

2.5.21 am

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning.

Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. and an encouragement for all to attend that. These, I think, are all the intimations, so we'll begin this time of worship.

[1 : 35] We'll sing to God's praise from Psalm 23, and we will listen to this psalm being sung to God's praise, a psalm that we know well, a psalm that has brought us great comfort through the years, and a psalm where we're encouraged to look to and follow the Lord Jesus.

The whole of this psalm we'll hear sung to God's praise. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to life in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again, And me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, In for all his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in dead stars filled, Yet will I fear none hell, For thou art with me and thy rod, And staff be comfort still.

[3 : 27] My table thou hast furnished, In presence of my post, My head thou dost, With oil anoint, And my cup overflows, Goodness and mercy all my life, Shall surely follow me, And in God's house forevermore, My dwelling place shall be.

Well, let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, We thank you for this day, This your day, The day that's set aside from all other days, And the day where we are commanded to stop work, And to be still, And to know that you are God, And that you are with us.

We thank you for the promise that you have given to us in Scripture, That you are with us when we draw together in the name of Jesus, Even two or three of us.

If we come together in Christ's name, You have promised that you are here with us, And we thank you for the promise that goes further than that even. We hear your words in Scripture saying, I will never leave you, Nor forsake you, But I am with you always, To the end of time.

And we thank you, Lord, For the assurance, And the encouragement that these verses bring to us, As we take hold of them by faith, The faith that you give us, As we believe them.

[5 : 33] And we pray, Lord, Also that we would know in our hearts, The reality of your presence with us. We think of those on the Emmaus Road, Who walked with Jesus, And their hearts burned within them, As he opened the Scriptures to them, And showed how everything points to him.

And we ask, Lord, That we may know something, Of our hearts being moved, Of our hearts burning within us, As we would seek to see Jesus. We thank you for the psalm, That we have sung, Which is so dear to us.

A psalm where we so clearly see Jesus. He is the one who said, I am the good shepherd. The one who laid down his life for the sheep. The one who promises that, Those who believe in him, Shall be saved, For time and for eternity.

The one whose promise is sure and certain. He says, I will give them eternal life, And no one can snatch them from my hand. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand.

I and the Father are one. So help us, Lord, we pray, To know that sense of your presence, That experience of God with us.

[6 : 53] We pray that we would encourage each other also. As we are in the habit of coming together, We are told to encourage each other. And we think back over a year, Where we weren't able to come together physically, And we felt a lack of that.

But we thank you that we are able, Week by week, To come together a little more. And we pray, That you would enable us, Through our words, And with our actions, And our expressions, And everything.

Help us, Lord, To encourage each other. We know that we are in a world, Where there is trouble, And there can be difficulty. And sometimes we can be low, In our minds, In our hearts.

But we thank you for each other. We thank you for the church, Of Jesus Christ, Which is not a building, But is your people. And we thank you that you have promised, Lord Jesus, That you will build it, And the gates of hell, Will not prevail against it.

So help us, Lord, We ask, On this your day, To be in the spirit, To worship you in spirit, And in truth, And to know the blessing of God with us.

[8 : 04] We thank you for the freedom, That we have to be able to do this. We pray for those, Who do not have such freedom. We thank you for the, The boys and girls, Who have been writing letters, In the last week, To those in the persecuted church, To give them encouragement.

And although we may never, Meet the people, That these letters go to, We ask that, They would be encouraged. We pray for places, Where it's dangerous, To be a Christian.

We pray for places, Where it's against the law, To be a Christian. And we ask, Lord, That you would protect your people, And that you would encourage them. And we thank you for the courage, That you do give to them.

And we thank you that, As they stand, Even when it's risky to do so, We hear stories, Of more and more people, Coming to faith in Jesus.

So we pray for, These countries. We pray, Especially for India. We have heard stories, In the past weeks, Of those who suffer in India, For Jesus' sake.

[9 : 05] And we pray, Especially for them, At this time. And as we see, Pictures on the TV, Of how desperate, The situation is, In India, Just now with COVID. We ask, Lord, That you would have mercy, Upon that country.

And we pray, For a government, That has turned, Very much against you, In past years. We pray, For those that you've allowed, To be in authority, At this time.

Those who have, Made it against the law, To seek to tell, Others about Jesus. And we ask, That you would turn, Those in authority around, To bow before Christ.

And we pray, For your people, That they may shine, As light in the darkness, In this difficult time.

And Lord, We pray for our own nation. We're conscious of elections, This coming week.

We struggle sometimes, To know how to vote. We struggle, To know what to do, When we see the, The political scene. And we pray, For our country.

[10 : 10] We ask Lord, That you would turn us around, Once more. That, That we may open, Your book. That we may bow, Before Christ as king. And that we may be humbled, To acknowledge, That you are God.

We pray, That you would forgive us. We pray, That you would, Give us that spirit, Of repentance.

We pray, That you would turn us, Around. That we may, Once more, Begin to follow, Jesus.

We pray, For those who are sick. We pray, For those who are struggling, At this time. Those who are sad, Those who are grieving, Those who feel that, Ongoing sense of, Of loss.

For those, Whom they have much loved, And who have gone, On ahead of them. And we pray for your comfort, For your strength. God, Is our refuge, And our strength.

And for all, Who are struggling, With whatever it is, Just now. We ask Lord, That they, And we would know, The reality of you, As our refuge, And our strength, In this day.

[11 : 11] So hear our prayers, And thank you Lord, For your grace, Thank you for your mercy, Thank you for your care of us, We thank you for Iona, And Joseph, Being able to, Come from hospital, And get home, And we pray on, For your blessing, On them as a family, We pray that Iona, Would be strengthened, And that she, Would be brought back, To full health, And strength, And we ask Lord, That your hand, Would be upon, Them at this time especially.

So hear our prayers, Take away, Our sin, We confess Lord, We stray, Far from you, We are prone to wonder, But we ask Lord, That you would draw us, Back to yourself, Day by day, And we ask all these things, In Jesus name, And for Jesus sake, Amen.

Well boys and girls, It's good to see, Some of you, Here this morning, And I'm going to tell you, A story this morning, I've got a couple of things, To show you as well, But I'm going to tell you, A story, Well first of all, I'll show you this, I picked it up, Off the ground this morning, The side of the road,

Can you see what that is?

Can you see that? Can you guys see that? Yeah, What is it? It's kind of, It is glass, It's actually, It's actually a mirror, But it's a, A slightly strange, Shaped mirror, Yes Michael?

Is the mirror broken? The mirror is broken, The mirror is broken, And I'll tell you the story, Of how the mirror got broken, Driving to school, The other day, Taking the girls to school, In the morning, We were just driving along, As usual, And then all of a sudden, The mirror, The side, The wing mirror, On the passenger side, It just flew off, And it, Smashed on the ground, And the girls all went, What's that?

[13:13] And said, Oh it's just a mirror, Don't worry, It's just a mirror, The mirror, It flew off, And just the bit, The bit where the mirror was, Was still there, And it was this kind of, Gunky, Orangey stuff, That was, Where the mirror was, And Lois, Said to me, I can speak about it today, Because none of them are here, Lois said to me, What's that gunky stuff, On the side?

And I said, Well it's gorilla glue, Said that the, The mirror was getting a bit, Shugly, A few weeks back, So I got the, The gorilla glue, And I put it on, And I stuck it hard, And I thought that would hold it, And the gorilla glue, Was actually sitting in the, In the side of the car, Just beside Lois, And that's it, There, And she picked up the packet, And she looked at it, And it says there, For the toughest jobs, On the planet, For the toughest jobs, On planet earth, It sticks stone, Wood, Metal, Glass, Foam, Ceramic, And more, For the toughest jobs, On planet earth, And Lois looked at it, And she said, For the toughest jobs, On planet earth, It can't even stick, A mirror to a car, The promise, That, The glue, Made in the packet, Seemed to be broken, Along with the mirror, And there's lots of things,

That we can buy, It probably wasn't, The gorilla glue, It was probably just me, Putting it on wrong, Before I get sued, By gorilla glue, These days, But, There's lots of things, That we can buy, And they make promises, To us, You might buy, One of these microwave curries, And they might say something like, The tastiest curry, In the whole planet, And you put it in the microwave, For two minutes, And you have a bite of it, And you think, It's not that nice, The promise they made, Doesn't seem to have been kept, Or there's people, That make promises to us, They might say, I promise I'll meet you, At half past eleven, I'm bad for this, And half past eleven goes, And twenty five to twelve, And twenty twelve, They're not there, They're broken their promise, And sometimes, Boys and girls, We can make promises, Can't we?

And big boys and girls, I can remember, Saying to my mum and dad, Can I please, Have that thing? In a toy shop, Please can I have it?

Please, Please, Please can I have it? If I get this, I'll never ask for anything, Ever again, I promise. Three days later, The thing's gone, And I'm asking for, For something else.

[16:00] We don't always keep our promises, The things that we buy, The people who sell them, Don't always keep their promises, But God, Always keeps, His promises, Do you remember, Boys and girls, What happened in the garden of Eden?

It all started off really well, Didn't it? And then what happened? Michael, How did it go bad? When they ate the apple, When they ate the apple, God said, Don't take any of the fruit from that tree, The devil came along and said, Oh, You can have it.

He didn't really say that, Did he? And they disobeyed God, And sin came into the world, And everything started going wrong, But God made a promise, Even in the garden.

And do you remember what the promise was? What was he going to do for sinners? He was going to send, A saviour. And he promised that in Genesis 3, And all through the Old Testament, He kept on making that promise, And then eventually, Did he keep that promise?

Did a saviour come? Don't worry, Jesus came. God keeps his promises. And God has promised, That those he saves, He keeps hold of.

[17:31] This blue, It didn't keep hold of my mirror. The mirror smashed. But God has promised, That when he takes hold of us, When he gets a grip of us, He will never let us go.

And he will take us, All the way through, This world, And all the way, To heaven. That's his promise. He promises, That those, Who follow him, As the Lord our shepherd, As we sang, He will give them, He will give us, Eternal life. And there's no one, And there's nothing, That can break, The grip of Jesus.

When he takes hold of us. Listen to what Jesus said, In John 10. He said, I give them, That's those who are trusting in him.

I give them, Eternal life. And they shall never perish. And no one can snatch them out of my hand, Says Jesus. My father, My father, Who has given them to me, Is greater than all.

[18 : 46] And no one, Can snatch them, Out of my father's hand. So that's good news, For us, If we're, If we're trusting, In Jesus.

He's promised, That he'll keep us safe. Sometimes, If you're, Anything like me, Our grip of Jesus, Can get a bit loose. Sometimes, Sometimes we, Wonder.

Sometimes we can be like, Little children, Who want to, To take our hand, Out of our father's hand, And say, I want to go my own way. But God has a hold of us.

And he promises, That he will keep a hold of us, Forever. So boys and girls, I want to say to you this morning, What I say to you, Almost every week, Trust in Jesus, As your saviour.

Because he is the one, Who can keep us safe, In this world, And forever. And we'll pray. Lord Jesus, We thank you, For your love for us.

[19 : 52] We thank you, That you came from heaven, To this world, To be our saviour. We thank you, Lord Jesus, That you went to the cross, Knowing how awful, That would be.

And yet, You so loved us, That you went to the cross, To pay the price, For our sin. We thank you, That the blood of Jesus, Washes our hearts clean.

We thank you, That Jesus, Takes our sin away. And we thank you, Lord Jesus, That you take hold of us, And you love us, And you care for us, And you keep us safe, In this world.

We know that you don't keep us, From experiencing difficult things, But sometimes when we, Go through difficult things, We thank you, That we know that your hand, Is still on us. And we thank you, That even when it comes, To the end of this life for us, You carry us through death, Into life that's everlasting.

So help us to believe, In you. Help us to trust, In your promises, And help us to know, That you are our saviour. And we pray these things, In Jesus name, And for his sake, Amen.

[21 : 07] Thank you boys and girls, For listening well, You can go through, To Sunday school now. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. If we could turn, In our Bibles now please, To Luke, Chapter 9.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Verse 48.

This is God's word. Jesus, this is Jesus speaking to his disciples.

[22 : 38] Peter has confessed faith in Christ. Jesus then begins to explain to Peter and the disciples what it looks like to be a disciple, what it looks like to follow the Messiah.

He tells them about the suffering, the taking up of one's cross to follow him, but gives them the encouragement that those who follow Jesus will be secure eternally.

They will be safe when the Son of Man, when Jesus comes back to this world. And then Jesus says at the end of that, verse 27, I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John, and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray. As he was praying, his appearance, the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.

Two men, Moses and Eliza, appeared in glorious splendor talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

[23 : 51] Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, Master, it is good for us to be here.

Let us put up three shelters to be here. Three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. He did not know what he was saying. While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and enveloped them and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

A voice came from the cloud saying, this is my son whom I have chosen. Listen to him. When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and told no one at that time what they had seen.

The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. A man in the crowd called out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams.

It throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and it's destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive her out, but they could not. Oh, unbelieving and perverse generation, Jesus replied, how long shall I stay with you and put up with you?

[25 : 11] Bring your son here. Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, Listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you.

The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them so that they did not grasp it and they were afraid to ask him about it.

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and made him stand beside him.

Then he said to them, Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you, he is the greatest.

[26 : 18] Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Let's pray again as we come back to God's word.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the word of God and we thank you for the promise that the Holy Spirit will be our teacher and illuminate our minds and open our eyes and unblock our ears that that word may make an impact in our heart.

And so we pray, Lord God, that you would speak to us today, that you would work within us today. We pray that you would carry the words of Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit and that you would penetrate our hearts.

We pray for each one here, each one who listens now and perhaps at a later time. We ask, Lord, that you would meet with us.

Some perhaps are walking close with you and waiting expectantly for you to speak and we ask, Lord, that you would speak. And others perhaps may be far from you.

[27 : 28] We may be distracted. We may be struggling in various ways in our hearts. Some may be in a state of rebellion even. And we thank you, Lord, that you know our hearts and you are able to penetrate even the hardest of hearts.

And we ask, Lord, that you would do so. So hear our prayers and help us as we speak and as we listen and as we respond to do all things for the glory of Christ.

For we ask these things in his name and for his sake. Amen. Amen. These days we have devices that are always alerting us to different things.

When a text message comes through or an email comes through on our phones, we get an alert. We hear a noise. We make a vibration.

When a new product comes onto the market that we're perhaps interested in, we get an alert to tell us it's now there and it's available for us to buy.

[28 : 39] Even when there's a change in the weather. My watch, if there's a change in the pressure that indicates bad weather is coming, the watch buzzes and it says on the screen storm alert.

And that's the first point I want to come to this morning as we're looking at this passage before us. Point number one is alert. There's an alert. That's what the passage begins with in verse 28.

You might wonder where I'm getting that from but look at the verse with me. About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went onto a mountain to pray.

I was going to say this last week but I didn't have time to get into this last week but it comes again this week. And one thing that we can notice as we're travelling through Luke's Gospel or any of the Gospels is that every time Jesus prayed something important was about to happen.

When we read about Jesus praying it was like an alert that should have caused the disciples to sit up and take notice. Even if you step back just a few verses in chapter 9 we have this conversation that we looked at last week where Jesus asks the most important question that could ever be asked.

[30 : 12] He poses it to the disciples. He says to them who do you say that I am? It's a question that prompted Peter to confess his faith in Christ for the first time but before Jesus asks that question what do we find him doing?

Well if you look at verse 18 you see that we find him praying. And if you step back a little more to chapter 6 and verse 12 we see that Jesus spends a whole night in prayer to his father and the

reason he's spending a whole night in prayer to his father is he's about to make a hugely important decision.

He's going to call the 12 disciples to be with him. And if you step back another chapter to chapter 5 and verse 16 we see all the industry the busyness of chapter 5 as Jesus performs miracles as he speaks to the crowds as he works in such an awesome way but Luke tells us in the midst of all that industry that Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and he prayed.

Then if we step back a little more to the beginning of Jesus' public ministry when Jesus is baptized in Luke 3:21 just before heaven opened just before the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in bodily form like a dove just before the voice of the Father is heard thundering to the earth what do we find Jesus doing?

Well he's praying. See when Jesus prays amazing things happen. And the disciples have seen this over and over again and they should have been alert to that.

[32 : 15] prayer has not changed.

Prayer is the means that God has provided for us to approach him. Remember that each time you pray.

Speak to myself also. we are approaching God. We are being called into conversation with the God of the universe.

Prayer has not changed. What Jesus was doing what the disciples were doing we do day by day. And remember also God hasn't changed.

he hasn't lost any of his ancient power and so when we pray having prayed we should be alert wondering what God will do next.

[33 : 29] I was at a prayer meeting on Wednesday morning a Zoom prayer meeting and Josh the opera singer who often led the singing here during lockdown he's in France at the moment he's got a concert coming up and in the course of the prayer time he prayed for it was Wednesday morning so it was prayer meeting day and he prayed in his prayer on Wednesday morning for prayer meetings in different places where things had gone flat he prayed for prayer meetings that would meet in various places where the people didn't actually expect to meet with God but they just tuned into a meeting he prayed for prayer meetings where people didn't really expect God to do anything in response to their prayers prayer and that's a kind of sad prayer but it's a necessary prayer and it's an honest prayer because often I think we would have to confess that we can be guilty of that so often when we do things we expect to see things happen but perhaps we don't have the same expectation that after we pray

God will do things as the disciples saw Jesus pray this should have been an alert to them that something important is about to happen so that's the first point we see Jesus pray it's an alert something huge is about to happen the second thing we come to the second point is anticipation and that takes us into the area of what is going to happen and I think we get a clue on that as we look carefully at the verses look at verse 28 it says about eight days after Jesus said this he took Peter John and James and went up on a mountain to pray now as we read that in verse 28 about eight days after Jesus said this we need to then ask the question about eight days after Jesus said what and to get the answer to that we need to step back a verse to verse 27 and that's when we hear Jesus say to his disciples I tell you the truth some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God the promise that Jesus made and it seems to me I think actually the NIV headings here the section breaks which are not from the original they're editors breaks it takes that verse 27 and it puts it in the last section and not the section with the transfiguration but I think what Lucas is saying here with verse 27 going in then to verse 28 is he's linking this trip up the mountain to seeing the kingdom of God Jesus makes a promise and then all of a sudden disciples are packing their bags they're putting on their hiking boots and they're going up this mountain

Lucas connecting this to seeing the kingdom of God and for our encouragement let's remember the kingdom of God it's a place it's a real place I remember a song in the 90s that used to go around in my head a Belinda Carlyle song and the chorus in the song was heaven is a place on earth but we know heaven is not a place on earth and Jesus preached good news consistently about a place that he called the kingdom of God I think the kingdom of God is a phrase you can get a

PhD in the phrase the kingdom of God but it's a phrase that can sometimes be translated the kingdom of God sometimes it can be translated as the kingdom of heaven now something of the kingdom of God was seen when Jesus came from heaven to this earth but there is a far greater

measure of the glory of the kingdom of God seen in heaven that's where we see the fullness of the kingdom of God and we're going to sing about that at the end there's a hymn we're going to sing it says there is a higher throne than all this world is known where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come before the sun will stand made faultless through the lamb believing hearts find promise grace salvation comes hear heaven's voices sing their thunderous anthem rings through emerald courts and sapphire skies their praises rise all glory wisdom power strength thanks and honor are to

[39 : 19] God our king who reigns on high forevermore and there we'll find our home not here but there we'll find our home our life before the throne will honor him in perfect song where we belong he'll wipe each tear stained eye as thirst and hunger die the lamb becomes our shepherd king will reign with him now that hymn gives us a picture it's rich in scripture it gives us a picture of the kingdom of God that place where everyone can see that Jesus is king and Jesus says to the disciples in verse 27 I tell you the truth some of you who are standing here before you even taste death you're going to get a glimpse of this and they should have been anticipating this glimpse of the kingdom of God

I think we should be anticipating heaven perhaps more than we do it is a real place it's a place that's promised to all who trust in Jesus as saviour it's a place that's promised to all who follow Jesus as king it's not a place of fluffy clouds and constant harp music and never ending sermons you'll be pleased to hear that it's a place where to use Tolkien's line everything sad has become untrue Satan is gone sin is gone it's a place where sickness is gone death is gone divisions are gone and Jesus is king the kingdom of God can I ask do we have a place there it's a wonderful picture it's an amazing promise that we are given in scripture but have we have we a place there if not trust in Christ it's that simple trust in Jesus that's how we receive a place in the kingdom of God remember what Jesus said in

John 14 he said don't let your hearts be troubled trust in God trust also in me in my father's house are many rooms many mansions if it were not so I would have told you I am 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'm going and Thomas says Lord we don't know where you're going so how can we know the way and Jesus answered I am the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the father no one comes to the kingdom of God except through me trust in Christ whether you're young whether you're approaching your final years trust in

Christ so we have the alert Jesus praise there is that sense of anticipation or there should be as they begin to head up the mountain the third thing is we have this revelation the word that's used in the in the the Bible headings is the word transfiguration when we speak about this passage that's what that's what scholars speak about they speak about the transfiguration it's not really a word that we ever use but it does capture what's going on we know the word trans we know all too well these days it means change and what we see here is that there is a change to the figure there's a change to the appearance of Jesus as Jesus was praying verse 29 the appearance of his face changed and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning and notice again this change happens whilst Jesus is praying sometimes we try and change ourselves don't we we think we can fix ourselves we think we can make ourselves better but we don't have the power to change ourselves it's God's power we need and we receive that power

God changes us to be more like him to show something of the glory of Christ in us as we spend time with him in prayer so Jesus is transfigured his appearance begins to change so what happens next well verse 30 and 31 two men Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious splendor talking with Jesus now we might ask the question well why Moses and Elijah and we are speed the commentator says it more briefly than I can he says Moses represents the law and Elijah the prophets both of whom find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ so Moses and Elijah who had something of the glory of the kingdom of God about them and their appearance they were talking with Jesus on the mountain what were they talking about well if you think about this if you think about [46 : 39] Moses and Elijah there's so much they could have been talking about they could have talked about how Moses led a million people from the captivity of Egypt through the wilderness for 40 years to the border of the promised land remember Moses never got to actually go into the promised land land this is actually the first time that Moses ever stood on the ground of the promised land and I imagine there's much that they could have talked about in relation to that or

they could have talked about the fact that Elijah he didn't die it says in 2 Kings 2 2 that he was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind now wouldn't you want to hear a bit more about that that would be a conversation but they're not talking about any of that verse 31 says they spoke about his that's Jesus departure which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem so Moses and Elijah they're the ones who are speaking about the departure the death of Jesus that's what they want to talk about not the wilderness not the journey through the wilderness not this supernatural being taken up to heaven in a whirlwind no they want to talk about the death of Jesus and the AV probably brings this out a bit more clearly it says that they spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem they were speaking about when Jesus would be deceased and yet it's a strange turn of phrase there isn't it if you look at verse 31 we generally don't talk about accomplishing or fulfilling our death and death is something that almost accomplishes us it overtakes us and yet that's not the way it would be for

Jesus remember what Jesus said again in John 10 he said I lay down my life only to take it up again no one takes it from me but I lay it down on my own accord and I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again see death would not master Jesus he would fulfill he would accomplish his death he would lay down his life and this is what Moses and Elijah want to talk about they want to talk about the death of Jesus and all that would be accomplished through that death and it just strikes me this would have been such an encouragement to Jesus Jesus knows he's heading for the cross he knows he is soon going to lay down his life and he's been trying to speak to his disciples about this and every time he speaks to them about this they cover their ears they don't want to hear it they didn't understand it they wouldn't accept it they don't seem interested in talking about his death but Moses and Elijah and all of heaven with them are fixated on the death of Jesus and the salvation he would accomplish through his death and for us it's Jesus death that we are called to remember it's Jesus death that brings us hope

J.C. Ryle says let us take heed that this death of Christ is the ground of all our confidence nothing else will give us comfort in the hour of death and the day of judgment our own works are all defective and imperfect our sins are more in number than the hairs of our heads but Christ dying for our sins and rising again for our justification must be our only plea if we wish to be saved happy is the person who has learned to cease from his own works and to glory in nothing but the cross of Christ if saints in glory see in Christ's death so much beauty that they must needs talk of it how much more ought sinners on earth so

Moses and Elijah and Jesus locked in this conversation transfigured shining with glory speaking about the death of Jesus so what did the disciples make of all this so far well it seems that they missed most of it they were asleep and it's only now that we're told that they start to kind of come to verse 32 says Peter and his companions were very sleepy but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men standing with him and we can just imagine for a moment Peter and John and James rubbing their eyes as they're coming to wondering are they awake or are they asleep are they dreaming and then we can imagine them wide-eyed as they saw the dazzling glory of Jesus and what was promised to them in verse 27 it was now happening as they saw something of the glory of the kingdom of God with their own eyes and it must have been of great encouragement to them at that point and then in future days because Peter and James and John and the disciples they were seeing Jesus popularity ratings plummeting they were seeing Jesus increasingly being despised and rejected and demoted but as this portal to another world just opens briefly they saw something of the glory and the authority of Jesus as king and they didn't want the experience to stop so verse 33 it says as the men were leaving

[54 : 50] Jesus Peter said to him master it's good for us to be here let us put up three shelters one for you one for Moses and one for Elijah and Luke tells us he didn't know what he was saying see Peter he loved the mountaintop experience and so he says to Jesus this is this is great let's stay here let's make three shelters one for you one for Elijah one for Moses let's stay here for a while it's much nicer up here than it is down there we can understand why Peter said it but he should have said nothing see Peter wanted to know the ongoing reality of glory and blessing but Peter had not yet grasped the fact that in order for him to know eternal glory and blessing

Jesus would have to go down from the mountain and persevere to the cross Peter needed to learn to do a little bit more listening and about less speaking verse 34 while he was speaking a cloud appeared and enveloped him and they were afraid as they entered the cloud the cloud is representative of the presence of God God silences Peter as he speaks and a voice from the cloud

verse 35 said this is my son whom I have chosen the chosen one the Messiah listen to him and this word from the father was a word of encouragement for Jesus as he determined from here to go to the cross and this word from the father it was an assurance to the disciples that this Jesus was indeed the son of God the Messiah and this word from the father was also a word of correction and instruction to the disciples that they needed to listen to Jesus Eric Alexander says it is precisely here that the disciples hitherto had been failing and this is what led to their decline and denial and this is always what lies behind spiritual decline and denial a failure to listen to him nine out of ten people who are going downhill spiritually Bibles are closed they're not listening to Jesus when the voice had spoken verse 36 they found that Jesus was alone the disciples kept this to themselves and told no one at that time what they had seen they were learning the disciples they were and we still tend to be slow learners but they were learning bit by bit that the most important thing is not to have amazing experiences but to have the word of God to be constantly listening to Jesus and if we fast forward for 30 years and listen to what Peter has to say about this day 30 years on he looks back on this day and this is what he says in 2 Peter chapter 1 he said we did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ but we were eyewitnesses says Peter 30 30 years on he says we were eyewitnesses of his majesty for he received honour and glory from the father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory saying this is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased we ourselves says Peter heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with them on the sacred mountain and then he says this staggering thing he says and we have the word of the prophets made more certain and you will do well to pay attention to it he says I had the experience it was amazing he says if you ask me to choose between the experience and the word this is what you need to pay attention to and I think the main application lesson for us is to listen to Jesus it's that simple we may not have experienced what they did I certainly haven't we may not have had a supernatural revelation where we've seen the glory of Jesus with our eyes and heard the audible voice of God I haven't but we have the written revelation of God through the prophets we have it in half a dozen translations we don't have to go looking for a scroll we have on our shelves we have it on our apps devices we have the words of the prophets of the old testament that Peter is talking about and we have more than that we have the words of Jesus in the new testament and Peter says you will do well to pay attention to it so we have the revelation and the final thing and I really just have one minute's worth on this is reality point four is reality and I don't intend

[61 : 48] I didn't intend anyway to step through the verses from verse 37 to verse 48 but I just want to invite you to scan them because what we see is that after Jesus after seeing something of the glory of the kingdom of God in the mountain in this revelation that's given to the disciples we just flick on a verse or two and it's reality hits down the mountain Jesus goes and what does he encounter when he gets to the bottom of the mountain well immediately he's attacked demonic possession immediately he's in the intensity of a spiritual warfare of satanic attack but Jesus doesn't say I've just had a great blessing leave me alone no he deals with it and then he takes some time with his disciples and he begins to try to speak to them about his betrayal and his death again and still they don't get it they don't want to hear it but he perseveres with them and then we look just a little further on and we listen into the conversation that the disciples are having we wonder having seen the greatness and the glory of Christ are they humbled now are they changed men and the answer is well not not really because they're having an argument about who's the greatest disciple and that's reality might depress you

I hope it doesn't this is reality some people think we should always be on the mountaintop we should always be in the state of constant blessing but that's not what we're taught here there will be periods of great blessing especially when we're first converted perhaps there will be mountaintop experiences when we need them but there will also be valleys there will also be dry times that's reality Dale Ralph Davis says we do not enjoy the dry times the days of Christian plodding but could it be that sometimes we take what God intends as a momentary along the way encouragement and try to make it a permanent arrangement I think that's true sometimes we do we listen to Peter who says let's make three shelters we say

Peter it's a wrong thing to say but we often say it we look back to the days when we were first converted we remember the buzz we remember the excitement we remember the courage we had we look at ourselves today and we say how can I not be like I was on day one why do I not have

that intense blessing that I had at the beginning what's wrong with me it might be that the Lord gave that intense blessing to us at the beginning because we needed that special portion at the beginning to carry us through sometimes we think about periods in our lives where we're in a special time of fellowship in a church or the teaching of God is just hitting us so amazingly and we're being sanctified at great pace and we look at ourselves now and we say how is that not happening just now what's wrong with me and sometimes the Lord works in a way where he gives us a special period of blessing and sanctifying touches and we thank him for them but they may not be constant sometimes the

Lord says down from the mountain we go there's going to be a dry period there's going to be a valley that you have to navigate through but if you're following me keep up so let me encourage you as I encourage myself whatever we're feeling just now whether we have the thrill of following Christ or whether things are a bit difficult just now whether we're on the mountain top or whether we're down in the struggle of the valley keep on keep on and keep on until heaven that's where the blessing is intense and it's eternal in this world you will have trouble says

Jesus but keep on we'll pray heavenly father we pray that you would bless your word to us that we would pay attention to it we thank you for the times that you give us of refreshing of reviving of encouragement we thank you lord for the strength that we receive through them we thank you also for the times when it's a bit more difficult to follow we know that our calling is not to constantly be in a state of thrill and excitement but our calling is simply to follow Jesus so help us to do that we pray in Jesus name amen we will sing to finish the hymn 1116 that hymn where we get a glimpse into the kingdom of God the kingdom of heaven there is a higher throne than all this world has known so we hear this hymn sung to

[68 : 37] God's praise there is a higher throne than all this world has known where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come before the sun will stand made faultless through the lamb believing hearts find promised grace salvation comes hear heaven's voices sing their thunderous anthem rings through emerald courts and sapphire skies their praises rise all glory wisdom power strength thanks and honour are to

God their king who reigns on high forevermore and there we'll find at home our life before the throne we'll honour him in perfect song where we belong he'll wipe each tear stained eye as thirst and hunger die the lamb becomes our shepherd king we'll reign with them hear heaven's voices sing their thunderous anthem rings through emerald courts and sapphire skies their praises rise all glory wisdom power strength thanks and honour are to

God our king who reigns on high forevermore and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with God God god that mercy be with sc McLempard