortable all the way there.

But eventually, it leads people to a lost eternity. But that's the nature of the false prophets. That's the nature of these lies. So, the people in Jeremiah's day here, they are rejecting the truth.

Rejecting the truth initially. And secondly, we see them there desiring these lies, the lies of the false prophets. But then the third point, and this kind of brings us to the end of the life of Jeremiah.

[19:56] The third point is people trying to silence and destroy the truth. And I make a distinction between the first point and that third point. So, the first one, if you remember, was rejecting the truth.

But this third point, this last point, is actually trying to silence and destroy the truth. And the reason I'm making that distinction is because you do see that trajectory in the life of Jeremiah.

So, it sort of begins by people initially just saying, no, I don't want to hear it. Or rejecting what it is that Jeremiah had to say. But then, as you go through the prophecy, as you go through some of the narrative, you see the whole thing escalating.

And it escalates to a point where they're actually trying to not just silence the word and the truth, but they're actively trying to destroy. And you see that in different ways.

So, one example, as I've seen in Jeremiah chapter 36, where Jehoiakim, one of the kings of Judah, he's given a scroll of Jeremiah.

[21:01] So, one of the prophecies of Jeremiah is given this scroll. The thing is, see, by this point, Jeremiah has been banned from the temple. You know, we talk today about cancel culture and that kind of thing. That's basically what happened to Jeremiah.

They effectively tried to cancel him. They banned him from public spaces. They banned him from being in the temple. So, he had to find other ways to get his message out, other ways to get the word out. And he's writing these scrolls.

And these scrolls are finding their way to the ears of different people. And here, the king ends up with the scroll written by Jeremiah. Of course, ultimately, the word of the Lord himself.

And interestingly, he doesn't just think, I don't want to hear that. I don't want to read that. He doesn't crumple it up and kind of throw it behind him. That's not what happens. He destroys it.

He burns it. There's this escalation in how they think of the word of God, the truth of the word of God. It's not enough now just to discard it or just to ignore it or just to stop Jeremiah from going to different places.

[22:05] Now, there's a sense of actually trying to destroy the very truth of the word of God. But the thing is, even that is not enough for these people. Even that is not enough. Time to silence the message.

That didn't work. Time to get rid of the scrolls, destroying the scrolls and suppressing the truth of the word of God that way. Again, that doesn't work. So, things escalate. And you see things escalating and escalating all the way through.

And then you get to read further on Jeremiah. So, the chapters that we touched on in our own reading a few moments ago there in chapter 37 and 38.

And there you see them trying to not only silence, but actually to destroy the prophet himself. Because in that section, we didn't read the whole narrative on what's going on there.

But what you're reading there is Jeremiah being arrested. He's being arrested. He's beaten. He's thrown into this dungeon. And eventually thrown into this pit, really. It was this muddy pit, this muddy dungeon, where he would have been left to die without food.

[23 : 12] Because, you know, they're besieging the city at this point. And food is scarce anyway. And he was effectively thrown in there to die. He would have been left there to die. And that was a way of them, as it were, finally getting rid of the truth of God's word.

Because ignoring the message didn't work early on in the life of Jeremiah. Trying to drown out the message with the lies of the false prophets. That didn't work either. And the same way trying to silence and cancel the prophet by stopping him from going to certain places.

Banning him from the temple. That didn't work. Even burning the scroll. That didn't work. All these ways of trying to suppress the truth of the word of God. None of these things work. So, eventually they get to this point of trying to, effectively, to destroy the prophet himself.

Anything. Anything to stop God's word coming to them. And when you look at the life of Jeremiah and you read through it, you just see how unfairly he was treated.

How terribly he was treated. And when you think about what he was trying to do, he was trying to help them. He was trying to help the people. He was trying to help them to understand the truth of God's word.

[24 : 23] And what did they end up doing? They just end up throwing him, discarding him into a pit and effectively leaving him there to die. Of course, he didn't. But that was the intention. To leave him there and to leave him there to die.

And again, when we think about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, that's exactly what we find. He comes to this world with words of life and hope and salvation and forgiveness.

Now, yes, there's also words of warning as well. You certainly see that from the life of Christ. But he does so in love. Even when he's speaking these words of warning, it's in love.

And again, what happens to him? Initially, they ignore. Try and drown it out with some lies as well. Then try to cancel him. And then, of course, ultimately, effectively trying to kill him.

To destroy him. And have him crucified as well. So, again, when you're seeing what's happening in the life of Jeremiah, you see that paralleled in the life of Christ. These things are pointing forward to what it is that the great prophet himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, was going to go through.

[25 : 31] And again, it's interesting that with Jeremiah here, and we did touch on this in the reading. Even though, even though he was being rejected by the people of the day, secretly, some people, without kind of broadcasting it too much, some people knew that he was right.

Some people knew that he did actually speak the truth of the word of God. And you picked up that in our reading about King Zedekiah. Because remember, at one point, when Jeremiah was imprisoned, Zedekiah comes to him.

And he wants a word from the Lord. But he's doing it secretly. And there's an emphasis on that. That he's coming secretly. It's like he doesn't want other people to know that he thinks that Jeremiah does actually have a word from the Lord.

But it's like he knows that this man is speaking the truth. That this man does have the word of the Lord. He's coming there in secret. And again, you see parallels of that in the life of Christ as well with Nicodemus.

You know, these guys who are meant to be against the word. Who are meant to be against Jesus. Your Nicodemus types. Your Pharisee types. But Nicodemus, as we know, he comes to Jesus. And he comes at night.

[26 : 39] And the implication does seem to be that he, very likely that is because he doesn't want others to know. He doesn't want others to know that he believes that what Jesus has is truth. And he wants to find out a little bit more about it.

And the reason I say that is because I think that that is absolutely the case today as well. We live definitely in a day of a lot of opposition to the word of God.

And we do live in a day where there's a lot of pressure coming from the wider society for people in general just to reject the word of God. That's kind of almost bullied into, pressured into thinking that we're meant to be rejecting the word of God.

But the truth is that there's a sizable number of people out there. I don't mean church people. I mean people in the world. There's a sizable number of people out there who are secretly very interested to hear from the word of God.

They don't want others to know. And perhaps for that reason they might not come to church. Perhaps because of that fact they don't want others to know that they're interested. But it's almost like they're seeing the lies that they've been told.

[27 : 47] They're seeing the lies that have been spun. And they're seeing the lies that have been the result of those lies. Because when you look at society it's a bit of a mess. And it shows that those things were lies. Society itself proves the lies that we've been told for a number of years now to reject the word of God and to reject the teaching of scripture.

And there's a sizable number of people like that out there in the world who are genuinely interested. Genuinely interested. They might not necessarily, maybe if you ask them they might come to church, but they might not necessarily find themselves in churches.

But they're out there and they are interested to hear more from the word of God. And that's why it's important for ourselves as the Lord's people today to recognize that. Because that is a shift.

And it's a shift that's become more apparent just in the last few years. It's a cultural shift. And it's important that we recognize that. That we spot that. And that we're emboldened so that even when the world wants to silence us.

That's the best way to control, to do that, to silence. Even when the world wants to silence, we have to be emboldened to speak. Emboldened to share something of the love of Christ.

[28 : 52] Emboldened to speak about the wonder of the wisdom of the word of God. Even the wisdom of the law of God. The promises of God. The promises of salvation and forgiveness and peace and eternal life and all these things.

The devil wanted to silence Jeremiah. The devil wanted to silence Jesus. And that is absolutely still the case today. The enemy of our souls absolutely wants to silence the Lord's people.

But it is so important that we are not silent. Even though that's the easiest option, to be silent.

It's one thing coming here and speaking about God with other Christians. And, you know, praying and singing and having fellowship. But I mean out in the world. It's easy to speak here and then go out in the world and we just zip it.

Because we're not meant to say much. We're not meant to say anything. We must not be silent. Especially in this day when we're detecting what's going on out there. Even a semblance of appetite for these things.

[29 : 52] We must make sure that we are not silent. We need to stand firm and be bold on these things. But at the same time, we must learn how not to be silent from Christ.

And when you look at the life of Christ, you see the way in which he's going around speaking, yes.

But with genuine concern and love for people. This is not about going out and stirring up and purposely building this atmosphere of antagonism against the Lord's people.

Sometimes Christians do that. That is not what we're called to do. We're not called to go out and be bold just to stir up hatred against us. That's not what we're called to do. To make people antagonistic against us. So therefore you need wisdom obviously in how we speak and how we share.

But I think far too often as Christians, we use that as an excuse not to say anything. I lack wisdom. I don't want to antagonize or Bible bash or whatever label we call it. So we just don't say anything. It's much easier to do that. It's much easier to do that than we can maybe think of ourselves as being so wise and not speaking and not antagonizing. But we must speak. Yes, with wisdom and with care and with love to others.

[30 : 57] But we must speak and share something of the wonder of Scripture and the wonder of the Gospel as well. So the story of the life of Jeremiah, it's a reminder to us really that there is nothing new under the sun.

It's always been the case that the teaching of the Word of God offends people. It was the case in this day. It was the case in Christ's day. It was the case in the New Testament day. It was the case throughout the history of the church.

And it's still the case today as well. And because of that, there will be an attempt to silence this Word and to silence the messengers of God as well.

But we have to remember that ultimately this is a Word that brings hope and life and salvation to people. And the world needs to hear that. The sound of this Word must go out throughout our society, our land, and our world as well.

Because we've received it. Our eyes have been opened to it. But how can we then not share that with others? We must do so. The world might not want to hear it.

[32 : 02] You might get difficult responses by sharing it. But the world needs to hear it. They need to hear it. And we pray that the Lord would give us the boldness to do that.

And that through the work of the Spirit, He might use these opportunities that we have to share something of the truth of the Word of God, and the wonder of the Gospel message for those who are in desperate need of it today.

Amen. May the Lord bless these few thoughts. To us, we'll bow our heads and come before the Lord in prayer. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the wonder of your Word.

And we give thanks as we were thinking about there and as we were reflecting on a few moments ago, even in prayer as well, that the Word is so relevant. Even when we study individuals and time periods that seem so distant from us in terms of geography and time and culture and in so many other ways.

And yet, that we can see these very same things happening in this biblical time period to what we experience ourselves today as well. Our prayer is that you would help us to learn, that you would help us to be bold, help us to have something of the spirit of Jeremiah, help us to have that sense of burden and of love for the lost, and seek to warn others in a loving way, and in a way in which it points others to the wonder of Christ and the life that is to be found, the true peace and hope and joy that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[33 : 47] So go before us now, strengthen us, encourage us, even as we approach this week ahead. We pray, O Lord, that you would give us an opportunity, help us to spot these opportunities, and when we have them, to use them.

So often, we allow these opportunities to pass us by because we're perhaps unprepared to share a word, maybe even a word of testimony, even a few words of scripture, even to come alongside people, and even to pray with others as well.

Give us opportunities, and we pray that your spirit would then take these opportunities and work them in the hearts and lives of those we encounter. So cleanse us from sin, we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Well, we're going to conclude our time of worship now by singing to God's praise in Psalm 126 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 126. That's page 419. So page 419.

[34 : 54] We'll sing the whole psalm there, Psalm 126. When Zion's bondage God turned back, as men that dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody.

They among the heathen said, The Lord great things for them hath wrought. The Lord hath done great things for us, whence joy to us is brought. So Psalm 126, page 419.

And we'll sing the whole psalm there to the praise of God. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137.

Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137.

Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137.

Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. Play for you, Psalm 137. With melody. The mother heathens and the Lord.

[36 : 05] Great things for them hath gone. The Lord hath done great things for us.

Whence joy to us is brought. As dreams of water in the sun.

Our bondage Lord recall. Their soul and tears are reaping time.

Of joy and joy they shall. But wonder very precious seed.

In going forth a thorn. In the blessed way.

[37 : 20] In your back of his sheaves. Rejoice in shall return. Amen.

And now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father. And the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit.

Continue with you all now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.