

It is time to seek the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] Shall we turn now for a few moments to words which you will find in the passage which we read from the prophecy of Hosea. Hosea chapter 10 and verse 12.

Hosea chapter 10 verse 12. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

It is time to seek the Lord. We know from instances in the history of the human race, both near and distant, that sometimes a very powerful nation can lose a war without being militarily defeated.

This is what happened to the United States of America in this war in Vietnam just over a decade ago.

In such instances, a nation, although much stronger than the other, can still lose because of a lack of morale on its own part and because of the high morale in the part of the enemy.

[1 : 3 7] A similar case happened in the 8th century before Christ with the great nation of Assyria. Because in these days the nation of Assyria was as the United States of America is today.

It was the great world power. And during the second half of the 9th century and the early part of the 8th century before Christ, that nation conducted a series of devastating campaigns into Palestine and Syria.

With the result that it became overstretched. With the result that its own economy suffered grievously. And it was forced to withdraw in order to recoup its reserves.

Now this sudden and unexpected withdrawal of the Assyrian superpower from the part of the Middle East where Israel and Judah and Syria were small buffer states between the great powers of Assyria to the west, to the east and Egypt to the west.

Created a vacuum which enabled Judah and Israel and Syria to enjoy peace and also prosperity.

[3 : 0 2] And from the book of the prophet Amos and the book of the prophet Hosea to messengers of God to the northern kingdom of Israel, we can see something of the prosperity which that nation enjoyed at that particular point of time.

A prosperity indeed which some historians believe was unparalleled in the national history since the days of David and Solomon. Israel was strategically placed on the caravan routes of the Middle East and was able to gain from the trade that these caravans brought.

Every caravan that passed through Israel territory would have to pay a toll to the Israelite government.

That in addition to the trade that those caravaners brought to local merchants and farmers. And so the kind of society to the Israelite government.

And so the kind of society to which Amos and Hosea presented their message was one in which a businessman became rich overnight. A society in which land speculators made a fortune.

- [4 : 20] A society which was characterized by what some people would call a prosperity rush. A rush in which only the strongest and the richest survived.
- A rush in which the poor, the ignorant, those lacking in initiative were ruthlessly knocked down and trodden under foot. And so both prophets, particularly the prophet Amos, paints a picture not only of prosperity but also of injustice.
- Because after all 90% of the population were peasant farmers or crofters. This prosperity benefited only the 10% of the population who were able to take advantage of it.
- The other 90% suffered. Many of them were cleared off their land or their crops by a land-hungry aristocracy. They were cheated in the marketplace by unscrupulous merchants with their false balances.
- They were denied elementary justice by venal judges who would dispense justice so-called in response to a bribe. And this is the kind of society against which we have to see the message of these two prophets of God.
- [5 : 36] Amos and Hosea. Amos would appear to have prophesied slightly earlier than Hosea. And probably for a very short time, whereas Hosea's ministry continued over a longer period.
- Amos was the champion of the poor. He denounced in graphic terms those who trampled upon the needy and ground the faces of the poor. Those who were willing to sell the needy for the price of a pair of sandals.
- And from the book of Amos we get a vivid graphic picture of this society which was at the same time prosperous and unjust.
- A society in which the poor were exploited. A society in which God's law was trodden underfoot. Hosea, on the other hand, appears to have been a very different type of person from Amos.
- He certainly fulfilled a very different type of ministry. He was a man of great feeling. A man of great depth of character. Yet his message was essentially identical with that of Amos.
- [6 : 53] Both men called the nation to repent of its sins and to turn to God. But whereas Amos concentrated upon morality, Hosea concentrated upon religion.
- And the point that is underlined in the prophecy of Hosea is not so much the injustice that we see underlined in the prophecy of Amos.
- But the idolatry which had come to characterize the nation. Again and again in the book of Hosea we find the word Baal or the plural Hebrew form Balaam.
- Because the people had turned to Baal. Baal after all was the Canaanite god of prosperity. And the people had turned to Baal.
- In order at this time of national prosperity. Hosea's indictment is that Israel had left the Lord her true husband. And had committed spiritual adultery by following Baal.
- [7 : 59] The nation's idolatry was mirrored in his own domestic crisis. And his wife Gomer left him in order to become a common shrine prostitute.
- And so we find the two prophets complimenting one another. Amos focusing his message upon the moral claims of God. Hosea concentrating upon the religious claims that God had upon his people.
- Amos went to Israel and said in effect you have broken God's law. And Hosea went and he told the nation you have broken God's heart.
- And it is against this threefold background of prosperity, injustice and idolatry. That we have to see these words of Hosea. It is time to seek the Lord.
- Amos' warning had gone unheeded. Now Hosea steps in. And he asks the people to pause and to take stock.

[9 : 05] It is time, he says, to seek the Lord. The warnings of Amos had fallen upon deaf ears. And so God's prophet Hosea comes. And over a longer period of time presents the claims of the Lord God.

The words of Hosea are words which I believe are relevant to us today. Living as we do at this particular point of time in our history in Scotland and generally in the Western world.

Because we here in this country enjoy a measure of prosperity which our forefathers could only dream of.

Even the poorest of us is well off in comparison with our fathers and our grandfathers. We live in what has become known as an affluent society.

As a consumer society. As a society in which we possess things which we don't really need. We live in a society which survives because it produces such things.

[10 : 13] The whole economic base of our society is on this basis of consumerism. We live in an affluent society.

Relatively speaking. It is true of course that there are people who are poor. And I don't want to suggest that everyone is a millionaire. That's not the case. But you compare our situation today with that of our grandparents.

Or that of our contemporaries in Zaire. Or in India. And we are relatively affluent. We are living in a society which is characterized by affluence.

And the problem is that the effect that affluence had upon Israel in the 8th century before Christ. Is being repeated in our experience today.

Because we discover that affluence is turning our hearts away from God. And not only that but I'm sure that if Hosea and Amos were present in this generation to present their mission.

[11 : 26] They would warn us and they would tell us that a great deal of the affluence which we enjoy is based upon injustice in other countries of the world. That we enjoy low prices.

Because some people in the world and other countries are denied a basic living wage. And so the message of Hosea and the message of Amos are relevant today.

Because we live in a society which is relatively affluent. That which in some ways at least is based upon an unjust world economic order.

But also we live in a society which has become idolatrous. We live in a society which has made these consumer goods the idols which we worship today.

And people today live for a motor car. They live for a new house. They live for a smart wardrobe. And things have taken the place of the Almighty in our affection.

[12 : 25] And we live for the things, the status symbols that money can buy. We live in a materialistic society.

A society which has become idolatrous. And we live in a society which is turning a deaf ear by and large to the message of the Word of God. To the preaching of the Gospel.

The Amos's have come and have gone. And men and women refuse to hear and to heed the message of the Lord. And Hosea comes to us.

And he reminds us of what we have heard and what we have rejected. And he reminds us again this morning it is time to seek the Lord.

And this is a message which is relevant not only to our nation. But it is a message which is relevant to every congregation. And perhaps particularly relevant to a congregation like yours which at this time is giving God thanks.

[13 : 25] For 150 years of faithful gospel ministry. Because during these years the Word of God has been preached. And no doubt there are people here in this church this morning who have heard that message for many years.

And who have turned a deaf ear to it. They have heard not only one but several ministries faithfully proclaiming the message of the Gospel from this pulpit.

And your response has been the response of the people of Israel to Amos and to Hosea. God's Word has fallen upon deaf ears. It has fallen upon hard hearts. And so God's Word comes to you again as you celebrate this great record of gospel ministry as a congregation.

God's Word comes to you my friend. You who have turned a deaf ear to the message of the Gospel. It is time to seek the Lord. Let us notice three things about this phrase.

It is time to seek the Lord. Let us notice first of all that they are words of censure. What the prophet Hosea is saying is it is high time to seek the Lord.

[14 : 41] He is reminding the people that they have failed to seek the Lord in the past. And now they must seek him. They come as words of censure. The clear implication of his message is that they have not been seeking the Lord.

He reminds them that they are guilty in two counts. First of all they are guilty on account of their defection. They have turned to the worship of Baal. There was not only one God, Baal, but many Baals in the land of Canaan.

The worship of Baal was a fertility cult. It was linked to the prosperity, to the fruitfulness of the soil, to the fruitfulness of the vine. It was part of the animistic religion of Canaan before the people of Israel entered into the land.

It was linked up with spirit worship. The belief that in nature there are spirits which have to be placated if the earth is going to be fruitful.

And each locality had its own Baal or its own God. The Baal which was favoured by Ahab, you remember, was the Baal Melchart of Tyre, which was Jezebel's home.

[16 : 03] We find that the word Baal is used in the plural, Baalim. I am is the Hebrew plural. Because there were many Baals, each community had its Baal.

And the people were turning to the worship of Baal because of the prosperity. They believed wrongly that the prosperity came as the gift of Baal.

And through Baal worship you could manipulate the processes of nature. You could guarantee prosperity. And so they turned from the Lord to worship Baal.

But they failed to seek the Lord secondly because of default, not simply because of defection. There was neglect on their part. Not only was there positive defection, there was also neglect.

Break up your fallow ground, says the prophet. You're failing to take action to seek the Lord. You're failing to begin to fulfil your spiritual responsibilities.

[17 : 06] He's obviously referring to spiritual carelessness, neglect and indolence. He said that they were like farmers who did nothing to prepare the soil.

Who did nothing while others plough and sow. And is there not a parallel between the people of Hosea's generation and ours in these two aspects also?

Are we not today in our society guilty of defection? Not perhaps to animistic worship. But we have our Baals nevertheless.

Someone has said that our age is more superstitious than it is scientific. And there's a great deal of truth in that. And we see up and down our nation a resurgence of interest in the occult.

There are people who gather to worship Satan. In most communities in our land, large communities in our land today.

[18 : 13] There are people who are seeking to make contact with the occult. With the spirit world. There are people who are turning to other false religions today.

We see defection in our society from the Lord. We see it in the interest in astrology. Most popular newspapers today have a horoscope.

People believing that somehow or other, in a way which is totally unscientific, the planets influence human destiny.

An old ancient belief with which Paul and the apostles grappled in the New Testament when they affirmed that God is sovereign over the events of history. And yet we see this old ancient belief resurrecting itself today.

A belief in astrology. A belief that we are the victims of fate. A fate over which we have no control. And of course the gambling spirit is again a belief in fate.

[19 : 19] And we see the gambling addiction gripping our nation today. And so there are signs of defection. Signs that although outwardly many people may profess allegiance.

And when there is a marriage to be performed. Or a baby to be baptized. Or a burial service to be conducted. People will turn to the church. Eighty percent of the British people will come to the church.

In a moment like that. But behind that outward observance of Christian rights.

There is this deep defection. Away from the service of the Lord. And not only is there defection in our society.

There is also default. Eighty percent as I've said of the population will turn to the church. For marriage. For baptism.

[20 : 18] And for funerals. But in Scotland only 17%. One sixth of the population are in church on Sunday.

In England it's significantly smaller. Just over one in ten. That is default on our part. And we need to seek the Lord today.

These are words of censure. Words which come to us from the word of God. Words which come to us from the prophet. Who although is dead yet speaks to us. A message of censure reminding us.

That we are failing to live up to the standards which God has given us. How many of us can say that we have fulfilled the claims that God has made upon our lives.

How many of us can say that we are loving the Lord our God with all our heart. With all our soul. And with all our strength. And loving our neighbor as ourselves. How many of us can say that we have not become infected by the materialistic selfishness of our age.

[21 : 25] Which is concerned only with ourselves and with our own loved ones. And we have lost the concern for the glory of God. And for the well being of the poor. In our society and in our world.

These are words of censure that come to you and come to me. They come to us as we look back over our lives. And think of the many times that we have heard the gospel being preached. The frequency with which the claims of Jesus Christ have been presented to us.

And again and again and again we have turned a deaf ear. And once again God in his mercy and in his grace comes to you. And he comes to me and he says. It is time to seek the Lord.

Yes these words are words of censure. But secondly they are words of caution.

It is time to seek the Lord. Comes to us as a warning. These words come to us as a caution. Reminding us that while now we have the opportunity to seek the Lord.

[22 : 32] We may not always. In fact we will not always have that opportunity. The prophet Amos and the prophet Hosea were prophets who said. God will intervene. God in his mercy and his grace is calling upon the people to repent.

But if they do not repent then God's judgment will come. Amos had earlier warned the people that they must prepare to meet with their God.

He reminded them that the day of the Lord would come. Many people in his generation believed that the day of the Lord had already come. That they were living in the millennium. Because of the prosperity that they were enjoying.

But Amos said no. The day of the Lord will come and when it comes it will be darkness and not light. It will be judgment and not blessing. Because the people had failed to seek the Lord.

And so both prophets warned that this prosperity was a freak. They warned that the prosperity which had come so quickly would equally quickly disappear.

[23 : 40] They warned that it was like an Indian summer. A spell of fine weather in mid-October. Which would be of brief duration and nothing permanent. They warned that the nation of Assyria would revive and return.

And indeed that's exactly what happened. And in the year 721 the city of Samaria. The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrian army.

And Israel as a nation was deported. And we've always talked of the ten lost tribes ever since.

They were lost as a national entity. They disappeared into the oblivion of history. That nation, that northern nation of Israel simply ceased to exist and disappeared. Under the judgment of God.

Now this has been recorded for us in the Old Testament. In order that we might learn the lessons which Israel failed to learn. The prophet Hosea is like a workman on the road.

[24 : 54] Because he puts a hazard sign up on the road. As you sometimes see these big exclamation signs on the road. Hazard ahead. And that's what the prophet is doing here.

He's warning us that further along the road there is a judgment. That although it may appear not to be the case. Although it may appear that to eat, drink and be merry is all that life consists of.

Although it may appear from the media and from many of our companions. That the be all and the end of all of life is to drive a Jaguar or a Mercedes. To own a fine house.

To possess a smart wardrobe. There is a warning sign here. A hazard sign. Saying there is a warning ahead. There is a judgment to come. Prepare, says Amos, to meet your God.

It is time to seek the Lord now, says the prophet Hosea. Because the time will come when it will be too late. When it will not be possible to seek the Lord in his mercy and in his grace.

[25 : 49] When it will not be possible to come to his throne of grace and find mercy. Today, says the prophet, you are being invited to come to the throne of grace.

In order that you might be saved. In order that you might find mercy and grace. And if you neglect. If you turn a deaf ear. If you refuse to respond.

Then one day you will suddenly, unexpectedly. Be commanded to appear before a throne of judgment. And then there will be nothing but a fearful looking forward to of judgment.

The day of grace, the day of mercy will have come to an end. And this message is a message not only to us as individuals.

But it is, I believe, a message to us as a nation. A message indeed to us as a part of the Western civilization. All of us come from the Western world.

[26 : 46] A part of the world which historically was being greatly favored by God. You remember how Paul, when he wanted to go east. Was directed by the Holy Spirit to come west.

And so rather than going into Asia. He was led into Europe. And with Paul came the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the gospel spread throughout Europe.

And during the centuries. The church has been reformed and revived periodically. The great modern missionary movement which has taken the gospel to the world. Was born in Europe.

Here in the Western world. Our society. Our laws. Our educational system. Has been based. Imperfectly. But nevertheless in a real way.

Upon Christian ideals. And morality. These things have molded our institutions. And our way of life. But today we live in an age in which. Our Christian heritage is being eroded.

[27 : 49] On a scale which is unprecedented. Since Constantine was converted to Christianity. A way back. In many centuries ago.

And for the first time in many centuries. People are talking of the Western world. Entering into a post Christian era. And so the signs of judgment are there already.

Just as the signs of decline were there in the nation of Israel. So the signs of decline and of coming judgment. Are there. If we have eyes to see them.

And so the prophet is warning us. As he warned his own generation. Seek the Lord now. Call upon him while he is near. The judgment of God.

Could come. The judgment of God. Is coming from within. As we see. Our Christian heritage being eroded. And as that vacuum is created.

[28 : 50] We see. People turning to the occult. And another threat of course. Is the threat of Islam. Which is a very real threat. In Western Europe. A few months ago.

I travelled in the. Tube. In London. From Heathrow into the centre. And all the time facing me. There was a young man. A German. Who was trying to convert. A Londoner.

To the worship. Of Allah. To follow the prophet. Mohammed. Neither of them were Asian. Neither of them came from.

From an Islamic country. And people. There are some. Islamic groups. Who have made it. Their objective. That London. Should become the capital.

Of Islamic Europe. And if we continue. In our civilization. To depend. Upon material things.

[29 : 48] If we continue. To allow our Christian heritage. To be eroded. We will have nothing. We will have no spiritual reserves. With which to resist Islam. And in fact. This is part of the appeal of Islam.

People. The Islamic missionaries come. And they say. Look. At how decadent your country is. Christianity has failed. To give you moral backbone.

Look at. Look at. Look at. Look at. What's happening in society. How. How immorality. Is. Is commonly practiced. How marriages are breaking down. Islam. Infidelity.

Has become a feature. Of human relationships. And they put forward Islam. As the model. Of. A model. As a model of morality.

And so. There are signs. That the judgment of God. Is near. And so. These words. Are words of caution. Reminding us. That we must all appear. Before the judgment seat of Christ.

[30 : 47] We must all appear. Before his tribunal. And never let us forget. That that's what the Bible says. Now we live in a society.

Which is. Becoming increasingly secularized. In which we are discouraged. Positively. To think of eternity. In which we are encouraged. To believe. That this life. Is all that there is.

Of human existence. But the Bible tells us. The Bible makes absolutely clear. That there is a life beyond. That this life. In which we live here. Is but a tiny fraction. Of human existence.

That there is a life beyond. And that there is a judgment. There is an eternity. It is appointed unto man. Once to die.

And then. The judgment. And because of that. These words come to us. As words of caution. It is high time.

[31 : 46] To seek. The Lord. Yes. These words. Are words of censure. They're words of caution. But they're also words of counsel.

The prophet is saying to us. Take courage. Because there is still time. To seek the Lord. The day of judgment. Has not yet come. Time. The day of reckoning.

Has not yet taken place. There is yet time. To seek. The Lord. In spite of the fact.

That. The prophet could look back. Over that incriminating record. In spite of the fact. That obviously. He believed. That Israel deserved. God's judgment. Yet he said. God in his mercy.

And in his grace. Is inviting the nation. To repent. And even at the eleventh hour. There was the opportunity. To turn to God. In repentance. And in faith.

[32 : 43] And so the prophet's message. To us. Today. Is this. That if we still. Are here. Under the sound of the gospel. That there is still time. To seek the Lord. In spite of our neglect.

In the past. In spite of the way. We may have spurned the gospel. Over perhaps many years. It is still possible. To seek the Lord. It is still possible.

To call upon him. Because he is near. In his mercy. In his grace. Now is the accepted time. Says the apostle Paul. Today. Today. Is the day.

Of salvation. These words. Which we sang. From the 95th Psalm. The Holy Spirit. Reminding us. Today. When you hear his voice.

Do not harden your hearts. As in the rebellion. Do not harden your hearts. Listen to what the Holy Spirit.

[33 : 38] Is saying. Respond. Respond. To the gospel. Of God's grace. As in Hosea's day. So in ours. There are many. Who laugh off.

This message. They. Do not believe. These warnings. That come to us. Through the word of God. And yet.

We live in an age. In which large scale. Judgment. Is a credible possibility. We see. This. All around us. In terms of.

Nuclear war. There is a stockpile. Of nuclear weapons. Which is. Mind boggling. Upon this earth. A. Thousands. And thousands.

Of hydrogen bombs. For example. Many nuclear missiles. Sufficient to destroy. This world. Many. Many. Hundreds of times. And that is the kind. Of society. In which you live.

[34 : 33] And God. In his mercy. And in his grace. Has. Preserved us. You think of. All these. Potential weapons. Of destruction. It's a miracle. Of God's providence.

That. We. We are still alive. And God. Is withholding. His judgment. In order that you. And I. And the nations. Of the world. Might have the opportunity.

To repent. It is time. To seek the Lord. Because God's judgment. May well be. At the door. We see also.

The. Very alarming. Development. In the AIDS epidemic. And some of the forecasts. Concerning. The progress.

Of AIDS. Are so alarming. That. Governments of the world. Will not publish them. We are being reminded.

[35 : 30] Of the brevity of time. We are being reminded. That we. As a western civilization. Have turned our backs. Upon God. And that God's judgment.

Is staring us in the face. Of the peace. Of the peace. Of the peace. And these. Fortes of judgment. Are pointers. To that great judgment.

Which is to come. And we are being reminded. Through this prophet. The prophet. Prophet Hosea. That there is still time. To seek the Lord. This is a message. Of hope.

Yes. It's a message of God's love. A message of God's grace. A message of mercy. A message. Of love.

And so God's word comes to us. And it reminds us this morning. That it is time. To seek the Lord. There is still time. To seek the Lord. But don't.

[36 : 32] Make the mistake. Of assuming that there will always be time. To seek the Lord. Because who knows. When any of us might be called. Into the presence of God.

To appear before him. Who knows. When. A life may suddenly come to an end. Doctors will tell you.

That you only need two minutes to die. And there is a very real sense. In which all of us. Could be only two minutes from eternity.

And you and I cannot assume. That there will always be hours. And days. And months. And years. In which to seek the Lord.

Not only may God's judgment. Come upon us as a nation. But the angel of death. May call us as individuals. To give an account to God.

[37 : 30] God. And another reason. Why we cannot assume. That there always will be time. To seek the Lord. In the days ahead. Is that we are dependent.

Upon the Holy Spirit. If we are to seek the Lord. We cannot seek the Lord. When we decide. To seek the Lord. Lots of people. Have made that great mistake. They've said. Well I'll seek the Lord.

When I'm 70. I'll seek the Lord. When I get my pension. I'll seek the Lord. When. You know. I've enjoyed myself. Many people have said that.

And you go to such people. When they get the pension. And when they're 70. And when they've enjoyed themselves. And they've no more thought. Of seeking the Lord. They've missed their opportunity.

My spirit shall not always strive with man. Says the prophet. And it is when God's spirit. Is striving with us. When our consciences are stirred. When we are concerned.

[38 : 28] About our spiritual welfare. It is then. That we must seek the Lord. We must respond. To the striving. Of the spirit of God. It is quite extraordinary.

How many people there are. Who when they know. They've got to die. And who know that they're dying. Have lost all concern. About seeking the Lord.

Because the opportunity is gone. They didn't respond. When they had it. And they're now so hard. And so indifferent. And so unbelieving.

That there is no word. Of seeking the Lord. And so when the opportunity comes. Let us grasp it with both our hands.

William Shakespeare has said. There is a tide in the affairs of men. Which have taken at the flood. That leads on to fortune. And when the flood of God's grace comes.

[39 : 27] To your shore. Launch your soul in that tide. Because that tide may never come in again.

Those of you who know. Something about the way ships are launched. No. That a large ship. On the Clyde. Used to be launched.

At high tide. Very often at spring tide. And that launch date. Had to be met. Otherwise the ship. Could not be launched.

And similarly. When God's tide comes to your door. When God's tide comes to your life. He's inviting you to launch out. In trust. Trusting Jesus Christ.

He's inviting you to commit your life to him. He's inviting you to seek the Lord. And to obey the gospel. He's inviting you to make that commitment.

[40 : 26] Which he demands. Of all of us. He's inviting us to heed the message of the prophets. Amos and Hosea. The message of the preachers of the gospel. That you have heard down through the years from this pulpit.

He's inviting you to heed the many sermons. That you have heard. And perhaps neglected. He's inviting you now. To seek. The Lord.

This is the word of counsel. Yes. The word of command. Which comes from the preacher of the gospel. As an ambassador for Christ. Seek the Lord.

Now. And as a preacher of the gospel. I can make the promise. With the full authority of God behind it. That if you seek the Lord.

Now you will find. That in no way can I. Or any other preacher of the gospel. Say that if you seek the Lord this afternoon. Or if you seek the Lord tomorrow. Or if you seek the Lord next week.

[41 : 23] That you will find. The promise of the gospel. Is in the present tense. Seek the Lord. While he is to be found. Call upon him. While he is near.

And so I would urge you. To seek the Lord. To close in with Christ. To trust in him. Now. As he comes to you.

And as he speaks to you. By his Holy Spirit. Lay hold upon him. And launch out. Your life. Your soul. Upon his mercy.

And upon his grace. Let us pray. Our gracious Lord and God.

And Father in heaven. As we come before thee. We ask that. Thou wilt look down upon us. In thy mercy. We thank thee oh Lord. That thou art not dealing with us. According to our deserts.

[42 : 20] But that thou art giving us. Yet another opportunity. To repent. And to seek the Lord. Grant that we may lay hold upon this opportunity. With both our hands.

That we may grasp it. While it is extended to us. Grant oh Lord. That today. All of us here may seek. The Lord. While he is to be found.

And call upon thee. While thou art near. So work in our hearts. Oh Lord. By thy Holy Spirit. And enable us to respond. In repentance. And in faith.

Enable us thus to prepare. For that judgment which is to come. Enable us to lay hold upon. Thy love. Loving offer of the gospel. May we trust Christ.

And receive him as our Savior and Lord. And commit all that we are. And all that we have to him. For his sake. Amen. Amen. Amen.