

The King's Speech

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- [0 : 0 0] Now we're going to look back today at this chapter, Daniel chapter 10 and try and unpack and work out what God is wanting us to learn from this chapter.
- I wonder if, like me, that you sometimes find that your expectations in life aren't being met.
- You go to a restaurant and there's a menu full of beautiful colour pictures of the steak that they're selling and the apple crumble for pudding.
- But when it arrives, it just doesn't quite look like the picture. You've seen that? The expectations just don't quite match the picture.
- Or a holiday brochure where you see this beautiful apartment or beautiful beach and when you get there, these are your expectations, don't quite match the promise.
- [1 : 0 5] The reality is different from the promise. And that can happen so often in our lives. Probably sometimes, maybe can I switch the words, not just expectation, but sometimes assumptions.
- And assumptions of what's going to happen sometimes don't meet the reality of what's happening. Or maybe it's more serious in your life, it's about what other people's lives are like.
- You come to church and you look at other people and you think they have no idea what I'm going through because their life's easy and they don't have any problems and difficulties.
- Or maybe in your workplace or maybe with your fellow students, you've got people that seem to just breeze through their exams and life for them seems to be easy and it's going well.
- And it's just not like that for you. And your expectation of other people's lives might not be completely accurate.
- [2 : 0 4] Well, this is a chapter that is very much about expectations and shocks. So I want you to stick with me, if you will.
- I think there's a few tired people today. I feel there's a sense of general tiredness and I think that probably comes around May time, certainly comes around May time for me when the assembly is due.
- But there's a general that's so I need you to work with me and to stick with it as we go through this and see and feel and hear what God might be saying to us. Because this is very much a chapter of expectations and shocks.
- I wonder, I can think of a couple of Christian expectations or possibly assumptions that we might have that I hope can be related to the principles that we find in this chapter.
- And one is that an expectation or an assumption that as a Christian, God will make me happy. You know, that might be an expectation you have of God. Well, I became a Christian because I want God said he would make me happy.

- [3 : 03] And that's what I believe that God's going to make me happy. And I think we need to define terms there, what happiness means and what you think by happiness and what God thinks obviously by happiness and that's where maybe expectations differ.
- But maybe you genuinely have come to faith in Christ and you're living your Christian life and you think, well actually the promises of God's word simply aren't meeting the reality that I'm going through.
- And my expectations aren't being met. He said he would bless. He said he forgives. I'm going to be full of the Holy Spirit that there's a, he will give me above and beyond what I can ask and even imagine.
- And there's these great promises and there's these great things that we can be transformed and renewed and changed. But the reality doesn't seem to match the promises. You seem to be trudging along in a Christian life that doesn't seem to be very victorious or great.
- And you're seeing the expectations that I had aren't matching the reality. And you look at the promises in the Bible and you find that you think that it's miles which is like the adverts. You know, it's not like what you expected it to be.
- [4 : 05] And that is, I believe, at one level and in one way, in a different way for Daniel, but nonetheless in a real way, that his expectation, his assumption of how God would answer his prayers was different from what was unfolding for him.
- Because this is about two years from the previous chapter. And if you remember previously, Daniel had seen that the 70 years of the captivity of his people in Babylon was coming to an end and that they were going to be released and that they were going to go back to the promised land.
- This was God's answer. This was God's promise. This was going to be a great rejoicing, celebratory time for him. And he was excited about that. That this great promise of God was going to happen for his people.
- They would return to the promised land and they would worship in the temple in Jerusalem once again. This is two years later from that. Cyrus the king had decreed and allowed the people to return and it's a huge anti-climax.
- Two years down. Huge anti-climate. It wasn't how Daniel expected it to be. Well, half of the people didn't even go back to Jerusalem.
- [5 : 20] They were quite content to stay in Babylon. They were not interested in returning to the promised land. And those who did go back to rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem were finding great opposition and it was a struggle and it was difficult.
- And Daniel at the beginning of this chapter seems to be in touch with God but he's mourning greatly. He's mourning and he's going to God because it seems that his expectations aren't being met and the promises of God don't seem to be working out in reality.
- He could well be depressed here, discouraged and downbeat and finding ways and finding his faith in God being tested greatly.
- So he goes to God. He fasts again before God. He doesn't drink any wine. He doesn't drink meat. He doesn't use his lotions which he used to make himself look good and everything else.
- And he goes to God. The expectations he had of God weren't being met. The assumptions of how God would answer his prayer wasn't working out.
- [6 : 28] He was learning that God's ways weren't his ways. And I think we'll begin to see a little bit what that means for us in our own lives if our expectations aren't being met in the way we think they should be.

If God isn't answering our prayers the way we think or isn't giving us the promises in the way that we expect them to be given to us. So God will make me happy. Is that an issue that you have that you feel that God isn't making you happy?

That he isn't giving you what you thought the Christian life should be? God's ways are not our ways. Can I just look at a second just by way of kind of introduction, a second expectation that we may have that's linked to what I said at the beginning is that it's easy.

You may think it's easy for people. You may look at other people and think it's easy for people who are Christians with strong faith to live their lives. You look at other Christians who you think are mature in the faith and who are growing up in the faith and who have been Christians for a long time.

You think they've got it absolutely easy. It's no problem for them. They've got great faith. They've got courage. Their life is easy. They come to church and they're involved in church and they're learning a great deal and it seems everything's smooth for them.

[7 : 36] But they don't understand my life. It's not like that for me. I don't have it easy. I don't have that strong faith. And you may be looking at someone like Daniel and say, where's Daniel?

He's probably about 84 years old by this time. He's got it easy. He's a man of faith. He's been consistent all his life. He just snaps his fingers and the truth of God just seems to pour out of him and so he gets through every crisis that he faces.

That's not the biblical picture and I don't think that's what we have here. We don't, Daniel didn't have it easy and I don't believe Daniel found it easy to be a believer and to trust in God even at an old age when he had seen God work in so many different ways.

I believe he was struggling here and it was difficult for him because the promises weren't working out and we see someone, a believer here, long in the faith who had a really tough time of it.

Things were very difficult for him. He's disappointed. What does he do with his disappointment? And I want to short caveat. What he does with his disappointment is he goes to God.

[8 : 43] It's the beginning of that chapter again. At that time, I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks and so on and he was in God's presence and God comes to speak to him. He deals with his disappointment by going to God.

That can be the hardest thing in the world to do. If you've got a really tough decision to make, the easiest thing to do in the world, isn't it, is to put it off. If you get something you don't want to do, then you're going to put it off, aren't you, sometimes.

And I think if you've got a difficult issue with your wife or husband or with your colleague at work or with your sister or brother or with your neighbour or friend and you know you need to deal with it, but it's going to be difficult to deal with when you put it off.

I think we can do that spiritually very easily. We can avoid going to God and dealing with our difficulties, but Daniel's a great example of taking his difficulties to God and dealing with him before God.

And so this early verses of Daniel chapter 10, he's seriously wrestling with God about what's happening, about his people struggling, about the promises not working out as he expected and he deals with his disappointment by taking it to God.

[9 : 54] He deals with his wrong expectations and his assumptions and he takes them into God's presence and his bitter disappointment, he takes them into God's presence and wrestles with God about it.

And in so doing, we find this great man of God, this great solid believer in God, it becomes deeply aware of his weakness.

You know in verses 4 to 7, he sees this vision, this amazing vision of Jesus Christ, we'll go into, to talk about that briefly. He terror overwhelms me, I was left alone in verse 8, gazing at his great, I had no strength left, my face turned deadly pale, I was helpless and he was broken.

He was incredibly aware of his weakness, you know the words, I was drained, I was speechless, I was unclean, I was inadequate, I was weak. And this great man of God goes into God's presence and as a mature believer, he's given this incredible vision of not only the person of God but also the future of God's people for us.

So this old man of God didn't have it easy. He became a channel of revelation, God revealed himself to Daniel but also through Daniel to us.

[11 : 17] And there was a great cost for him. I think sometimes we open our Bibles and we read them quite cheaply and we'll read Daniel quite cheaply and we'll say, oh that's interesting, what's interesting what happened to Daniel.

But for us to know about God, for us to know about God's purpose and pattern and God's revelation and God's bringing of his son, there was great cost to people like Daniel for us to know.

Because he was so close to the light of God, he was hugely aware of his own weakness and darkness. And that will be a reality for you and I as we mature in the faith. Now you may look at some people here who you think are very mature in the faith, you think life is easy for them and that their faith is easy and they've grown strong.

Let me tell you those who are strong in the faith, the closer they become to Jesus, the darker their own hearts appear and the weaker they feel and the more impotent and the more needy of a saviour.

If you believe you're a strong Christian and you haven't experienced these things, then I think your expectation and your assumptions are wrong.

[12 : 21] Because the closer you are to Christ, the closer you are in fellowship with the Father, the more aware you will be of your own weakness and vulnerability and darkness.

Because the light will be shining in the places that it never otherwise will reach. And so this Daniel may have been a strong believer, he was aware of his own need and he was also aware of his need of support.

The stronger you become as a Christian, the closer you are to Christ, the less likely it is to make you a maverick, the less likely it is to make you independent and self-contained.

The closer you are to Christ, the more you're aware of your need of support and you need of fellowship and you need of encouragement from others.

He was walking by the time of the Passover and we then go on to hear that there were men with him, they were overwhelmed when he saw the vision, they didn't see the vision themselves.

[13 : 33] So he wasn't there on his own, he was there probably celebrating the Passover with these guys, these band of brothers that he's had, maybe a different band of brothers through many long years, but he wasn't alone, he was praying with others and maybe celebrating if they could to Passover because it was at that time and thinking of the believers back in Jerusalem with all their battles and struggles.

He needed support from his fellow human beings and he also needed the support and the encouragement of God. It's a great chapter of this because we see and we'll go on and say a little bit with us, the angels, they touch him, they touch his lip and they touch him and lift him up and then they give words of encouragement, you know, don't be afraid, be strong, peace, be strong.

So this great believer, you know, expectations might be that the more you go on in the faith, the lesser you're going to need these poor, miserable Christians around you and the closer you are to God, I get all my strength and my spiritual vigor from relationship with God, not so.

Yes, so, but God supports and encourages us through his people and through the words that they bring and through the touch and encouragement and closeness that we have with one another and we will continue to need that support and share that support with one another.

So as we even come to this by way of introduction, we need to examine our expectations and our assumptions about the kind of life we live, the way God will answer his promises.

[15 : 02] I guarantee that he will not answer our promises or guide us. You may be faced with a lot of different guidance issues today. He will not necessarily guide you the way you expect or want to be guided.

It will not simply be a case of rubber stamping what we want to do. God will often lead us a different way and it will be a way of the cross and it will be a way of suffering and struggle and difficulty because he knows better and because he's doing a greater work in us and because he is God.

And Daniel began to recognize that his expectations and his assumptions of God were far from the mark. You know, at best we live for 80 or 90 years in this universe.

Do we really believe that we have the overall understanding of what God wants to do with us, this great sovereign eternal God, and are we willing to take our assumptions and take our expectations to the foot of the cross and say, Lord, you guide me and you lead me your way because you know better than I do.

I think that's very often what causes us to struggle in our Christian lives when we don't think God loves us because he's not giving us what we want. He's not making me happy in the way I think I should be happy.

[16 : 21] And there's battles and struggles and difficulties and doubts and fears and what we do rather than take them to him, we just become angry with him and close the book and close the door and close the conversation.

Daniel got it right. It was so serious that he went to God fasting and praying to seek God's wisdom. So we find, I think, sometimes that our expectations do need to be channeled and remolded in the light of Scripture.

But can I say that there's also, and I think this will help to understand the whole kind of principles behind what we're looking at today, there's two shocks in this chapter, I think.

The first is God's fight and the second is God's emphasis. So in our lives, I think these things apply to us just as much as they apply to Daniel.

And what we see here is God speaking about an unseen spiritual warfare in this chapter. Now it's a difficult chapter to unpack and the vision is difficult, but to me it seems very clear that the vision that he gets and the man that he sees who in verse 5 we're told, dressing linen with a bit of finest gold around his waist, his body was like chrysalis, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, that's Jesus.

[17 : 53] That's a pre-incarnate vision of Jesus Christ. It's the same vision with the same kind of language that's given in Revelation chapter 1. Okay, about who John met and who gave him the revelation at the end of the Bible.

But I also believe that there's two other heavenly beings in this vision that speak to Daniel. One is Michael and one is Gabriel.

And it's almost like what we have here is this great kind of vision from the throne room of the spiritual kind of war cabinet, as it were.

And what is reflected here is this unseen spiritual dimension. We're told here later on in the chapter, Michael says, one of the chief princes came to me to help me because I was detained with the Prince of Persia and the King of Persia.

And it speaks about a spiritual warfare, the Prince that's spoken of here is not a human prince, he's probably a satanic power.

[19 : 04] And what has been revealed again and again at the end of the chapter, what it talks about, no one was there to support me except Michael, your prince, and I was detained because of the spiritual warfare that was going on.

I mean, it's kind of an amazing revelation that God is revealing an incredible, unseen spiritual dimension, that Gabriel and Michael and the angelic forces were battling with dark spiritual forces so that God's will could be done with God's people.

And I think that is, you know, we kind of shrug our shoulders, she was ridiculous today. But that's the theme of the whole Bible. It's the theme of the New Testament just as clearly, and we'll come at the end to Ephesians 6, for our battle is not a struggle, not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil and heavenly realms.

And Jesus, Peter says, be self-controlled and alert, your enemy, your enemy, my enemy, the devil, prowls around like a lion looking for someone to devour.

Or Jesus says, now, and John 12, now is the time of judgment on this world. Now the prince of this world will be driven out.

[20 : 26] Okay? Our Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4, the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers. Now can you just look at one passage, Revelation 12 and 7 and 8.

Revelation 12, this is another look into the spiritual unseen war that is a reflection of what happened at the cross on Calvary.

Revelation 12 verse 7, and there was a war in heaven. Michael, say Michael had spoken of in Daniel, and the angels fought against the dragon and the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was not strong enough and they lost their place in heaven.

The great dragon was hurled down that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan who leads the world astray. He was hurled to the earth and his angels with him. And verse 11 it says, they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony.

So you've got this unseen spiritual warfare that is described in cosmic terms here in Daniel and what was happening and also in personal terms in our spiritual lives.

[21 : 40] And that is what's being revealed here. And there is this ongoing, in other words, not only does God do things in his own way and his ways are greater than our ways, but also things are not as they seem.

So we sit here today and everything's comfortable and casual and relaxed, but the Bible makes clear there's an unseen spiritual war, even today, even around the word of God.

And we have spiritual power seeking to snatch that word away and make it inapplicable to our lives. And so when we complain to God or when we struggle with God and we struggle with our circumstances, God is saying, you need to know that there is this spiritual warfare, that there's this unseen spiritual battle that is happening in life and see our life and circumstances in the light of the fact that we have as Christians a spiritual enemy who wants to draw us away from Jesus, who wants to make us live our life our own way, who wants to make us be bitter and to be careless and to be unthinking and to be gossiping and to do all kinds of things that will take us away from Christ.

So when we're struggling in life and when things are difficult, we always need to think about the spiritual battle and the spiritual forces of darkness that want to take us away from Jesus Christ.

That's the spiritual reality we need to consider. It's one we see by faith. The world may mock, but the world is happy to speak about multiverses and plurality of universes and life outside there, but we're saying that God makes clear that there is a spiritual warfare that's unseen that will keep you from Jesus, that will deceive you not to believe in Jesus, that will seek to make you spiritually cold, that will keep you from understanding the gospel message.

[23 : 47] God's fight is revealed here. An incredible, unseen spiritual dimension. But also we need to be encouraged by our glorious King that is revealed here and that almost is so great and so glorious that Daniel almost life drains out of him.

He doesn't know he feels weak and helpless. His power goes from his legs. He's falling down because this vision of Jesus Christ that we believe is a pre-incarnate vision of Jesus Christ is just so wonderful and also terrifying and powerless.

I had no strength left. My face turned deadly pale. I was helpless and I heard him speaking. So we have this Christ who is key to the message of Daniel and he will then remain central to the visions that Daniel gets and the prophecies Daniel gets in verse 11 and 12.

And as we saw previously and as Corey told when we went through and Tom also when we went through it that Christ is central to all the visions of Daniel, that it's a message that Christ is coming, that the people are being prepared for the coming of Jesus.

And so Christ meets with Daniel in this passage and it's an awesome meeting that he has. It's maybe a bit more paralleled to the meeting when in the Mount of Transfiguration where the disciples see the glory of Jesus Christ and it's overwhelming for them.

[25 : 23] Now that's important I think for us because we think of Jesus Christ in Nazarene, don't we? We think of the carpenter. We think of Jesus that's just like me.

We think of Jesus who's emptied himself into humanity whose glory is hidden, who has humbled himself. Therefore we find it easy to sideline this Jesus because he's just like me.

I don't need this Jesus. He's the dispensable mate that I have. He's Jesus the chum that I can draw along beside now and again but the one I can take or leave.

This is the brother Jesus that I can ignore, the family member that doesn't need to be at every meal and in every conversation.

And that is one of the dangers of us worshiping only the incarnate Son without recognizing who this incarnate Son is, remembering how glorious he is, remembering that he is God eternal and remembering that we will all stand before him, remembering that he knows everything there is about us and who he is.

[26 : 38] So we worship this great and glorious God and we don't seek to sidetrack him because he is victorious. That's what Daniel's about.

God is saying to Daniel, you're disappointed, you're discouraged. It's not happening the way you think because I've got a better plan. It's not just that Jerusalem is going to be rebuilt and the walls and the temple are rebuilt.

I'm going to send my son and there's going to be a spiritual Jerusalem that will go on into eternity and the king of kings will defeat the darkness, the enemies that you have, not the physical enemies, not the Babylonians, not the Chaldeans but Satan and his powers and that is what he's doing for every one of us and that is where our encouragement and our strength comes from, we have a glorious king.

It's God's fight that we are in but it's a fight that has already been won. So I want to end with not just this reality of our expectations and our assumptions being recalibrated and recognizing a spiritual fight.

If we don't recognize a spiritual fight, we'll be prayerless I think as people, both corporately prayerless and individually prayerless.

[27 : 55] So the spirit in recognizing the spiritual fight is very important not because we're kind of wrestling away in our own strength but because we go to one who's already victorious.

We go to one who will be empowered by, because that is God's emphasis and that's what I want to finish with. We've seen God's fight and we now see God's emphasis in this passage as well because not only does we have this great vision of Jesus Christ and this unpacking of a spiritual warfare that's going on that Daniel doesn't really understand and know about nor do we in many ways but we see his emphasis as one, it's on encouragement and secondly it's on wearing the armour as a broader emphasis but the encouragement is great in this chapter.

This isn't meant to discourage us, it's not meant to make us think, oh well this is on him, it doesn't really relate to me, it doesn't relate to my life, it's written last, you know it's the Old Testament, it's not significant.

We are to take encouragement from it because we see God here dealing with Daniel and how does he deal with Daniel who may have wrong assumptions and who may have wrong expectations of what it is to see God's promises unfolded, he builds him up.

What is the sovereign God of the universe, he sends his angels to touch his lips and he touched me and set me trembling on my hands and feet and he touches him and brings him up from his position of terror and fear and then he says these great words Daniel, you who are in verse 10, 11, you're highly esteemed, consider the words I'm going to speak to you and stand up for I've been now sent to you and then he said you know do not be afraid Daniel since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding, humble yourself before God, your words were heard, I've come in response to them and he speaks words, oh man highly esteemed again, don't be afraid, be strong now, be strong, don't be afraid, no peace, shalom, shalom, peace, that's God's great emphasis, he doesn't come down and say let Daniel look at this, have a look at this, you know you've got it all wrong, you've got to read pages 10 to 15 and get it right, you're misunderstanding everything, you've been a Christian for 80 years, a believer for 80 years, how can't you know and understand my ways by now, he's not like that, he deals with him gently, he deals with him lovingly, he reassures him that he's greatly loved, he senses peace and he says be strong, do not be afraid, I've said it here, I've said it here hundreds of times, do not be afraid, it said 300 at least 365 times in the Bible, one for every day, don't be afraid, the word that the angels bring most to humanity that we have recorded are the words don't be afraid, don't be afraid, when Jesus comes don't be afraid and here don't be afraid, at the resurrection don't be afraid, don't be afraid, oh macho men here sitting there, I'm not afraid, I'm never afraid, of course you're afraid, we're all afraid, we're afraid to stand up for our faith, we're afraid to do what God wants us to do, we're afraid to be obedient because we don't know what it'll lead us, we're afraid all the time, all of us are afraid in one way or another and God says don't be afraid, the reason I'm showing you this is because

[31 : 36] I've won the victory, I've done it, I've planned it, I've purposed it, the cross is the victory won, same thrown out, death defeated, your sins dealt with, don't be afraid, that's God's expectation from us is to go to Him and hear these words, if you're struggling in your Christian faith today please don't do what I do sometimes and what I know other people do is close the door to heaven, go there, speak with God and listen to Him say these words, hear these promises and allow Him to unravel what that means for us, it's much better than going to Him saying God will make me happy and if He doesn't make me happy I'm going to walk away from Him because often our happiness is polluted and it is dysfunctionally motivated, He's doing something greater for us, something better, something more eternal,

He's renewing, He's transforming, He's giving us spiritual power and He says to us when we're struggling we're in the darkness, don't be afraid and I do believe and this is a bit of a broad application but I do believe that the touch that He gave here or He made the angels touch Daniel is what He wants us to do for one another, that we are close with one another, that we care for one another, that we look after one another and that there's a human touch that we require in our lives, Daniel had seen God in the flesh, he'd seen this incredible vision but he needed a touch and he needed comforting words so God's emphasis is encouragement and I hope that you're an encourager more than anything else, you know the easiest thing to be a church is a discourager, the easiest thing to find fault, the easiest thing is to step back and be a discourager and discourage others, the greatest thing is to be an encourager, we all need encouragement, we all need lifted up, this is Daniel, he's 84 years of age, he's been consistent all his life, he needed these words, old Christians need these words, young Christians need these words, we all need the encouragement to carry on in our Christian lives, that's God's emphasis but also of course so is his emphasis is the armour of God in the battle and we take that from the example of Daniel who prayed but also of course from the teaching of scripture in Ephesians chapter 6, that amazing chapter that speaks about our spiritual warfare and the armour of God and what we need to do spiritually in our Christian lives and all of the armour that we wear is bolted on and is kept on by praying in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests with us in mind be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

So we leave from this place today, I hope recognising if we haven't before or if we've forgotten that we, you know the circumstances we find ourselves in life, the disappointments we might feel with God, the expectations we have and the assumptions we have need to be calibrated in the light of the fact that God knows, that God has a great plan, God loves us, he can't show us any more love than giving his own son but also that we have an enemy, a spiritual enemy, you've got a spiritual enemy today and I have, he's an enemy that knows you, he's defeated but he's not yet destroyed, he's like thrashing about in death throws, that's what he's doing and he's making a mess of the Christian church, why is the Christian church such a mess? Because Satan's in his death throws and he's thrashing about making a mess of everyone and because very often we don't go back to God for protection and help. So we have an enemy and we have difficulties and your difficulty in your enemy is not the Christians that you sit beside, it's not the church and the poor leadership that you have and the rubbish sermons that you get, it's not society in which you live with all their evil and rottenness, it's not your neighbour, it's not your circumstances, it's not your poverty and it's not your wealth, it's none of these things. Your enemy is

Satan and there's a spiritual warfare and his work is to draw you away from Jesus Christ, your Lord and Saviour. It's to take you from him and to deceive you and to blind you and if you're sitting here today as a believer who has, and you've become content to stay away from Jesus Christ because you think he's giving you a bad deal, then please reflect on the truth and teaching of this passage. You come to God for his protection, you have the gospel, you have the word, you have faith and you have prayer, you have prayer and you've got the people of God who we come together to pray with and to link armour with and shield with against the wiles of the evil one, against these purposes and plans and you need to know how significant you are in the kingdom. Don't think you're not significant because God uses your prayers and God works through your prayers. That's one of the messages of this chapter,

I just haven't the time to go into, that God used the prayers of Daniel to influence the unseen spiritual battle that was going on and so he uses our prayers, know who's on your side, know the victory that is yours, know the significance that he's given you to give you this strategic role in his kingdom by being a praying person and us by being a praying church and know where the victory and the blessing and the fullness comes from.

[37 : 26] I hope and pray that you will be encouraged in your Christian life and you'll be encouraged in the truth of this passage which is not just for the Old Testament days and not just in the midst of a really difficult meaningless passage for you but you'll find and know and be challenged and encouraged by the truth of God's word and that you will recalibrate and I need to recalibrate expectations and assumptions around God's truth and God's word in our lives so that we know who's we are and who we serve and how great he is.

Let's bow our heads briefly in prayer. Father God we ask and pray that you would help us to understand, help us to know, help us to see, help us to be renewed by your spirit Lord we pray that you would move our hearts and that we would be touched by your person and by your character by this amazing plan and purpose, that we would not be cold and casual and careless, that we would not use you as an easy blame for the experiences of life but we would see a great and a much more complex reality and a much deeper wrestling that is on going to pull us away from Christ and from the beauty and the glory of Christ and may you have the glory and may you keep us from deception and we pray that we would come to you again and again and again for protection and for power and for strength.

For Jesus sake we ask these things. Amen.