

1 Samuel 1 v 1-20

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 March 2014

Preacher: Peter Robinson

- [0 : 00] In prayer together, let us all pray. It's so important now, God, that we do stop and remember, oh Lord, the wonderful things that you do for us.
- It's good that we can pause in the busyness and in the chaos sometimes of life. To be able to think about you and think about our relationship with you.
- And Lord, whether we have trusted, whether we love you, whether we know you or not, the reality is that we have so much to thank you for. You've given us so many things, so many things to enjoy.
- The very fact that we have health to be here and strength to be here this morning is something quite marvellous and we often take for granted the simple things, Lord.
- We perhaps think that we deserve them or somehow we have the right to them, but we don't. We don't have the right to any moment of any day.
- [1 : 17] We don't have the right, Lord, to health and strength. We don't have the right to live. Lord, you give to us that privilege. You give to us that wonderful opportunity.
- You give to us, oh Lord, that precious blessing of life each day. And Lord, we thank you for that. And we ask again that you would help us to be more considerate and more thankful and more appreciative, not only of what you do for us, but what others do for us as well.
- We thank you for times like Mother's Day to stop and think about, Lord, how much we do owe our parents and our mothers. And no doubt they had their faults.
- But Lord, we thank you that it was through them that, Lord, we came into this world and you gave us life. And there was care and supply and provision through them.
- And Lord, we do want to thank you again for those who are mothers here. And we do pray, Lord, for those who are mums here this morning. We pray for those mums who, Lord, who love you and trust you.
- [2 : 25] You know that it's their desire and their longing is that they might be good examples to their children, that they might be the best mums they can be. And that through their example and through their lives, that the children you've given them may come to know you and trust you, love you and follow you, even in their childhood.
- And so I pray for Christian mums, for those mums here and perhaps other Christian mums too, Lord, that we know about. Lord, strengthen them, help them, encourage them. Lord, give them the patience that they need.
- Give them the strength they need, the love they need. Give them the boldness and courage they need to be able to stand and not to compromise with their children in a world where it seems children are badly treated in the sense of being allowed to do anything they want, being allowed to have anything, even if it's harmful and dangerous.
- And Lord, I pray that you would strengthen mums here and that, Lord, through them, you would make them great ambassadors for Jesus. We do pray, Lord, for those of our mums who aren't here, perhaps much older, those that are in other parts of the country or even possibly other parts of the world.

We thank you again for those mums. And we pray, Lord, that you would help us to be those who show real gratitude and thankfulness to our mums. Help us to be good children to our mothers, whatever their age now.

[3 : 48] Help us, Lord, to be those who encourage them. And if our mothers are Christians, Lord, we pray that you would richly bless them and help them and, again, that our lives may encourage them in the faith.

But if we have non-Christian mums, we pray for them, Lord. We pray that, Lord, they might enter into the wonderful joy and peace of Jesus, that they might, through our lives, see, Lord, how much they are missing out on the great love of God.

Lord, we pray, Lord, that you would be pleased to, even this morning, speak to their hearts and lives and save them. We pray, Lord, again for those mums who still struggle, Lord.

Those mums who struggle because of loss. We pray, Lord, that you would comfort their hearts. We pray that you would wrap them around your everlasting and loving arms and that, Lord, you would give them your peace.

That you take away any ongoing pain and distress. Oh, Lord, that you would cause them to know again that you are with them.

[5 : 01] We pray, Lord, for those mums in other parts of the world who are struggling alone. Perhaps their husbands are in prison because of the faith or even have been killed or murdered because of the faith.

And we ask, again, that you would help them and give them great grace. We do rejoice and thank you for the good news of the birth of this little baby boy to Frederick and Janet's son and daughter-in-law.

And we pray that you would bless that child and that you would help him to put on weight and to grow and to develop. And we pray for mum as she recovers from the birth that, Lord, you would strengthen her and that, Lord, you would richly encourage that family.

We thank you for the safe arrival of this child. Lord, we pray again that he may not only grow physically and mentally and in every other way, but spiritually too, and that through the example of his parents and grandparents and other believers that this little boy may come to know you and love you and trust you even in his childhood.

And so, Lord, we do ask these things. We again come with grateful thanks that you have something to say to us this morning. And we pray, Lord, that you'd give us ears to hear what you have to say.

[6 : 22] Lord, deliver us from that attitude of saying, well, we've heard it all before and we're just here to make up the numbers or whatever it may be. Lord, meet with us and speak with us in such a way that we may know, Lord, we've heard from you and that you are the God who lives and the God who cares and the God who sustains.

And we ask again, oh Lord, that you would please, just as you gave us natural birth. So again, our cry is for many people, those here and those in our town, that they might know that second birth, that spiritual birth, that being born again, that being brought into your family, that being made a child of God, that wonderful joy that comes for sins forgiven.

Oh Lord, we pray that even on this day, even in our midst and even, Lord, in other churches where your gospel and your wonderful good news is preached, that there may be those who enter in to the wonderful joy of Jesus as Savior and God as Father.

We ask these things and we cry to you for these things and look to you to work in this way for your own praise and for your glory. Amen. Let's sing together then before we come to God's word.

We come back to that passage in 1 Samuel number 418. 418. Let's sing together then before we come to God's word.

- [8 : 15] Let's sing together then before we come to God's word. Oh Lord, we come to God's word.
Let life and truth obey. And love and prayer myself has done.
For Jesus come to pray. So let's turn back then to 1 Samuel in chapter 1.
And to that, those first 20 or so verses. I want us to meet somebody this morning.
Somebody who is spoken of here in this chapter and in the next chapter as well.
Well, she's a woman. Don't know how old she is. Probably something in her early 30s. But we know her name. Her name is Hannah.
- [9 : 25] She's not a mother, at least when we start this story and as we begin to learn about her life. But she is married. And she's married to a man called Elkanah.
And a man who loved her very much. So far all seems well with Hannah. So far her life seems pretty good.
But didn't stay that way. Like all the men of Elkanah's day, it was usual that he should want a child.
A child to whom he could pass on the family inheritance. A portion of land within the country of what we know as Israel. That he should pass on his name to continue posterity.
But his wife Hannah was unable to conceive. As was the accepted custom as well. Because after some time, at least it seems that way, as I read the story.
- [10 : 30] He knew that Hannah would not be able to bear a child to him. He took another wife. And her name was Peninnah. Unlike Hannah, Peninnah was able to have children.
And within what seems just a very few years, a short few years, she had several sons and daughters. Now this must have been very hard for Hannah.
But it was bearable to her. Because she knew that Elkanah loved her. Unfortunately, it appears that Peninnah knew that Elkanah loved her more than he loved Peninnah.
And something grew within her. A spirit of bitterness towards Hannah. And Peninnah made it her mission that she would taunt and mock Hannah because of her infertility.
And Peninnah took great delight in Hannah's sadness. In fact, she counted it, it seems, a great victory if she could reduce Hannah to tears.
- [11 : 34] By her taunting and by her insults. Year after year, this provocation would go on. And seemingly getting worse.
More bitter. More unpleasant. All the time. And it seemed to reach a culmination. It seemed to reach a height. Particularly on their annual visit to Shiloh.
The place where God's tabernacle, his temple, was set up for worship. And as was the law. As was Elkanah's religion.
Once a year, he would go up with his family. Make offerings to God. For sin. And for thanksgiving. And so on. And it would be over several days that they would be at Shiloh.
And it was there. We see that on one occasion, Hannah and the family went up to Shiloh.
- [12 : 33] Verse 7. They went on. This went on year and year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival, that's Peninnah, provoked her till she wept and would not eat.
Elkanah, her husband, would say to her, Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downcast? Or downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons? It's a very sad situation, isn't it?
A very sad situation in which Hannah finds herself. We may say even a hopeless situation. How could things ever get better? Been married for these years.

She was never going to have a child. Penanah was going to continue to goad her about this. People around about her, no doubt as well as would be their way, would gossip about why Hannah hadn't got a child.

What possible future happiness could she look forward to? What possible way out of this situation could there ever be for her?

[13 : 38] It seems that she was bound to misery, to unhappiness in her marriage. For the rest of her life. I don't know about you this morning, but it may well be that you can associate in some way with Hannah.

It may not be that you're in an unhappy marriage. It may not be that you are struggling with somebody who is particularly bitter and nasty against you.

But it may be that you're facing a problem which seems to you to cast a long shadow over your life. And that problem, that difficulty, whatever it may be, is unsolvable.

You just can't see a way out. You just can't see a way through. You just can't see how it can possibly change. And though there are many good things in your life, but there's many things that you can look at and point to, as Hannah could to Elkanah's love, there's still this huge heartache that's going on.

In one sense, even a brokenheartedness that's still there because of something that is happening or something that has happened. It could be because of a relationship with another person, perhaps your spouse, perhaps it is very difficult.

[14 : 59] Perhaps it could be your parent that you're struggling with, or even children. Joy they are, but a challenge as well.

It could be at university. It could be at school. It could be in a workplace. There's someone there or something happening there. It could be your own health situation. It could be any number of things.

It could be finance and debts and burdens. It could just be the unavoidable stresses of life sort of piled up and piled up and piled up and you're trapped underneath it.

How can this be resolved? How can this change? Well, what are you going to do?

Perhaps you've tried lots of things already. Perhaps you've tried all sorts of solutions. I'm sure that Hannah had tried lots of things already. I'm sure she'd been to the local doctor or physician and perhaps been examined.

[16 : 03] He said, well, there's nothing that I can see wrong with you. There's nothing I can do for you. Perhaps you'd been to the priest and spoken to him. And he said, well, I can't see anything that I can do for you.

Perhaps you've been to ask her own mother about these things or friends even. I don't know. But nobody seemed to have a solution. And in one sense, she'd run out, we might say, almost of ideas.

Perhaps you've tried to deal with this problem. You've tried to deal with it.

You've gone for advice. You've gone to perhaps Citizens Advice Bureau. Or you've gone to your doctor. Or you've gone to counsellors. Or you've gone to all sorts of people.

And you've asked for help. And you've tried. And you've really worked hard. But it just hasn't budged. That person still isn't changed.

[17 : 01] That situation is still ongoing. That heartache is still very real. You see, there's something about Hannah that sets her apart from most people.

There's something about Hannah that sets her apart in such a way that she's an encouragement and an example to us. Whatever our situation. Whatever our troubles.

You see, Hannah was somebody who had a very real and living faith in the Lord God. That's what made her different. She had someone who wasn't just religious and went along with Elkanah up to the tabernacle and the temple once a year.

She wasn't just somebody who believed that God existed and was there in some intangible sort of strange way. You know, Hannah, for God, for Hannah, God was personal.

Hannah, God was somebody who was real. Somebody who was approachable. Somebody who knew about her. And somebody to whom she could go to for help.

[18 : 08] I wonder if that's how you think about God. What your view of him is like. It may even be, perhaps, you have this sort of belief in God, but actually, because of your situation and your trouble and difficulty, you say, Well, I don't want to know this God, because actually I think God's to blame.

We have a habit of that, don't we? That we won't have any time for God, really, but until things go really wrong and then we're angry with God. Well, why didn't you do something about it?

We have no time for him at other times, except to blame him for our sadnesses. And so genuine was this faith of Hannah in the Lord, her God.

It helped her, enabled her to react to her situation in a surprising way. It helped her to do something which perhaps we've never done. To do something which we need to do.

To do something which we must do. Now, of course, perhaps when we are faced with a situation, like Hannah's, if we were in her shoes, as it were, we might think of things we could do.

[19 : 16] She could always leave Elkanah, couldn't she? She could get out of this very unhappy marriage, even though he loved her. She could get away from the house and the situation. She could, of course, stop going up to worship at Shiloh.

She could make excuses and say, Well, that's it. I've had enough of God. I don't want to even think about God, because it's all his fault. Well, of course, she could have done, which I must admit, I would have been tempted to do in her place, and that's wait in a dark alley and bash Peniah on the head.

I'm sure there's people you know, that you, you know, occasionally you think, Well, I'd like to wait in a dark alley. No, none of you think that, of course. Only me. But she didn't do any of those things, did she?

She didn't do any of those things. In fact, we don't really record her being bitter or angry at Peniah. We don't record her being bitter or angry at Elkanah for taking this other wife, or even bitter and angry at God.

We have no record of her seething in this way or being full of bitterness herself. But also what we don't find is that she, if this makes any sense, she did not do nothing.

[20 : 28] She did not do nothing. She didn't just say, Ah, c'est la vie, or que sera, sera. That's the way it will be. That's just life. That's just how it is.

You've got to accept these things. You've got to have an air of resignation about these things. Perhaps you've got to that place, and you've said, Well, I've tried everything.

I've thought of everything. There's nothing I can do. I've just got to accept it. I've just got to live with it. It's not going to change. No, she didn't do that.

Well, what did she do? Let's look at what she actually did do, because that's where the help is for us. She did what every Sunday school child is taught to do whenever they face a problem.

Let's pray. It's as simple as that. She prayed. She prayed, and she brought her prayer to God. Or rather, she prayed in a way that brought her to the Lord.

[21 : 28] We see that down there. Once in verse 9, once when they had finished eating and drinking, Shilohana stood up. And then in verse 10, in bitterness of soul, Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord.

She prayed. Her prayer is very brief. We don't know all that she prayed. We know part of the prayer where she makes this promise, this vow to the Lord. But we do see certain things about her prayers, which really we need to learn about, and we need to recognize, because there is prayer, and there is prayer.

There is prayer that says, in a wrong attitude, God do something, in a sort of an arrogance or an anger. And there is prayer that is like the prayer of Hannah.

This prayer which is very limp, and sort of like, well, you know, it's a bit like throwing a penny in the wishing well, isn't it? You know, well, you know, you've tried everything.

You never know. It might work. You never know. I don't believe in fairies, but you never know. It could happen. And this prayer like Hannah prayed. And the first thing we see about this prayer of Hannah is that it's a sincere prayer, isn't it?

[22 : 41] It's described in several different ways. In verse 10, we're told, in bitterness of soul, Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord. Later on, when she speaks to Eli and tells her what she's doing, in verse 15, she said, I was pouring out my soul to the Lord.

It's very sincere, isn't it? She's not keeping anything back. She's not being a little bit sort of fast and loose with God. She's just laying it all on the table. She's laying it all out before God.

She's not spinning off a well-rehearsed sort of prayer that she learned from her childhood or something, or something which was dead, but just sort of a liturgy in one sense. She just opens the floodgates of her heart and the floodgates of her soul, and she pours it out to God.

That shows you just how far she's come, isn't it? It just shows you how much her heart is broken. It shows you just how she is struggling. And she's not concerned, it seems to me, with using the proper language in her prayer.

She's not thinking, well, I'm going to pray a really eloquent and really sort of flowery, if I can put that in poetic prayer, perhaps that might be turned into a poem or a psalm or something later on.

[24 : 00] She's just as concerned with God. And notice what it says there, later on. It says that, verse 13, Hannah was praying in her heart.

In her heart. See, the reality is the only prayers God hears are the prayers that are in the hearts, and that come from the hearts. I can stand up here, or you can stand up, and we can say all sorts of things with our mouths.

But if the heart isn't connected, God doesn't hear. Not because he doesn't hear, physically, but because he takes no notice. A prayer that doesn't come from the heart doesn't interest God.

A prayer that's done for people to think how clever the prayer is, or to sound good, or to be something else. God doesn't care about those prayers. He only cares about prayers of the heart.

Prayers that we are engaged in. Prayers that mean something to us. Prayers that we believe in. He's not concerned about trying to impress, she's not concerned about trying to impress Eli, the chief priest who sat there.

[25 : 09] She doesn't even realize he's there. She has no interest in him. She doesn't know he's about. And when he comes and sees her praying, or moving her lips, he thinks she's drunk, doesn't he? And she gives him a very humble rebuff.

No, Lord, I'm not. I'm deeply troubled. I'm pouring out my soul to the Lord. Don't count me as wicked. I'm praying here out of my great anguish and grief. And he's clearly surprised by this, and sends her with this blessing.

When you pray, dear friends, are you praying with sincerity? Are you praying from the heart? Have you really brought this problem to God?

This thing that weighs, that binds, that traps? Have you really come sincerely and laid it out before God, and poured out your heart with him about it? Does it mean that much to you?

And the second thing we see here as well about her praying is that it was specific praying. She had a specific thing to pray for. She was focused on one request. One thing that she wanted from God.

[26 : 17] One thing mattered to her. Give me a son. Give me a son. When Jesus was on his way through Israel one time, he met a man who was blind, and he said to the man who was blind, What do you want me to do for you?

And I said, I want to see. I want to see. He didn't say, I want to be rich. I want to be happy. He didn't say, I want to be healthy or wise. I want to see. There's only one thing.

She didn't pray about Elkanah. She didn't pray, Lord, show Elkanah how wrong he's been in taking a second wife. She didn't pray against Peninnah, Lord, strike her down, or get rid of her, or change her heart even, that she might become more loving and caring and thoughtful for me in my misery.

She didn't pray about anything else. She had one desire, one thing. Above all else, she longed and requested of God, and that was the thing that she prayed for. You're specific when you pray.

There's a lovely story about that Helen Rosevere. Some of you will know her. She was a missionary in Zaire, 20 or 30 or so years ago, or more even.

[27 : 33] And she told this story in one of her books. She says this, One of the girls responded in prayer like this.

Dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late because by then the baby will be dead. And dear Lord, send a doll for the sister so she won't feel so lonely.

That afternoon, a large package arrived from England. The children watched eagerly as it was opened. Much to their surprise, under some clothing was a hot water bottle. Remember, this is in Africa, central Africa.

Somebody sends them a hot water bottle. Immediately, the girl who had prayed so earnestly started to dig deeper in the box, saying, If God sent that, I'm sure he also sent the doll.

And she was right. The heavenly Father knew in advance of that child's request that five months earlier, he had led a ladies' group in England to include both of those specific items.

[28 : 50] That's the sort of God we're dealing with, you see. But you see, that childlike faith. Oh, that's childish, isn't it? But that's real. That's genuine. That's sincere.

And it's specific. What's pressing? What's the pressing need of your heart? What is it you really need from God? What is it you really need?

Perhaps you are afraid to ask specifically, think you're being selfish. It's not right for me to ask in that way. But if that's what you need, if your heart is broken, doesn't your heavenly Father care about that?

Of course he does. Doesn't he know you need that? Of course he does. Too often when we come to pray or when we share with someone, say, I'd really like God to answer this prayer. But we don't want it enough.

We don't really want it enough. If we're honest, though it would be nice if that situation changed or that got better, we've sort of settled with putting up with it.

[29 : 49] There's a sort of a blasé or a contentment that's come upon us. We don't have much urgency about it. And we shouldn't be surprised if we aren't urgent about this matter, then why should God be urgent about it?

Hannah prays. If I can put it in this way, she prays as if her life depends upon it. I can ask myself, when was the last time I prayed like that?

But I want you to notice as well, dear friends, that when she brought that prayer to God, that prayer brought her peace. Look at the change in this woman, Hannah.

She's prayed, she's wept, she's cried, she's spoken with Eli who thought she was drunk. What happens? Verse 18. Second part.

Then she went her way, ate something, and her face was no longer downcast. Her face was no longer downcast. downcast.

[30 : 57] She got up from prayer. She still had no son to hold. She still was not pregnant. She still had received no answer from God, no voice from heaven had come and said, yes, you're going to get this or anything like that.

But there's this burden that's lifted off her shoulders. There's this incredible peace that's flooded her soul. She's no longer downcast. And her face shows it. Something has changed in her.

Just think how miserable she was. In bitterness of soul, she prays. She speaks about being deeply troubled. This is not just a passing whim or a tantrum that she's having.

This has been building up for year after year after year after year. And in one sense, the pressure cooker's popped. She's smiling. And what's changed?

What's changed in the situation? Nothing's changed. Has it? Nothing has changed. Elkanah is still married to another woman. Penanah is still the nasty woman she was before.

[31 : 58] All her children are there as a constant reminder to Hannah's barrenness. Nothing has changed outwardly, but she has this incredible peace, this incredible sense that God has heard and that God will answer.

Now this is what prayer is so important, dear friends. Paul, as he writes in one of his letters, talks and speaks about this matter of prayer. He says this, Philippians chapter 4, verse 6.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

There's a simple equation. Tell God everything in prayer. Bring it to him and lay it before him and the answer is, verse 7, the peace of God.

Will guard your hearts and your minds. People say a troubled shed is a troubled halved. You see, the reality is that a troubled prayed is a trouble removed.

[33 : 27] When you pray, dear friend, you know what's happening? That burden, that sorrow, that grief, that struggle that's upon your heart is taken from your heart and God takes it to his own heart.

Takes it to his own heart. This is the God we're talking about and dealing with. Our almighty God, our loving Father, takes it to himself and there is that giving and there is that receiving.

A prayer board of peace. Are you still looking for peace? Are you still searching for healing on your heart?

Are you still longing for some satisfaction, some contentment, some, there's something there, there's one can, an itch that won't be scratched, there's a bug that won't be removed, there's a wound that won't heal, a sore that won't close up.

Never going to until you come to God in prayer. And then finally we see here what we shouldn't be surprised to see but we do see it.

[34 : 44] Prayer brought her the answer. Later on, we're told after the feast, after they went back, verse 19, early the next morning they arose, worshipped before the Lord, went back to their home in Ramah.

Elkanah lay with Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her and in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel saying, because I asked the Lord for him.

That's his name, because I asked the Lord for him. Samuel. The peace that she felt from God was not the answer to her prayer.

God didn't just give her the grace to accept her situation so that she no longer sorrowed but God gave her that peace because she had the assurance that he was answering her prayer and would give to her what she longed for.

That son. That son that everybody told her she was never going to have, God gave her in his time and in his way. God always answers prayer.

[35 : 54] God always answers prayer. Now he can answer it no. That's an answer. Isn't it? If you ask somebody a question, are you going to the shops today and you say no, you've received an answer.

It may not be the answer you want or that you say, well can you give me a lift to church today and you say, no, well it's, you know, there's an answer. God answers our prayers and sometimes he says no. At times he says wait or not yet.

But there are often times when God does answer yes, particularly when we pray as Hannah prayed. That's why we are encouraged from Genesis to Revelation to pray.

That's why we are given so many assurances that God answers prayer. That's why we have written out for us people's lives like Hannah and others as well who prayed and God answered and said yes.

They're given there for our encouragement. They're given there so that we should be expecting God to say yes and looking to him. And when God, when we pray in this way, we should expect that God will give us what we ask for.

[37 : 04] And the reason is this. Because when Hannah prayed, she did not pray in her own strength. She did not pray by her own ability. She did not pray with her own righteousness or goodness.

She prayed because God by his Holy Spirit so filled her heart so that she prayed as she did. And this is what the Bible tells us in Romans chapter 8 in verse 26.

Paul is speaking about the Lord's help for us. And he says this. In the same way, the Spirit, that's the Holy Spirit, helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for.

Perhaps that's how you feel in the present situation. But the Spirit himself intercedes with us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

The Holy Spirit within us stirs us and moves us as Christians to cry out to God and to pray to him. That's in one sense why we know that this is God is going to answer it because he doesn't put within our hearts requests and prayers and desires that he has no intention of answering.

[38 : 15] Now we do pray selfishly and we do pray with wrong attitudes. We do pray with wrong motives. But when we pray in this way as Hannah prays, it's proof that God has worked in our hearts in such a way to bring us to that place where we can do nothing else but cry and call out to him.

Now why? Why? Because God had a plan and a purpose for Hannah. God had a plan and a purpose for Hannah's son Samuel.

He was going to be a great leader of God's people. He was going to fulfill an important part of God's wonderful plan of salvation for the people of Israel and for the whole world.

He was going to be the one who would go ahead of King David who himself was somebody who pointed to and prepared the way for Jesus to come into this world to be the saviour of sinners and to bring in God's kingdom.

And so God had a plan and in part of that plan was Hannah's sorrow and barrenness. Part of God's plan was to bring her through that time of distress so that she might pray as she did so that they might be the answer that she received.

[39 : 31] And we haven't time to go into all of these things but the reality is this that if we have faith in the living God then the things that you are going through, the distresses and the sorrows you are going through, God has a plan through them and for them which you and I cannot see at this time.

But part of that plan is to bring us to that place where we will cry to him and call upon him and look to him. It may be for some of us here this morning who have never trusted in Christ that God is so working in our hearts and lives and so distressing us and stirring us up because his purpose and plan is to bring us to that place where we will call upon him to be saved.

And when life is comfortable and life is easy and life goes just as we want it then we are forgetful and thoughtless of God. But God has allowed us to go through and brought us into times of heartbreak.

It may be done by sinful hands and wicked people and other things and situations but in the midst of it God is there. He doesn't stand aloof from the realities of life.

And though painful and heartbreaking it is it is because God's desire is to bring you to himself that you might enter into that peace and that fullness and the perfect plan that he has for you.

[40 : 48] But it may be to you dear Christian that you are going through these things and for you they are trials and they are testings and they are painful and again you may think well what are you doing God?

Why are you acting in this way? Why aren't you allowing me to have peace or freedom in this situation? Why is there heartbreak? Why is it that that person who I love with all my heart is still unsaved?

Why is it my child or my husband or my wife that I've cried to you and prayed to you for is still hardened against you and it breaks my heart? Because God has a plan in that to teach you to trust him to teach you to love and follow him to teach you that he is the God who will answer that prayer according to his timing and purpose and plan.

Maybe many other things. The Apostle James at the end of his little letter we've been looking at it in our church he says something very simple but extremely profound.

Is anyone of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone of you in trouble? He should pray. Let's just do that now.

[42 : 10] Let's respond to God's word. Let's just take a moment to pray before we sing our final hymn. Whatever it is that's on your heart whatever it is that God has been speaking to you about now's the time to speak to him about it.

Now's the time for you to bring it to him. Amen.

Amen. Let's sing 422 very well known hymn what a friend we have in Jesus all our sins and griefs to bear what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer 422 422 harm 522 522 God, yes.

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and sins to end.

All our revelations carry. Everything to God in prayer. Oh, what peace we often call it.

[44 : 06] Oh, what needless day we end. All our sins and sins to end. All our sins and sins to end.

Everything to God in prayer. All our sins and sins to end. All our sins and temptations.

Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. All our sins and sins to end. And we find a friend so faithful.

Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus, God, yes. Jesus, God, yes. All our sins and sins to end.

[45 : 05] Take it to the Lord in prayer. To your friends, this wise will save. All our sins and sins to end. All our sins and sins to end.

Easter. Caesar. All our sins and sins to end. All our sins and sins and sins to end. All our sins and sin. All our sins and sins. All our sins and sins. All our sins and sins to end. All our sins.

All our sins and sins. All our sins and sins. All our sins and sins. All our sins and sins. Do your friends despise for saving Take him to the Lord in prayer Give his arms to take and shield him You will find the solace there Listen to this assurance from God's word, from God himself.

Now to him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout every generation, today, tomorrow, and forever.

Amen.