

Guest Preacher Rev. Donald M Macleod

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Date: 06 August 2023

Preacher: Rev. Donald M. Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] Let's, for a short time, turn back to the chapter we had, Mark chapter 4. Mark chapter 4, looking at a parable of the sower.
- We'll see how far we get in the time that we have, but we can make a good start on it. And whenever we stop, I'm sure you're going to do a better job than I can of finishing off wherever we end.
- For the sake of that text, we're going to take verse 8, or verse 1, sorry. And he began, well, the first few verses we'll take. And he began to teach beside the sea, and a very large crowd gathered about him.
- So he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables. And as teaching, he said to them, listen, a sower went out to sow.
- We'll be taking our text from the first parable. And then, of course, later on, from verses 13 down to verse 20, where Jesus has to explain the parable to the disciples.
- [1 : 0 3] But, of course, also he explains it to us. This is the first parable. If you read through Mark, this is the first parable that Jesus tells. But it's certainly not the last.
- Throughout Mark, scattered as the same for all the Gospels, Jesus speaks often in parables. And I know for a fact you've, of course, looked at parables before over the many years that Myrtle's been here.
- I've heard some of the sermons myself. I've sat in on some of the parable sermons myself over the years. But just a reminder for us, because we all need a refresher as Christians, and we all think perhaps we know things, we forget things pretty quickly.
- Why did Jesus speak in parables? Why did Jesus teach in parables? We even have told to us here, there's two reasons, or two main areas given to us, why Jesus speaks in parables.
- The first is obvious, and it's clear to us. Jesus spoke in parables, and the parables are almost always images and descriptions that those of the day would have understood.
- [2 : 1 2] He speaks to fishermen and farmers, fishermen and crofters, and he speaks to them about fish, about boats, about crofts, about fields, about seeds. It makes sense.
- There's plenty of books written about how you best communicate the Gospel, and how to be a good preacher, and how to be a good communicator, and there's plenty of value in these books.
- But the truth is, the best Gospel communicator we have to learn from as Christians is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the model, not just for all that we do, but also how we do things.
- When it comes to Gospel communication, he always meets people where they are. As he speaks to crofters and farmers, he speaks to them about land and seeds and growth.
- But also, as we saw in our passage here, there is more to the parables. Yes, the parables are there to help explain things, but also the parables are there to obscure.

[3 : 16] We see that as the disciples ask Jesus in verse 10 down to verse 12, they ask him, what are the parables about?

What have you just said? And Jesus says to them in verse 11, To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything is in parables. So that, and as he quotes here from the Old Testament, so that they may indeed see, but not perceive, and may indeed hear, but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.

So if we're saying the parables are there to explain things, why also are they there to obscure things? Well, in this situation, at least, the time has not yet come.

As Jesus teaches this parable, he's teaching it quite clearly to the disciples. He's teaching to them at this point in time. He's teaching them to understand what he's saying.

So they then go out and they share the same teaching. Because they share the teaching then with the explanation that Jesus gives to them. And we have a privilege this evening that the disciples themselves didn't even have at the time.

[4 : 30] When we come together just now to look at the parable, we also have for us the explanation. We have both things given to us in one package, as it were. And the truth is, as we come to this parable this evening, it's a parable I'm sure we've heard preached before.

It's a parable I'm sure many of us have grappled with over the years. I was sharing earlier to Emma, being very honest, it's a parable that as a younger Christian, I was terrified of.

We might touch on that more in a second. So the truth is, as we come to this parable, this is a parable which speaks to everyone in this room.

Now, humanly speaking, I don't know your stories. I know a good number of you over the years. I've met you and I'm related to some of you. But there's many here I haven't got a clue.

I don't know what your story is. I don't know why you come here. I don't know how long you've come here. For those listening online just now or in the future, I don't know what you think of Christ.

[5 : 38] I don't know if you love Him or not. I don't know where you are in your stage of life or your journey in faith. So we come to a parable this evening which touches on every single area which takes in every single person here this evening.

If you're here this evening and you have no interest in ever becoming a Christian, you come along to church because you know you probably should do it. Or you come out to church to keep a loved one happy, a mum, a dad, a spouse, whatever your story might be.

You come to church to give yourself perhaps a quieter life so you aren't being nagged at every Sunday. Perhaps that's your story. Perhaps you come here because your grandparents and your parents came before you.

So you know it's what you should be doing. You do it to honour them. We praise the Lord you're here but you have no interest in the gospel but you still come out week after week. This also is a parable which speaks to perhaps some here or some online.

And perhaps you think you might be a Christian but you've got some pretty important things very wrong. We'll see that more in a second. The parable also speaks to those of us who know and who love Jesus, who have all our hope and our help found in Him and in Him alone.

[7 : 04] In other words, there's not one of us here this evening that doesn't fall under the categories of this parable. Not one of us, as it were, gets to escape this evening from being talked to and finding ourselves in this parable.

A sower goes out to sow his seed, Jesus tells us in verse 3. Of course, a sower in this story is Jesus Himself and the seed he sows is the Word.

Now, be careful here. Just a quick word. J.C. Ryle is your go-to man when you want to study the parables more for yourselves. When coming to the parables, any one of his commentaries, he always reminds you a parable always has one, maybe a few central themes.

And plenty of people, we get so caught up in the detail of the story that Jesus is telling. The numbers and what's taking place in the background, but we forget Jesus is using illustration to try and share.

Well, Jesus does not try, but to make and try and make the people understand, as you say, perhaps, what he's saying. As Jesus shares through imagery, through images, through things they knew and understood, he uses a whole raft of things.

[8 : 23] But he has one main point. There are a few main points that he is sharing with those who are listening. So don't get caught up in the details, the small details. They are there for the sake of the wider story, as Jesus uses the story to teach those beside him and those who are listening to him.

So we come to look at this parable. We see the first seed as it lands. And as we look at the seed, we're not looking at the seed itself.

The seed is the word. That goes out regardless. The sword is Jesus. We're looking really at the soil this evening. The soil is us. The word goes out week after week.

Your minister faithfully preaches week after week. He preaches the word, the gospel week after week. But as the gospel goes out from this pulpit and it lands in your ears and it lands in your hearts and it lands in my own ear, in my own heart, the question is, what sort of soil is it landing in?

What sort of soil is it landing in? That's a big question we have to answer this evening as we come to this parable. So first of all, looking at verses 4 and also verse 15.

[9 : 30] And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path and the birds came and devoured it. It's explained to us in greater detail in verse 15 by Jesus.

And these are the ones who sow along the path where the word is sown and they hear. Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.

This evening, as the word goes out, as the gospel goes out once more, the first soil, it's not even soil at all, it's just a path.

The word goes out and it hits the path. Now, you have to imagine for a second, of course, in this place, in this part of the world, the soil is precious. And any part of soil which wasn't producing, they had to make the most of the space.

So they created often a path through fertile fields so they could get to every single part of the field properly. And that's the path Jesus is speaking about here.

[10 : 33] The path in between the good soil. There's good soil here and there's a path that runs through. This path was used, made up of rocks. Can you imagine?

Just rocks and stones. But also made up of soil which was of no use. Soil which didn't produce anything. They would lump that onto the path too. This is a well-worn path.

Everyone who attends the field, everyone who passes from village to village would walk these paths in these fields. Well-worn, well-trodden, well-compacted paths.

And the first soil is this soil, this well-compacted soil that's found on the path. And the seed hits this well-compacted soil that's found on the path.

What does a seed find? Well, it finds, first of all, it finds hard ground, doesn't it? As the word goes out, it finds hard ground to land on.

[11 : 37] Again, as we said, this is the path between the fields. They weren't looked after, they weren't watered, they weren't cared for, they were just paths. And the truth is, we must begin bluntly and honestly and openly together.

We said, not one of us escapes this parable and that is true from the start. The first question we have to ask is, is this you this evening? You come here, you sit here, we praise the Lord that you are here genuinely.

I assure you, your minister is overjoyed to see you week after week, he really truly is. Your elders are too, I am more than sure. But you come here and you sit here, you listen online week after week, faithfully.

And you hear the gospel week after week, faithfully. It's preached to you from all of God's word in various ways. And Myrtle will plead and cry and every minister will come and we'll plead and we'll cry and we'll do our utmost humanly speaking.

We will share with you God's word as best we possibly can. Your family and friends, they'll talk about Jesus, they'll share how they can with you. And yet you sit week after week and you spend week after week and still in your heart and your soul, you've heard sermon after sermon, read chapter after chapter, heard prayer after prayer, been called and begged that and pleaded to week after week and yet you sit there and it's just hardness.

[13 : 14] You're like the path. The seed hits it but there's no going through it. This is a solid lump of stone. There's no place for the seed of the gospel to take root.

You have hardened your heart over years. You've said to yourself, this is not for me. I don't care about who Jesus is. I don't care what he has to offer me. I don't care what he has done or what he promises to do.

I don't care. I'm here but I don't really care. And the sad thing is that the path of course is also exposed ground.

We'll see in a second often they would cover the healthy ground but they wouldn't cover paths. It's just rocks and dust and the paths are exposed ground. And the truth is as you sit week after week with a hard heart trying your best to ignore the gospel call, trying your best to ignore Jesus week after week, your heart is exposed to all the rubbish, to all the carnage of this world.

It becomes harder and harder and harder. That's the sad reality. The more exposed the path is, the more it's trodden upon, the harder, the more compacted the path becomes, the harder your heart grows and the more the gospel seeds just bounce off it.

[14 : 44] It's dry ground. The path isn't watered. Your hard heart isn't being watered. Yes, you're right beside the source of living water, not the minister, but in front of you is God's word, the source of living water as we see it in Christ and it's in your hands, it's in front of you, you hear it preached, you hear it discussed and yet there's a hard hearted path right beside it.

There's living water available to you but you're so dry and so hard hearted you could not care less. What happens as the gospel seed lands on your hard hearted path of a heart?

We see the reality taking place. The birds come. Verse 4, the birds of the air come and they devour the gospel seed and Jesus explains this to us in verse 15.

The word is sown and when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. Dear friends, as long as your hearts are hardened to the gospel, as long as you have no care about Jesus, as long as you sit in these services and just, as we all have done before you, sit and count the blinds, sit and watch the minutes subtly tick by on your watch and sit and just wait for the end to come, as long as your heart remains hard, as long as your heart remains this solid path which the word just bounces off again and again, Satan is more than happy for you to be like that.

The birds of the air are hovering and Christ says this is just the image he uses for Satan and the second the word lands on your hard heart, because you've spent years hardening it, the second the word hits you, it's gone.

- [16 : 36] Satan comes and devours it. He takes it away from you. When we speak of Satan and spiritual warfare, we're perhaps more used to the big incidences of spiritual oppression and where Satan attacks God's people so clearly and openly, but the truth is much of Satan's work, it is quiet, it is simple, it is so-called easy work for him, because you do the work for him with your hard heart.

The seed lands, the gospel lands, and it's taken away instantly. Look at the wording he uses here. Satan devours it and he does so immediately.

This is the ferocity of the attack of the evil one. Friends, make no mistakes whatsoever this evening. Satan will go to great lengths to make sure the gospel seed is devoured up long before it touches or has a chance to germinate, has a chance to grow at all.

As long as you sit here week after week that dry, dry path in your heart, that dry, solid ground in your heart, not wanting to come near Jesus, saying to yourself you won't do nothing to come near this man, whoever he may be, not wanting to listen, not willing to listen.

The seed will bounce off your heart week after week after week. The gospel is devoured week after week after week. Do you know what the sad thing about that fact is?

- [18 : 09] As we're preaching just now, as we're saying it just now, it is happening live in front of us this very second. There are some here at this very second, as I even say to you, the gospel is being stolen from your heart week after week.

It's bouncing onto hard ground, being devoured by birds week after week. It's happening just now, live in front of us. It's taking place this very moment in this building.

We're not just here for the drama of it, we're not just here for the effect. There's no pleasure in coming from Tulsa to bar this, to tell you this. There's no joy it gives us to do this, but we're duty bound to do so, and God's word tells us to do so.

Dear friends, as long as you remain away from Christ, your heart will remain solid against him. The word will keep bouncing off your hard heart, and the truth is you will live and die that way.

The question is, is this moment, is today another day where the seed of a word being scattered on your hard heart, is it being wasted?

- [19 : 14] Is it another day where this seed is being wasted on the field of your heart, the hard-hearted path of your heart? It's a hard question to ask yourself, it's one you must ask.

From a hard path, we then see the next soil being described for us, verses 5 down to verse 6, and verses 16, verse 17, verses 5 and 6.

Other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil, and immediately sprang up since it had no depth of soil. When the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away.

Again, this is explained to us, in detail, by Christ in verses 16 and verse 17. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground, the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy, and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while.

Then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. First of all, again, the location.

- [20 : 25] The location now is rocky ground with some soil. You can imagine it. It's the ground that we often find in our own gardens, at least for ourselves, anyway, as we're looking to work in our garden.

There's plenty of soil, but plenty of rocks in the soil. Plenty of problems as you dig away. You hit rock after rock. You think, this soil is not as good as I thought it was. There's soil with rocks. It's a thin level, a thin layer of soil.

And these are the people who have a good, as it were, initial response to the gospel. Who hear the gospel, who respond well to the gospel, and you can see when you think, well, they're coming to church, praise the Lord for it.

They seem to be listening, praise the Lord for it. They seem to be growing, perhaps, in some form of understanding of faith. There's immediate growth. There's almost immediate flourishing.

They seem to have taken the gospel to heart. But the truth is that there's great danger ahead. Because the second the conditions change, the soil no longer does the job.

[21 : 35] We see that these are the ones who have some root, but who have no real roots, no real support. There's no place for a root to grow.

They exist in a thin layer of soil, and below that's rocks, so the root can't ever take root properly. It just has enough staying power to look good for a while, but eventually it just caves in to the elements.

We'll see that in a second. We'll see the opposition. The opposition is the bright sun which scorches down onto this seed, onto this growth.

In verse 6, when the sun rose, it was scorched. And Jesus makes clear that this is persecution, this is opposition to the word. But when you begin to get pushback as to your newfound faith, or pushback as to your at least newfound interest in the gospel, you begin to wilt away.

Dear friends, and the Christians here will testify to this, I'm sure, don't be shocked when you face pushback for when you show interest in the gospel.

[22 : 49] I don't know where you stand with the Lord, but if there's some here and you're not quite saved, you aren't a Christian, but you are searching and you want to be a Christian perhaps, or you're at least very interested in becoming one, as you begin to read your Bible more, perhaps come to church more, ask bigger questions about who God is and what it means to follow Him and all that.

Don't be surprised for a second the level and the amount of pushback and opposition you will find. First of all, you'll find it internally, we could say.

You'll find doubts arising in your own mind. You'll have doubts about God, doubts about yourself, your worthiness, etc. You'll also find a lot of external opposition beginning to grow against you.

Your family will think you're getting a bit too keen perhaps in all this God stuff. I know it's a joke, of course, of years ago. I think it was a wee bit before my time really, but the jokes we had, some here grew up with the jokes of catching the coor.

And the jokes might have gone, but the feeling's still there, isn't it? Perish the thought someone actually takes a serious view of Christianity. Perish the thought someone takes a serious look at themselves and considers that God and the gospel might actually be real.

[24 : 11] But we aren't just doing this just for the fun of it every Sunday, but actually we're here for a solid reason. Actually we believe this stuff. Actually this stuff is real and it matters. You will face pushback, dear friends, as you begin to look into the gospel more from friends, from family, from colleagues.

Don't be surprised. Don't be shocked. And the truth is you might even face some form of derision or even persecution perhaps for even pondering the gospel.

And like this seed, it finds initial grounding. But as the comments grow, as the pushback grows against you, as more people laugh at you for having gospel interest, or laugh at you for coming to church, as more people as it were begin to persecute you for having a care for Jesus and thinking that Jesus actually is real and that it's important to listen to what he says about himself, you will, if you're not careful, like this seed, you lose your hope, you lose your desire.

As the sun of persecution rises, you will wilt away. You will wilt away. This is a seed which has no root.

Why does this seed have no root? What does it look like for us to be rootless? There's a few reasons we can be rootless. A lack perhaps of good theology, a lack of true theology.

[25 : 47] We need true and honest and clear biblical teaching. It requires the hard work of reading the Bible or listening to the Bible, whatever is easiest for you, of asking the big questions, of seeking answers.

You have to do the legwork. Also, perhaps, and this is a challenge for us as Christians, there's a lack of discipleship often. There's people who show great gospel interest and we don't notice them.

We don't give enough care towards them. And that gospel interest we once showed, because it goes away so quickly, as Christ shows us, because it can lose its root and wither up so quickly, if we aren't paying attention to our congregation and seeing, and this is not to the ministry of the elders, this is to us as a congregation in general.

This is our job as people in general, as brothers and sisters. We must be on the lookout for those amongst us who are showing gospel interest, who are asking big questions, who are showing interest in who Jesus is, what it is to follow him.

And we must be ready to come alongside them and to lovingly, carefully, gently nurture them. Lack of true theology, lack of discipleship, but also lack of true deep faith.

[27 : 05] Very often, those who lose faith, whose faith withers away quickly, it's because their faith is situationally dependent rather than dependent on Jesus himself.

It happens quite often, it happens at least in my experience, that the most I saw friends fall away was when they went from here, often to universities in the mainland. It's not because the mainland is somehow more evil, somehow more deceiving than Lewis.

It's not the sin is worse out there than it is here, no. It's because many of these people, they grew up going to church, they grew up knowing their stuff because they had to, to keep people happy, parents and so on.

So much of our faith was situationally, for them, locationally dependent. They were Christians as long as they were in Lewis because it was easy to be so. The second they went to the rest of the world and moved away because the location changed and because their faith was based on where they lived, when they moved somewhere else, the faith didn't follow them.

It wasn't rooted in their hearts. It wasn't ever genuine faith. It's a worrying reality but it is truly a reality that's replicated year after year.

[28 : 18] If your faith is based on anything but Jesus, if it's location, location changes, you lose your faith. If it's based on your circumstances, when life is going well, when life is easy, then you believe in Jesus.

When the second life becomes complicated or hard, your faith withers away. The sun comes up, your faith withers away and away you go. If our faith is based on anything other than Jesus and who He is and what He has done, then our faith has no real root.

It has no real solid root. This is a section which often puts fear into many Christians. As we finish asking, is this us?

Are we genuinely saved? Do I really know Him? Do I really love Him? And the question, or perhaps the answer to that question is quite simple. The truth is, a faithful Christian, a genuine Christian, a Christian who has roots in Jesus, only a faithful, real Christian worries truly about the state of their salvation.

If you weren't truly saved, you wouldn't worry about it. That sounds so simple, but for those of us who perhaps suffer from lack of assurance, at times, that is the only hope we have.

[29 : 41] We wonder, am I really the Lord's? Is my root really more than surface level? Does my root go down to Jesus, or is it like this root? Is it just surface deep? You wouldn't be asking these questions.

You wouldn't be caring if it was truly just surface level. The truth is that it's only Christians who worry that are they the Lord's truly?

Only Christians truly worry, in a real sense, are they truly still His? The truth is, as we come to look at the soils and the seeds here, that at this very moment we are talking to everyone and some in this room and I've seen time has gone.

I don't want to rush the next two seeds, the next two soils. I'm tempted to leave it until the next time we may gather together whenever that may well be.

So to bring what we have to our conclusion, as we look at the soils, and I'll give you some homework, don't worry, I'll never check up on it, but some homework, I can leave it with your own consciences. Go home this evening and read the rest of the chapter, read the rest of the other two seeds and soils looked at, and ask the same question to yourself.

[30 : 59] Are you the seed that's being choked with the cares and concerns of this world? Does the riches of your life, are you so well off in material goods you have no time for God?

Or are you so worried about what people think about you and might say about you that you should never come to Jesus? Because imagine what they would say, what they would think, and so on. Dear friends, it's a hard sermon to preach in the sense that you know there's someone in this room that you're having to speak to negatively.

You're having to call out, as it were, from their slumber. There are some here this evening, and you find yourself in the first category of soil we looked at, that hard, compacted soil.

It has no root. It has no purpose. You're just getting through life, trying to distract yourself, trying not to think about the reality that Jesus exists, that He is Lord, that He rules, that He reigns, that He is your Lord, whether you worship Him or not, that He reigns wherever you worship Him or not.

And the sad truth is, if you spend your whole life that way, if you spend your whole life rejecting Jesus with that hard-hearted path in your soul, then the final day, you will hear from Jesus what He has heard from you all your life.

[32 : 25] When you come to the final day and you cry out to Him, you will be rejected by Him. as one who never knew Him, who never loved Him, who never cared for Him. If you're here this evening and you're perhaps from the second category where your faith and you know yourself, it's not truly based on Jesus.

Now, this is not people of weak faith. There are many Christians here with weak faith, but your weak faith is based on Jesus alone. But those here tonight, if you ask yourself, where is your faith based?

If I was to move to Glasgow tomorrow, if I was to move to America tomorrow, if I was to lose all my family and all my money and all my whatever else I may have in life tomorrow, would I still follow after Jesus?

Or at least, would I still hope to follow after Jesus? If you can't say yes to that, if you can't say, I pray and hope Jesus would keep me even then, then you should know and you should worry for yourself that perhaps your faith is only surface level deep.

If it's based on who you are, on your surroundings, on your possessions, on your life circumstances, don't waste any more time.

- [33 : 35] Because the glorious and the good news is, and we'll end with this, that those of a hard, path-like heart, whose soil has long since dried up, and those with just a small scattering of earth with no root, the good news is it's the same answer I have, but it's the same solution that we bring to you.

How does a hard heart change to one that is soft and glorious and willing to serve Jesus? And how does one who lives a life with roots based in yourself and not in Jesus, how do you have roots then based in Jesus and Him alone?

Well, it's a simple answer and you know the answer. It's come to Jesus. Come to Jesus. The one who changes hearts of stone, who changes path-like, compacted down, sin-filled hearts to hearts of flesh, to soft hearts, to loving hearts which care for Him, who takes small roots and who can expand that root right down until it finds its home in the immovable rock of who He is.

That's the hope you have. Dear friends, there is not one person here this evening, and I say this with full, full biblical confidence. There is not one person here this evening and your heart is not so dry that Christ cannot with His living water revive your path-like heart and cause seeds to spring up and grow from it.

Not one person. You say, well, you don't know that. You can't say that. I don't know your stories. But God is the eternal God with eternal power and your ability to sin and be wayward is not greater than His ability to save.

- [35 : 21] That much I know. Your power this evening to fight against Him and to say, I don't want to hear Him or have anything to do with Him. These excuses you come to, dear friends, and they've served you well up to a point these excuses, but on the final day it means nothing.

You've heard Myrtle and you've seen Myrtle and we all know Myrtle and his desire to see his dear friends here saved. Dear friends, Myrtle can't save you.

I can't save you. We can get every guest preacher we can think of to come up here and raffle through every sermon I can find. The words in his pages, they won't save you. A thousand sermons won't save you.

A thousand hours in this building won't save you. Your hard heart is only changed if you come to Jesus yourself.

Only He and He alone will save you, dear friends. And same if you're struggling and you think, well, maybe my faith is only surface level, is only so deep. That's a worry you have when you ask Christ to strengthen and revive and give you that real faith.

- [36 : 34] And the glorious truth is we have the gospel-given assurance. Those who come to Christ cry out for salvation, cry out for spiritual revival, cry out that He would take you and save you.

He listens to those who cry and come to Him. He turns none away who come to Him with that cry. You've heard the gospel before. And there's no time.

Time has gone. But to summarize, hard-hearted hearts. Hearts with no root. Again, your homework tonight. Read the other two soils.

The soils so taken up with the cares, the concern of this world. You've got no time for Jesus. And finally, the healthy soil. Dear brothers, dear sisters, the healthy soil. Be encouraged. But even though your output, as we see, the end of the healthy soil, even though your output might be thirty-fold and others have a hundred-fold, Christ does not comment on either.

Dear brothers, your sisters, as you serve your Savior, you serve a Savior who cares for you, who cares for you as a person, who cares for your service towards Him, who encourages you in that service.

[37 : 46] Don't waste any more time this evening. Again, you've heard the gospel countless times. And we're so comfortable, aren't we? At the end of this. We're so comfortable in our pews, so comfortable in our clothes, our church clothes, so comfortable in our setup, that we forget this is life and death.

This is real life. We're not just here for a performance and to go home again this evening and back to our supper. We're here because we believe this is true. Dear friends, what soil does the gospel find your heart in this evening?

What state of soil is the gospel landing in this evening? When you hear the simple gospel news that only in Christ you have eternal life. Only in Christ can you know the Father.

Come and be saved through His finished work and His work alone. When you hear that simple gospel cry, that simple gospel promise, the simple good news, do you hear that the hard heart, an uncaring heart, a choked up heart, what a willing heart.

We ask the Lord to bless His word to us this evening. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Lord, we come, we thank You once more for the gift of Your word. Lord, we ask You would bless Your word to us.

[39 : 07] We ask that You would forgive anything that was said not in accordance to Your word. We give You praise that the power is in You as You work through it and not in the jars of clay who stand up here. We ask this evening especially that for any here whose hearts are still unmoved and untouched with the gospel that You would bring them to a saving and sure knowledge of Yourself.

They wouldn't leave this building or indeed they wouldn't close their lives to sleep this evening without having at least asked the question genuinely to themselves and to You of where their heart is before You.

Lord, for those of hard hearts this evening, we ask You would soften them with the glorious gospel of good news that Christ came to save sinners. We ask for those of hearts which are so rootless and with such a thin level of soil, Lord.

We ask You would bring them and grow that root down to Yourself that they would be solid in You. We ask, Lord, for those whose hearts are so choked up with the concerns and cares of this world who have such ability to ignore You.

Lord, You would take away from them these supports that they cling to and would find themselves relying on Jesus and Him alone. We pray finally, Lord, for ourselves here this evening, those of us who know and who love Jesus.

[40 : 20] You'd encourage us as we seek to bear good fruit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold, as we seek to bear fruit in our own homes, our places of work, our places of study in this community.

We'd see Your name glorified in Barvis and see the gospel known from home to home and from person to person. Lord, we ask that once more, asking it only through the power and in the name of the risen Lord Jesus.

Amen. Let's bring our time to a conclusion by singing to God's praise from the Scottish Psalter and Psalm 51. That great psalm of salvation, that great psalm of God's cleansing to all who come to Him.

Psalm 51 on page 280 of the Blue Psalm books. Psalm 51 on page 280. We can sing verses 2 down to verse 8.

Me cleanse from sin and throughly wash from my iniquity. From my transgressions I confess my sin I ever see. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned. In thy sight done this ill, but when thou speaks, thou mayest be just and clear in judging still.

[41 : 32] Psalm 51 verses 2 to 8 to God's praise. Amen. Me cleanse from sin and throughly wash from mine iniquity.

For my transgressions I confess my sin I ever see.

Against thee, thee only have I sinned in thy sight on this ill, that when thou speak, thou mayest be just and clear in judging still.

Behold, thy iniquity was born the womb within.

My mother also be conceded in guiltiness and sin.

[43 : 07] Behold, thou in the inward parts with truth, delighted heart, and wisdom thou shalt make me know within the hidden part.

Do thou with this upsprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so.

yea, wash thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow.

Of gladness and of joyfulness Make me to hear the voice that so these very bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with you now and forevermore. Amen.