

Homelessness

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[0 : 00] So I returned from the U.S. with a bit of a bug and a cough. So I've got what seems like one of those weird 100-day cough things that never goes away. So as is my usual rule, if I have a cough of fitting and I'm unable to continue, whoever runs up and touches the pulpit first can finish the sermon.

So for those of you who always had aspirations of a secret church takeover or something like that, this might be your chance this morning. We're going to be in the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 2 and then verse 11 to 25.

Just to give you a sense of where we're going in the coming weeks, next week going forward we're going to start a new series on the doctrine of worship. And by worship I'm specifically referring to what we do here on a Sunday when we gather for formal or corporate worship.

We're going to spend a number of weeks thinking theologically about that because I think it's a really important thing. This in many ways is the centerpiece of Christian activity. And so it's important that we know what we're doing when we worship and why we do what we do when we worship.

And so we're going to spend a number of weeks in that. And I've enjoyed reading up on that subject over the last few months and I'm looking forward to working on that material. But today I thought I would talk about homelessness a little bit.

[1 : 24] And so we'll go to Exodus chapter 2 and read about an episode in Moses' life where he found himself to be somewhat homeless. Exodus 2 and verse 11.

Listen to these words. One day after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor.

He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hit him in the sand. The next day he went out and he saw two Hebrews fighting.

He asked the one in the wrong, Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew? The man said, Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid.

Thought, What I did must have become known. When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.

[2 : 26] Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their flocks. Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

When the girls returned to Reuel, their father, he asked them, Why have you returned so early today? They answered, An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds.

He even drew water for us and watered the flock. And where is he? Reuel asked his daughters. Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat.

Moses agreed to stay with the man who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, I have become a foreigner in a foreign land.

During that long period, the king of Egypt died, and the Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.

[3 : 30] God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And so God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Let's ask for God's help as we study. Gracious God, your word is our food, our true spiritual sustenance, without which we cannot live, without which we have no hope.

And so we pray that you would feed us this morning. Teach us truth, embed it in our hearts, and make us like your son. All by the power of the spirit we pray.

Amen. So, one of the things I often feel when I'm on a longer trip away from home, this was two and a half weeks or so that I was away from home on this US trip.

A very profitable trip, and I'm happy to tell you about it later on at some point, going to lots of presbytery meetings, meeting lots of churches and partner churches. A really profitable time. But one of the things I often feel, as particular as I get into like kind of the last third of the trip, is I really start to miss home.

[4 : 48] I really get homesick. I almost get teary every single time we fly into Cape Town and you can see the mountains and stuff like that. I hope to always kind of land where the sun is still up so you can see something of the mountains.

The pilot had a bit of a sense of humor on the flight as we landed because the sun was setting and we had this really nice view of Tabo Mountain. So he said to all the people on the right-hand side of the plane, if you look out your window, you can see a fantastic view of Tabo Mountain and Signal Hill.

And for all of those sitting in the middle of the aisle, you can see a fantastic view of the back of the heads of the people looking at Tabo Mountain and Signal Hill. But I often get almost like choked up when I see that and I'm like, I'm going home.

I'm finally going to be home. Get homesick. Now, I wonder what you think of when I say that word, home. Do you think of a place?

Or do you think of a feeling or a sensation of being at home? So being at ease, at peace, in a state of comfort, in a state of safety and security?

[5 : 57] One of the most famous quotes that comes from the poet Maya Angelou is this. She wrote, the ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.

And so I was reading a series of essays on this subject of home, people reflecting on the subject of home and what home truly means. And I found one writer who picked up on this Maya Angelou quote.

And this is what she wrote, reflecting on this. She said, I've been thinking about home and what it is and means to me and I realized I had no idea what home really is. Is it a house where a family lives together, sharing their lives and all that entails?

Or is it a place you go to where you know that no matter what, you will be loved and accepted with open arms? For me, the concept of home has always been an elusive one.

I suppose that is because I never really felt as though I had a place I could without a single doubt call home. Maya Angelou described it the best when she said, the ache for home lives in all of us.

[7 : 05] For a while, I believe with all of my heart I had found that place called home and the ache in my soul would have long been eased. Unfortunately, the ache returned and once more I'm left questioning if I will ever find somewhere that will forever be my home.

I want this abode to feel to be unfailingly mine. A place that no one else can take from me or say I don't belong.

I want to feel home not just have a home. Somewhere safe, sheltered, beautiful where I am loved, accepted, understood and most of all belong. See, I think home is primarily a feeling.

a sensation. To feel accepted. To feel comforted. To feel secure. To feel loved and rested and at peace.

That is what it means to be truly home. It doesn't matter really in that sense where you live. If you have all of those things then you are at home in the truest sense.

[8 : 19] But as the author of that essay that we just read admits that feeling seems impossible to attain. To fully attain. And we get glimpses of it from time to time.

Little tidbits of it in this life. But we never seem to get all of it. Consistently. And you'll find that theme repeated all the time in poetry in songs in stories.

As humans we just cannot shake the sense that we are not truly at home in this world. Now the Bible comes along and it really helps us with this because it helps us understand this feeling of homelessness.

It gives us a diagnosis of the human condition. And in this sort of early part of Moses' life that we just read we get a glimpse into this sort of deep existential problem that spans the ages that we all wrestle with.

And so I want to try and draw that out for you a little bit this morning. So three things I want you to see. Number one the nature of homelessness. Number two the challenge of homelessness. And then number three the hope of homelessness.

[9 : 24] So the nature the challenge and the hope of homelessness. Here's the first one the nature of homelessness. I want you to see in these verses what a homeless and alienated individual Moses becomes in these early chapters of the book of Exodus.

So look down for example verse 11. One day after Moses had grown up he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor.

He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. One of his own people. So this is the first time we now encounter Moses as a grown man. He's not a little baby in a basket which happens earlier in the chapter where he gets put on the Nile and he gets raised in Pharaoh's court.

This is now he's a grown man. He's been raised in Egypt as an Egyptian so much so actually that you might have noticed later on when the Midian woman encounters him they say oh we were rescued by an Egyptian verse 19.

So he obviously looks and sounds like an Egyptian walks like an Egyptian I think as the song goes. But he hasn't forgotten his roots because the text says he went out to see his own people.

[10 : 36] And at that point we get a clash between his two identities because he sees an Egyptian beating one of his own people and then this happens in verse 12.

Looking this way and that and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and he hit him in the sand. So it's almost like he sees his Hebrew his Israelite identity as primary.

He sides with the Hebrews over the Egyptians here. But then verse 13 the next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting and he asked the one in the wrong why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?

And the man said who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian? And then Moses was afraid and he thought what I did must have become known.

When Pharaoh heard of this he tried to kill Moses but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian where he sat down by a well. So he's not really accepted by his own people by the Hebrews and now he can't go back to his Egyptian home because Pharaoh wants to kill him because of his actions and so he runs away.

[11 : 53] He runs very very far away. He runs to Midian. We're not actually entirely sure the location of Midian or this particular group of Midianites. they were quite a nomadic people so they moved.

We know that it was quite far east from Egypt probably the top northeast section of the Sinai Peninsula and into the bottom part of ancient Canaan.

Moses runs really far away is the point. Far away from Egypt but here in this far off place through a series of events he now actually starts to build a home.

So verse 16 A priest of Midian had seven daughters and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. Some shepherds came along and drove them away but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

When the girls returned to Reuel their father he asked them why have you returned so early today? They answered an Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock.

[12 : 56] And where is he? Reuel asked his daughters. Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat. Moses agreed to stay with the man who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage.

So Moses gets married and he starts to settle down in his new home and build a life. But then verse 22 Zipporah gave birth to a son and Moses named him Gershom saying I become a foreigner in a foreign land.

So even though he's building a new family and a new place and a new home he's still acutely aware that he doesn't actually fit in. He doesn't truly belong. Maybe if you didn't grow up in Cape Town you might understand something of this experience.

So you can be like me. I was born here in Cape Town but I spent my schooling and university years in the city of Durban. So sort of my formative years in Durban.

In this stint I've lived now continuously in Cape Town since 2005. So that's 20 years plus there were a couple of other times in Cape Town before that. But formative years in Durban.

[14 : 13] But you look overall and you say well if you count up the numbers I've spent more of my life in Cape Town than anywhere else and almost all of my adult life in Cape Town. I'm pretty Capetonian now. But here's the thing.

I can be incredibly Capetonian and still not completely fit in. So I can trail around on the mountains. I can do the August cycle tour every single year.

I can eat Gatsby's from Golden Dish. I can be pretentious and unfriendly. I can even and this goes against everything in me as a Durbanite. I can even wear a speedo on Clifton 4th.

But the minute that I open my mouth and I say the word fish, you go oh he's from Durban. Moses wasn't Egyptian enough.

He wasn't Hebrew enough. And when he builds a new home and a new family in Midian he's still not Midianite enough. The text just continually and quite emphatically portrays his homelessness.

- [15 : 26] And this is the story of Israel up to this point. The story of humanity really. You go right back to the very beginning to Adam and Eve in the garden. At home in the garden.
- They were at home. There was shalom. There was harmony. There was peace there. The Christian thinker Francis Schaeffer points this out in his book on Genesis. He says there was harmony and peace in four ways in the garden.
- Between God and humanity there's peace there. Between humanity Adam and Eve there's peace there. Between humanity and nature there's peace there. And even in turn Adam is fulfilled.
- He has life and blessing in the garden. They were by every definition at home. Completely at home in the truest sense of the word. But sin enters in and makes him homeless.
- Because it brings alienation. There's alienation between God and humanity. That relationship is broken. Adam hides from God. There's alienation between man and woman.
- [16 : 29] They pick up leaves and they cover themselves. They protect themselves now from each other. There's alienation between humanity and creation. Adam is now going to work the ground by the sweat of his brow.
- And there's alienation on the inside. There's frustration now at life. There's the experience of pain now and dealing with that. And then after all of that they're expelled from the garden.
- Expelled from their home. There's a flashing sword at the entrance saying you cannot come back in. That's a big picture view of the state of humanity that we get very early on in the Bible.
- That humanity is homeless and here's why. Humanity is homeless because of our sin. Now then you fast forward in the storyline in the Bible and you fast forward to the patriarchs.
- You fast forward to Abraham. Look at how he is portrayed in scripture. God calls him out of his home and makes him a wanderer. He's always moving.
- [17 : 29] He's always nomadic. Same with Isaac. Same with Jacob. And all of this sort of wandering and moving culminates with the Israelites far removed from their promised home in slavery in Egypt.
- And so there's this very distinct theme of homelessness that runs all the way through the text and it's that same theme that's being picked up and even reenacted a little bit here in the early chapters of Exodus in Moses' life.
- Moses looks in three different places for his home but he just doesn't find it anywhere. Now friends, as people, I think we need to come to terms with this. That is, I think you need to come to terms with your own homelessness.
- You have to see that sin has so deeply damaged our world and ourselves that now we experience daily what Maya Angelou calls that ache.
- You ache for something that you don't have. And that ache is so very evident in so many different ways. It's evident in our failing bodies. It is evident in the entropy all around us that we continually keep throwing money and energy at trying to sort of stave off.
- [18 : 47] It's evident in the relationships that we gain but then lose. It's evident in how fleeting moments of unbridled joy seem to be.
- It's evident in how hard contentment is to come by. True peace. True rest. It's evident in our daily fears around security, around safety, around the future.
- but more than just acknowledging your experience of the world which I think is obvious, you have to go further.

You have to make the connection between that feeling of homelessness. We can all see the symptoms of. We can all describe the symptoms of. You have to make the connection between that feeling of homelessness and your alienation from God.

You have to connect the dots like the Bible does between the experience of the world and the fact that sin has fractured the fabric of everything around us and in us.

[19 : 57] Because if you don't make that connection, if you don't join those dots, you'll be tempted to think that that feeling of homelessness can be rectified by rearranging the circumstances of your life.

That there's something you will be able to do to make the ache go away. I mean, think that doing all sorts of things like doing more exercise, acquiring more wealth, curating the right friendships and relationships, well, if I do all those things well and effectively and consistently, that's going to take the ache away.

you can begin to really think that you can make this world as it currently is your ultimate home, your true home. And I want to say to you, and the Bible says to you repeatedly through the stories of the patriarchs, through the stories of Moses, through the overall storyline of the Bible, the Bible repeatedly says to you, friends, that is a lie.

It is a lie. It is a big, fat lie. It is an incredibly seductive and powerful lie, but it is a terribly terribly cruel lie. See, so long as alienation from God remains the root problem, this world will never be your home and any attempt to make it your home is going to actually create even deeper aches in your soul.

Let me go a little step further here. For those of us who inhabit this sort of more affluent middle class world, which most of us in this congregation do, I think a failure to come to terms with our homelessness is one of the biggest things that is keeping us from being more sort of radical, passionate, and effective Christians in our faith.

[21 : 47] For many of us, the reasons why our faith is weak, our obedience is weak, the reason why it feels like we don't have enough motivation to do the things of God is that we believe the lie.

We started to believe that we can build a true home here in the present. Our primary attention goes into building that home in this life and because of our affluence, our relative affluence, we're able to temporarily plaster over the cracks of homelessness.

we're able to give the veneer that actually, you know what, I can get a decent measure of peace and comfort and rest. You know how incredibly dangerous that is?

So very, very dangerous. It's like somebody building a six-bedroom beach house on the tropical island shore while all the while there's a 60-foot tsunami over the horizon that is coming towards that beach.

And even though the tsunami warnings have been sounded, they've sent out the pamphlets, they've put it on the radio, when you relax on that comfortable chair, on that expansive deck that you've built, watching a glorious sunset over this exquisite beach, for a moment you start to forget about the tsunami that's coming.

[23 : 27] So our affluence, what it does is it dulls us to the reality that we can't actually build a true home in this present world. What we need to see is we need to see that our homelessness stems from our alienation from God.

You cannot use your middle-class affluence to fix it. You just can't. There's no job that any company in the city can offer you that will fix that.

There is no house that you can purchase in Clifton or in Constantia or in Higovale that will satisfy your desire to be at home in God.

Now I know many of us believe this at an intellectual level. but does that belief reflect in the way that you live? Does it reflect in your aspirations?

Does it reflect in your priorities? Does it reflect in where you invest your time, in where you invest your energy, in where you invest your resources? You cannot build your true home in the world as it presently is.

[24 : 34] And friends, as Christians, of all people, we should know this. We who claim to follow Jesus. Who is Jesus? Matthew chapter 8. A very smart religious leader comes up to Jesus and says, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you will go.

And Jesus replies, Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. We of all people, we who claim to follow the homeless Messiah should know what a fool's errand it is to try and build our truth.

true and lasting home in this world as it presently is. Because we understand the nature of our homelessness. And so that's the first thing we've got to do. We've got to understand the nature of our homelessness and its connection to our alienation from God.

Here's the second thing, the challenge of homelessness. Because you might say, well if I don't build my true home here, now, then what do I do now?

What should I spend my time doing in this state of homelessness? And that's what I would call the challenge of homelessness. I wonder if you were, as we were reading through that story, if you noticed Moses' concern for the weak in the text.

[25 : 50] You notice in verse 11 his concern for the Hebrew being beaten by the Egyptian. You notice in verse 13 when he confronts the two Hebrews fighting each other, he actually goes after the one that the text describes as being in the wrong.

So there was an aggressor in that situation and he goes and confronts him. You notice in verse 17 when he gets to the well in Midian, he fights off bullying shepherds who were harassing the woman and who evidently harassed him every day because their father says, why are you home so early?

Moses repeatedly shows concern for the weaker party in this story. In fact, a very well-known Old Testament scholar by the name of Desmond Alexander points out that this text seems to be deliberately highlighting Moses as a defender of the weak.

There's a sharp irony actually there in verse 14 where the one Hebrew man says to Moses, who made you ruler and judge over us? Because that's exactly who God is going to set Moses up to be.

And I think we see the early signs of why God chooses Moses to lead an oppressed people out of slavery. It's because Moses, well he constantly has an eye for the weak.

[27 : 03] He's constantly concerned about the oppressed. It's almost as if in a realization of his own homelessness, he now starts to become acutely attentive to the harsher realities of homelessness as it's played out in the lives of other people around him.

And this is the challenge of homelessness that I think we need to meet. if we're all to varying degrees experiencing this cosmic homelessness then friends we are all hurting.

Everybody sitting here this morning is hurting in some way. We're all hurting, we are all struggling, we are all suffering and our challenge I think is to meet each other in that hurt, in that struggle, in that suffering.

we've got to in a sense be fighting back against the effects of homelessness in the lives of others around us. We've got to expend our time and our energy and our resources on ministering in very concrete ways to people in their homelessness.

Now there are really a thousand different ways I could apply this but let me stick with the line that I started in the first point. By God's providence we're a largely affluent church relatively speaking.

[28 : 26] We have a lot of people in this church who are in high income professions or to put it a little bit more bluntly there are a lot of people who are either making a lot of money or who are primed to be able to make a lot of money in the future based on what they're studying and what profession they're starting out in right now.

My challenge would be to you if you're in that bracket and if you're sitting there wondering if you are in that bracket it probably means you are in that bracket. My challenge to you would be this.

Are you using that money in a futile attempt to build your own home in this world or are you generously and sacrificially using that money to fight back against homelessness in others?

For example you have heard me bang on this drum numerous times and this is part of the reason why I've been in the US twice in the last three months but we desperately need to plant more churches in this city in all sorts of different neighborhoods.

If alienation from God is the source of cosmic homelessness then can there be a more urgent task than widespread aggressive church planting of churches that teach and preach the gospel of the crucified Messiah who reconciles us back to God.

[29 : 57] It's our job, it's our task, it's our call, it's what we've been put here to do. But church planting costs money. Taking on interns who will go on to plant churches costs money.

What are we doing with our money? What are you doing with your money? At the same time as planting churches are going to preach the gospel and tell people about this root problem to their homelessness, tell them about their alienation, tell them how to be reconciled to Jesus, at the same time as doing that was the material needs.

The material needs of a broken city cannot be ignored. We cannot preach the message of love, the love of God and Jesus if it's not evidenced in tangible deeds of love and care and compassion.

And so we need to grow and we need to expand the ministry of the deacons. We need to partner with and resource NGOs, maybe even develop some of our own. Maybe there are ideas in some of your minds and hearts for things that can grow in the city, that can push back against homelessness.

We need to make counseling services more accessible to people struggling with abuse or addiction or mental health issues. That all costs money.

[31 : 17] And so I ask again, what are you doing with your money? Friends, I would ask you to build something that lasts.

Invest in something that will be of eternal consequence, that will have some sort of connection with that eternal home. home. Take up that challenge of homelessness.

That's what you can do with your time as you wait for that eternal home. Now the last one, the hope of homelessness. Why would we fight back against homelessness if it's a futile attempt?

I mean, through our tangible love and care, through our expending of our resources and our time and our energy, we can never completely remove that sense of homelessness from people. So why fight back?

Well, the answer is we fight back because God is taking us to our true home. And we want our speech and our action to shout out that reality.

[32 : 28] We're being led by God to our true home and we want our speech and our action to, as we're in that train, come out the windows to everybody on the side so they can hear and they can see.

Look at verse 23. During that long period, the king of Egypt died.

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.

And so God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them. God looks at his homeless people groaning and crying out about their experience of homelessness in this slavery and he remembers what?

He remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And what was their covenant promised? Well at least in part it was to take them home.

[33 : 37] Remember how the covenant discussions start with Abraham? All the way back in Genesis chapter 12, very key part of the Old Testament narrative. This is how God starts his covenant discussions with Abraham.

He says, go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. God's covenant promises to take us home. home. Where is home?

Where is he taking us? Where do we find this true home? In the book of Psalms, in the middle of your Bible, we have Psalms that are written by all sorts of different people.

So we have Psalms that are written by David, we have Psalms written by Asaph, some are anonymous, some are written by the rock band, the sons of Korah, and then there's one Psalm that's said to be written by Moses.

That's Psalm 90. Listen to how Moses' Psalm opens up. Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.

[34 : 43] See, God is our home. Being reconciled to him, being with him, that is where true home is. We have to get back to God. And the only way to get home to God is through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, through our homeless Messiah who had no place to lay his head as he walked this earth.

You see, Jesus came and Jesus experienced our homelessness. He experienced the ache, especially in that moment on the cross. Abandoned by his friends in a state of utter discomfort.

There is no peace, there is no security. There could not be a more homeless experience than that moment on the cross. And he took on our homelessness, and through his substitutionary death, he made a way for us to go home.

in John chapter 14, Jesus speaks with his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion. They're anxious.

They know something big is going to go down now. And now having followed Jesus for three years, they start to realize that they've become a little bit like him, a fox without a hole.

[36 : 05] You could say they're starting to become quite acutely aware of their own homelessness all of a sudden. And in that moment of anxiety, he speaks about his ascension to them.

And he says this, he says, do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My father's house has many rooms.

If that were not so, would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going. Faith, in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ is the way back to God.

It's the way to go home. In his resurrection, in his ascension, he's already gone ahead. He's making home ready for us.

[37 : 12] He's preparing the place for us to go. And it's a beautiful place. It's a place where comfort never diminishes and gives way to discomfort.

It's a place where safety and security never fade into fear and into anxiety. It's a place where peace and rest are never interrupted by hardship or by struggle.

It is a place where you belong, where you are accepted completely because Jesus has brought you into his family as his brother or his sister. it's a place where the ache is gone.

The ache is taken out of the heart. It's gone. In the gospel, God is taking us home to be with him. We preach the gospel.

We bind up the brokenhearted because we want the world to know that there is a way to go home. we want the world to know that the ache can go away.

[38 : 19] We fight back against homelessness because we want fearful, weary, burdened people to be reconciled to God and to find their true home.

This is the hope of homelessness. Isaac Watts, who I think was probably the greatest hymn writer of all time, ends his hymn that he wrote on Moses' psalm, psalm 90, with these words, O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, be thou our God while life shall last and our eternal home.

Friends, are you en route to that eternal home this morning through faith in Christ? Are you living like someone who is homeward bound?

That's the question. Let's pray together. Father, we feel that ache this morning in our bodies and our souls.

We know that ache. We are not unfamiliar with it. it has followed us since our earliest memories and we have probably all done different things to try and relieve it, to try and get free from the sense of homelessness.

[39 : 53] us. Particularly as we've grown into adults and had means at our disposal, we've done things, we've tried to curate lives that will shield us from the harshness and the hardship and the anxieties and the fears.

we've failed to run to the true hope that we have that will bring an ultimate end to homelessness and that is our Lord Jesus Christ.

To know him, to love him, to trust in him and then to walk in his ways even when those ways seem difficult now in the present. because we know that engaging in that temporary pain now is en route to having the ache removed completely.

Father, help us not to delude ourselves with our wealth and our means and our ability to plaster over the difficulties of life. Help us to take the good gifts that you give us to fight back against homelessness in the preaching of the gospel.

and the tangible care for hurting and suffering people. And Lord, for any person who sits here this morning who says, I'm not sure if I'm en route to home.

[41 : 16] I feel lost. I don't know Jesus. I pray that you would bring them home this morning, Lord, by bringing them to a place where they repent of their sin and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Father, make this a church church that is clearly full of people who are en route to their eternal home. And the things that we say and the things that we do, we ask for that mercy upon us.

In Jesus' holy name. Amen.