

Psalm 84

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[0 : 00] We can turn to Genesis chapter 3 and we're going to read the first 10 verses of the chapter.

So Genesis chapter 3 verses 1 to 10. Now the serpent was far more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the women, did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

And the women said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die.

But the serpent said to the women, you will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

So the women saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise. She took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

[1 : 17] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, Lord God, among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

So here we see Adam, Adam and Eve in the garden, dwelling with God. We're seeing that they are with God in the garden.

Mankind dwelt directly with God at the time of creation, and had a close, loving friendship with him. We are in fact told that Adam and Eve were well acquainted with being in the direct and perfect presence of God.

He walked with them in the cool of the day. They were familiar with the sound of God walking in the garden, showing us that we were indeed created to be in a close relationship with our perfect Creator.

[2 : 32] The nearness that we had to God in the beginning, however, was quickly spoiled. We read there when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, that glorious fellowship that they enjoyed with their Creator ceased.

It ended immediately. We were created to be in a relationship with him, yet now, as we see with Adam and Eve, we often find ourselves trying to hide and avoid him.

You might feel like the fall of man, and we spoke about this earlier, was Adam and Eve's fault, and I've been guilty that when I was younger, in my faith, of thinking, why, why in earth did Adam and Eve do this?

And we often project some of what we do in our own lives to Adam and Eve, and it was the fall, and we often point our eyes back to them. But if we're honest, and we look inwardly, we see ourselves in them as well, each and every day.

We've read there of them being afraid of him, being afraid of God in their presence. And how often do we do things wrong when we seek to turn away from him?

[3 : 33] Many of your probably parents, grandparents, and we notice quite quickly with our children, I certainly notice I've got two, one, I've not quite noticed the sin within our yet, which is only a few months old, but my older daughter, she's seven, and I can instantly tell if she's done something wrong.

One of the first things she'll do is she'll disappear, and you go, okay, right, there's something wrong, we've got an issue here, we might need to resolve. But the first thing she'll do is she'll turn away from you, she'll not want any eye contact with you, she doesn't want to see your face, because she knows she's possibly disappointed you.

She doesn't want to be reminded that she's done wrong. So she'll often flee, she'll often go up to her bedroom, quickly followed by myself, no doubt, but she'll often turn away, and that's often what we do when we sin, we either compartmentalize it and we put it away and say, well, it was just a small thing, I'll just park it over there.

But what we're doing is we're really disappointed in what we've done and we're trying to ultimately hide from our Lord. Instead of following nature to avoid and hide, we as people run from God and hide ourselves from him on a regular, if not constant basis.

We see here in Genesis that after sinning, both Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. So look at verse eight there, God was walking in the cool of the day and was looking for Adam.

[4 : 56] Yet after hearing the familiar sound of God being near him, he was afraid and found hiding from God. His sin and indeed our sin has destroyed our very purpose of enjoying and treasuring the perfect nearness with God.

Thankfully though, we have an almighty God and in his perfect faithfulness to us, he doesn't give up on us. When we think about Christianity, it's not about man searching for God, it's God searching for man.

He's persistent in his pursuit of us in order that we have that sweet fellowship with him, even though we sin. But it's often we struggle with, we struggle with understanding that.

I know early on before I became a Christian, I just couldn't understand why the Lord would want me to come to him and to have a relationship with him. It was something that was a real blocker and a barrier for me, but I was pointing the light to myself.

I should be pointing on Christ. He is the one that fulfilled by dying on the cross for us. It's not about what we do, it's not about what we have done, it's what he has already done for us.

[6 : 06] So we've looked at Genesis right at the beginning of the Old Testament. If we skip forward in our minds, I won't take you there. You're probably thinking, when are we getting to Psalm 84? We'll get there soon. But if we just quickly skip forward in our Old Testament and we think about the time when Israel had been redeemed from Egypt and God designs his own tent in order that he can dwell with his people.

The Baptist's tent or tabernacle amongst them as a reminder that God indeed is relentless in his desire to be near and dwell with his people. He wants to dwell and be with us, even when we, in our sinful ways, try to turn and hide from him.

He doesn't sit back and watch from a distance. No, he opts to set up a dwelling place in the middle of his people for them to be near him. If we could now cast our minds on our little journey through the Old Testament, we're going forward one more place before we get to Psalm 84.

We think about when God's people entered the Promised Land. The tent or tabernacle has been exchanged from a permanent and fixed dwelling among his people. God created a place where he could permanently be near his people, and they also with him.

It's believed that Psalm 84 was in fact written in the Temple Era when God had a fixed place to dwell in. The Psalm itself shows a deep longing to be near God in this fixed place that he has found.

[7 : 31] We think back to Adam and Eve. We were created to enjoy the sweet relationship with God. Yet our instant response, our often first response, is to hide and avoid being near him.

Because of the sins in our lives, it's not in our nature to draw near to God. So for this morning's service, I want to follow the trend that often, I don't preach often, but I've not managed to get alliteration into my points.

But I've got three points that I want us to maybe go through. In the Psalm itself, if you look at the Psalm, it's structured in three parts, which is very helpful. So the first section that I think we'll look at is the longing to be near God.

So the first few verses, they're longing to be near God. The second thing we'll explore is journeying to be near God. And finally, the third point is that we ought to cherish being near God.

So looking at the first section, if we look at verses one and two of the Psalm, we're considering here longing to be near God. So verses one and two, how lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, my soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord, my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

[8 : 47] The last question, obviously, you don't need to answer it, but have you ever been in a situation where you're craving or desiring something so much that it becomes a physical, even an emotional feeling?

Maybe if you've ever been away from home, you might have had a genuine feeling of being homesick, and it can often feel physical. You want to be in the place so much that there's a physical feeling, an emotional attachment associated to it.

One of the commentators, Jameson Fawcett and Brown say, the word here when we're looking at longing, when my soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord, the word is used of the bereft parent crying out for the children whom she has lost.

That's how strong and powerful a word here. It's not a simple I would like. It's a really strong heartfelt and deep, deep feeling of longing.

The Samus here is longing to be near God in his temple. Some translations have the word longing down as yearns, so I've got the ESV that shows longing, but some of them, I think the AV has the word yearns, which again shows us the strength of that word.

[9 : 59] My soul yearns, there is an intensity to this feeling. It's not something that you're just in the mood for, or you would quite like. It's a strong intense longing to be near God. He longs to be with God so much that he even envies the birds that have made their nest in the temple.

Just look at verse three there. Even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow and nest for herself where she may lay her young at your altars. O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

The Samus here is saying, even wished to be like one of the birds that were always near to God in the temple. Wished to be just like a bird in the corner of this temple.

That's what his desire was, not to be right in the midst, to be in the presence, but just to be even being near to God was something that he desires so much. He wished he could also be near the living God in his place of dwelling, because we look in verse four, blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise.

He longs so much to be with God, that he would rather be a nesting bird in the corners of the temple, just to be near his God. Is that you today?

[11 : 13] And I ask the question to myself, is that me? Do I long so fervently and intensely to be near to God that I would even rather be a nesting bird in the corner of the temple?

Do you have that physical feeling in your body that cries out to be near to God? I obviously, first time I've preached here, but you can think in your minds, what was it like during the last couple of years when our church doors were closed?

Did you long to come back into fellowship with one another? Did you miss the church doors being opened every Lord's day for the services in the morning, the evening, or the prayer meetings?

Did you long to come back together? And when you did, was there a real feeling of joy and satisfaction coming back together? I think it was, possibly not every single day or every single week you felt that, and more often than not, we probably don't long to be near to God in the same way as the psalmist is talking here.

We don't long to be with God as we should. We let other things in our lives come in and distract us from the very nearness of God, whether that's prioritising our pursuits of money, could be our careers, we maybe have a real focus and desire to improve in our careers.

[12 : 28] The next promotion is just around the corner, and that's where we're really focusing. It may be our hobbies, whatever that hobby may be, it may be in the football field. Does that impact on you maybe coming to a prayer meeting on a Wednesday night if there's training on?

All these other things in our lives can come in and consume the time that we have. These things in our lives, such as hobbies, such as football, could be music, it could be any other hobby that's been given to us.

They're gifts from God. I'm not saying here that none of us should have hobbies, but they're gifts from God. We should remember where they came from. But when we fail to see God in these things that have been given to us, they quickly become deadly substitutes for God.

We're so often distracted that a physical or painful longing for God is not something that we're familiar with, as the Samist is here. The Samist longs to be with God more than he longs for anything else in the world.

And it's quite a challenge to us. And I speak again, I speak to myself first. There's 24 hours in the day. I've been woken up at, I don't know what time everyone's woken up, I'm not going to ask you in

case it's been a nice quiet morning.

[13:40] But we've got 24 hours in the day. And I think if we were to reflect on the time that we give the Lord, whether that's in our devotional times or in reading his word and telling us the times in prayer, I think each and every one of us would probably think we could do more.

We've not given enough to the Lord in the last 24 hours. What is it that has come in the way? What is it that is stopping us from longing to be with God as the Samist does here?

So that was longing to be near God. We see the Samist so intensely longing to be with God. We'll now briefly move to the verses 5 to 8. When we look, we move from longing to be near God to journeying to be near God.

If we look at verse 5, first of all, Blessed are those whose strength is in you and whose heart are the highways to Zion. Now, Zion is the city of God where God has made His fixed dwelling in the temple.

So I want us to focus on the words here in verse 5. The Samist is saying that blessed are those whose heart are the highways to Zion. I want us to think how readily we have access to maps or directions nowadays.

[14:59] Now, I will often use my phone. The first time I actually ever came to Carly, it's not my first time here, but the first time I ever came to Carly was to come to the church here to attend a funeral.

And it was obviously time bound. I didn't have all day to just drive around and try and find it. So I needed to make sure I knew I was coming to the right place. So you'll probably be embarrassed, but I put my sat-nav on.

I know you can hardly miss it from the road, but I did. I put my sat-nav on in order to be able to know exactly where I was going and I wasn't going to miss it. So it helped.

It took me directly to where I needed to go and it was absolutely perfect. If I hadn't used it, I dread to think where I would have ended up. Who knows? I could have ended up further down the road or walked into the wrong church.

I would have hopefully made it, but you never know. If I hadn't had that direction and that guidance, who knows where I would have ended up. But if we think about a place that I know well, so Glasgow, and from Glasgow, you've probably noticed I've not got the North Harus accent.

[16:03] From Glasgow originally. And if I was to go to a place, if somebody was to ask me to direct them to a place somewhere in the West End of Glasgow, it's a place I grew up, it's a place I knew well, I wouldn't require the sat-nav.

I would say, yeah, just take a left on Byers Road, or I would tell you the directions to go to the respective place in the West End of Glasgow. Because I was born and brought up there. So I would have had no problem navigating someone around the place.

When you know a place by heart, you don't need directions in the way to go. Those that have the Lord in their heart know the way to Him, as they regularly come to Him in worship and in praise.

As we're doing today, the way to God is emblazoned upon their hearts, knowing that He will supply their needs to them on the journey. We don't need directions, we don't necessarily need someone telling us how to go.

When the Lord is in our hearts, and we are longing for Him, and we're desiring to be with Him, we know the way to go, and we indeed follow it. Look now to verses 6 and 7.

[17:07] As they go through the Valley of Baker, they make it a place of spring, the early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength, each one appears before God in Zion.

We see that they go through the Valley of Baker, and they make it a place of springs. Now the exact location of Baker is unknown. However, one of the commentators explains that the word itself, the word Baker itself means weeping, and as they move forward, and as they move through the Valley of Weeping, it turns fertile as they near the holy place.

What we're told here by the Sammits is that those who trust in God will find refreshment in a dry and desolate place. And I think what's even more amazing in these two verses is what we see there in verse 7.

And in my preparations for this, Sammits, the words that kind of stuck out to me, and they really jumped off the page to me. If we look at there at verse 7, they go from strength to strength, each one appears before God in Zion.

So not only does God supply their need with refreshment, but each one appears before God. We don't hear of anyone being left behind. We don't hear of anyone not surviving the journey to be near

God.

[18 : 32] Each one appears before God. They go from strength to strength, each one appears before God in Zion. And it just struck me how amazing that is, that each one will indeed appear before God.

And it's an encouragement for us, those that are on the walk, it's not an easy walk. You may be going through really difficult times. Even today, even this morning, you may have real struggles spiritually, but we should be encouraged by the words there in verse 7, that each one appears before God in Zion.

Those of us that trust in the Lord will find he supplies our need on the journey, but he also makes the journey a successful one. How are you doing on the journey today?

Again, I ask myself the same question. Don't, through my preparation, don't worry. I'm not, I'm asking myself the exact same questions. How am I doing on the journey today? Maybe you find yourself in a dry and desolate valley, but we should be encouraged by these words in verse 7, that each one will appear before God in Zion.

These words are a very sure promise for your encouragement and mine this morning. Even in the great hardship, God will provide refreshment and strength to those who put their trust in him.

[19 : 44] Now, again, we're not promised an easy journey. We're not promised a lovely, nice, straight tarmac road. It's full of twists and turns.

I traveled over the Clesiom myself. That's probably quite a hot topic for some people who are not familiar with the word, people driving south. I was told driving north was nicer, but I'm not convinced of that yet.

But we'll see how I get on going back down the road towards Harris. But we're not promised a lovely tarmac road, a well-maintained road. It's full of twists, it's full of turns, it's full of challenges, but God will provide for you at the point of each of our needs.

We can be assured that we will make it successfully to our journey's end. You might feel weak, you might feel weary on your journey at the moment, but we ought to keep on. We ought to keep on and have eternity in view.

So often, the struggles of today bog us down and we don't see beyond the next day or the next week. But everything that happens in our lives, we should have eternity in view, knowing that the time we have on Earth here is so small.

[20 : 51] And if we think our catechism's grown up and I still remember the catechism, the first one, our chief end, is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

And the last word, forever. We've to enjoy Him forever. We enjoy being on the walk with Christ now, but we've to enjoy it forever. We have to have eternity in view when we're thinking about our Christian walk.

Knowing that the hope that is to come is something we can't imagine at the moment, but it should certainly see us through the difficult times at the moment. We can be assured that we will make it successfully.

We trust Him and make Him our strength. Not on our own strength. None of us can journey on our own. Apart from Him, we can do nothing. And we ought to remember that. So we've looked at the longing to be near God.

We've briefly looked at journeying to be near God. And we move on just to our third point just now. And that sees a shift from journeying to be near God to cherishing being near God.

[21 : 51] Let's read verses 8 through to 12. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer. Give ear, O God of Jacob.

Behold our shield, O God. Look on the face of your anointed. For a day in your court is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the Lord God is a Son and shield, the Lord bestows favour and honour. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk up rightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts you.

What wonderfully challenging comparison we have here in these verses. We look at there that the psalmist would rather have one day in the courts of the Lord than a thousand days elsewhere.

How can that be true? You're obviously, the psalmist obviously didn't know Carlyway. So how can that be true? That he would rather spend one day in the house of the Lord but a thousand elsewhere.

[22 : 54] But if we think seriously about it, what's important to the psalmist here has nothing to do with the length of life. He doesn't wish to stay around elsewhere for a thousand days because he enjoys life and he wants to prolong life.

No, he is one who has eternity and view. He would rather spend one day in the presence of his Lord than be a hundred days anywhere else. Indeed, our God is so unimaginably gracious and glorious. We must ask the question, why? Why do we then run and avoid being near to God? Why do we distract ourselves with earthly and unsatisfying things? Why do we choose almost everything and anything else in our lives before we turn and long to draw near to God?

What we may be saying is that if I spend time with God over here, I'm going to miss out on all these things that I think are exciting over on this side. It's our very sinful nature. It means we so often choose 1000 days of running and hiding from God.

But the psalmist doesn't stop there with this comparison. Look at the rest of verse 10. It would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

[24 : 09] He would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. It's far better for him to even be at the edge of God's house rather than be at the heart and center of the tents of wickedness.

And do you notice the wording that was chosen here? The doorkeeper is at the door of a permanent place in which God dwells. Yet the wickedness that he refers to is at the center of tents. The house of God is permanent. The tents of wickedness are so temporary and fleeting and fragile. We can't be struck, we can't be failing to acknowledge the fact that he would rather be in the door of a permanent place than right in the middle of something that is so temporary and fleeting.

And again, it's about having that view of eternity. All the good nice things that we have, whether it's our hobbies, whether it's our homes or careers, when we leave this world, they're gone.

None of them can come with us. And we need to be making sure that we are laying up our treasures in heaven, not here on earth. Looking at verse 10 as a whole, I want us to ask ourselves and myself whether or not we are indeed drawing near to God.

[25 : 23] Are you choosing to be near him? Or are you opting for the temporary pleasures of wickedness in those tents, those fragile and fleeting tents of wickedness?

One of the study Bibles I use is that the ESV study Bible actually puts it perfectly. They said wickedness offers no reward that can even remotely compare to the joy and pleasures of God's house.

Now remember, as the psalmist has said so wonderfully here, it's better to be in the presence of the living God than be anywhere else, not just a couple of places, but anywhere else.

And Matthew Henry beautifully words it. He says it's better to serve God in solitude than serving sin with the multitude. Now you might be listening to the message this morning, whether here or online, thinking that this sounds too onerous and it sounds like a really difficult journey being on the Christian walk, maybe even unenjoyable is a word that's possibly coming to your mind.

You might wish to remain in 1000 days in the tents of wickedness, doing what you think is good and what you want to do, what you maybe don't want to miss out on. Well, what we need to do then is now look at verse 11.

[26 : 35] For the Lord God is a Son in shield. The Lord bestows favour and honour. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk up rightly. And the last words are the important ones there.

No good thing does He withhold from those who walk up rightly. There's no missing out on anything when you draw near to God. You will receive rich blessings and strength if you long to be near God and you indeed journey to be near to God.

We should cherish being near God, knowing that He will ensure no good thing is withheld from us. The Samhain ends with a final blessing in verse 12.

Well, Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you. Blessed is the one who trusts in you. Do you want to receive this blessing and goodness? If so, then it's not found in the tents of wickedness, but it's found only in the house of God where He is dwelling.

So we might ask the question, okay, what now? Where do I go from here? Where do all of us go from here? Well, just in closing, I want us to go to the cross. This wonderful Sam that we've been reading, a very short Sam, but it's a wonderful Sam, finds its absolute fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

[27 : 49] In my study, I found at least two ways. There will be multiple ways, but I found at least two ways that I want us to think about just now, in which Jesus fulfills this Sam. So I'll briefly touch

on them just now.

The three points that I've used this morning, longing to be near God, journeying to be near God, and cherishing being near God, were carried out perfectly by Jesus. He lived out the very heart of this Psalm, so perfectly and far better than you and I ever will.

We're also told of this story. You don't need to turn to it in your own Bibles, but I'll briefly read a few verses from Luke chapter 2, verses 41 to 47, and it's when Jesus was found in the temple, and he left his family to stay in the temple.

So I'll read just seven verses just now, of Luke chapter 2, verses 41. Now his parents, Jesus' parents, went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover, and when he was 12 years old, they went up according to custom.

And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group, they went a day's journey.

[28 : 59] But then they began to search for him, among their relatives and acquaintances. And when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem searching for him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, and listening to the disciples.

And listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. This was not the work of a young, rebellious child, running away from home.

It was Jesus fulfilling the words of this Psalm, perfectly by longing to be near to God, to God his Father, sorry. He was longing to be near him, and he desired to be in the presence of where he was.

He wished to dwell in the place of his Father. Jesus is so often found in the New Testament, disappearing to be near to God with perfect commitment. Jesus was truly devoted to drawing near to God, and we shouldn't wallow in our own failing to do so.

We might sit here and think, well, I'll never be able to draw near to God, or to desire to be near God in the same way Jesus is. None of us will be able to. Because it's his perfect righteousness that was exchanged for our sin.

[30 : 10] His perfect longing to be near God was exchanged for our pitiful efforts. The fulfillment of this Psalm is found in Jesus and his flawless devotion on our behalf.

That's the first way in which Jesus perfectly fulfills this Psalm. But the second way that Jesus fulfills this Psalm is that he now is the place we go to be near God.

The dwelling place we ought to long for and rather spend one day in than a thousand elsewhere now is Jesus Christ. The earthly tents and buildings where God once dwelt are now no longer required.

And it's seen in Matthew 27,51. We won't need to go there where Jesus died on the cross, and the temple curtain was torn into rendering the temple obsolete.

We no longer have a need for a temple on earth. If we wish to draw near to God now, we do so through Jesus Christ himself. He is the new meeting place to dwell with God.

[31 : 06] So we should be encouraged that when we long to be near God, we have a perfect Savior to go to. When we have faith in Him, we'll allow us to draw near to God.

Whether you are fulfilling this Psalm or not, we can confidently draw near to God because in Christ we are made fit to do so. We should all look inwardly and pray that we are each longing to be near God, journeying to be near God, and that we cherish being near God.

And to anyone that's maybe not yet a Christian, I urge you to make right with God. The words we see here, no good thing does He withhold. It's not going to be an easy walk, but equally no good thing does He withhold.

Today is the day of salvation. None of us are guaranteed to enter into tomorrow. None of us are even guaranteed to enter into this evening. And I was just thinking, while we're talking, Phil was mentioning briefly about the Blythe'swood appeal and the shoebox appeal.

I was just thinking when I was sitting there, these young ones receive these gifts. And when they're given the box, I've seen a few of the videos, you don't see the young children asking, what do I need to do to earn this?

[32 : 20] Or what do I need to do to work my way towards deserving this box? No, they take it. The first thing they do is they take the box, simply take it.

The Lord has died on the cross for our sins. You will never come to a level where you will be accepted for the life you live here. We just simply need to take the gift of salvation that has been given to us.

Ask God to have mercy on you. A God that seeks to have you say, how lovely is thy dwelling place. So in closing, just going back to Genesis, we were each created to be in perfect relationship with God.

And now we look to the cross on Calvary. We can have that perfect relationship once again, because the sin that once separated us from God has been dealt with by his Son.

Like the bird in the temple, we have found a home in Jesus, a nest for ourselves, where we may live in the presence of God. What a merciful and gracious God we have, and we ought to be turning to Him, giving thanks, cherishing the opportunity to be near Him.

[33 : 27] Amen. And may the Lord bless these very short reflections on Psalm 84 just now. We'll just conclude before we sing in just a short word of prayer just now. O Lord our God, we give you thanks for this, Sam, we give you thanks for the wonderful blessings and the wonderful encouragement that we have, that each one that journeys with you, Lord, that we know that we will each appear before you in Zion.

And we give you thanks for that wonderful encouragement and the fact that there will be no good thing withheld from us. The life of the Christian is not an easy and simple walk, but it is a fulfilling one, and one that doesn't end at the end of life here.

It doesn't end when we pass into eternity. But when we look at the rich man in Lazarus, we see the things that we have in this world will not come with us.

The treasures that we lay up should be laid up in heaven and not in this world where they are so temporary and fleeting, Lord. So we pray that we would each be reminded of that, that you would speak to us today, that we would indeed long to be near to you, that that longing would be something that is physically felt, that's so intense that we desire to come to you and that we enjoy coming to you each and every day in our prayers, in our devotions when we read, and coming to your house, Lord, and coming to meet the Incorporate Prayer as well, Lord.

So we pray for the prayer meeting that's coming Wednesday online and ask that you'll bless it, Lord, and we know that there is very much the engine room of your church, Lord, and we pray that we would indeed be, we all drawn to come out to pray, Lord.

[35 : 12] So be with us just now, Lord. We give you thanks for the opportunity to hear your word, to hopefully understand better about who you are and how you've created that salvation plan for each and every one of us, and all we need to do is take it.

You don't require us to reach a certain standard, a standard that none of us will be able to reach yet you, and your wonderful mercy and grace you've handed it to us, and all we need to do is put our hands out and take that wonderful gift, Lord.

So we pray that we would indeed do that. Those of us who have not yet done so would indeed do so, and that we would bless our time and bless the message this evening, Lord.

We pray for Phil and give you thanks for him and ask that you continue with him in his studies, Lord, and that we would indeed be able to see many more young men come into the ministry to share the gospel and to spread this wonderful message of hope to all those in our nation, Lord.

So be with us just now. Forgive us for all of our sins. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.