

19.2.23 am

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 00] So let's pray. I don't know if this is working yet, is it? Yeah? Let's pray and ask God for his help. Lord Jesus, we thank you for the fact that you are the way and the truth and the life.
- You are the one in whom there is more power than we can imagine or think. And we thank you that you promise that when we believe in you, that you come and live in our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus.
- And we ask, Lord, that you would be working in each of our lives today. We pray for the boys and girls and for all of us here, that we would ask you to come in and take our sin away, that you would come into our lives and that you would fill us with the power of the Holy Spirit.
- And every day we pray that you would be filling us up more and more, that we would be filled more and more with the Holy Spirit, so that we can stay close to you and so that we can serve you.
- And we ask, Lord, that you would be with us now in the rest of this service. We thank you for sometimes the things we take for granted, even like the power. We thank you that it's back on and we pray that you would be near to us in the rest of this service and that we would know your power in this place and in our lives.
- [1 : 26] And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, we're going to sing. And do we have words? No? No.
- No words. So we will sing Psalm 23, Farrakhan. We'll stand to sing and we'll sing Psalm 23, The Lord's My Shepherd. We'll sing.
- We were going to sing, sing Sam's version, but we'll just sing the traditional version just now. So let's stand to sing to God's praise. The Lord's My Shepherd I'm not one.
- He makes me down to lie In pasture's tree He leadeth me The quiet waters wide My story does restore again I need to walk the day Within the paths of righteousness Even for His own name's sake
- Yet though I walk in death star-fail Yet will I fear nothing For now art with me and I want And stop me come far still My killer thou hast furnished In presence of my voice My head the dust with eye anoint
- [4 : 22] And my cup overflows Goodness and mercy of my life Shall surely follow me And in your thirst for evermore My dwelling place shall be Okay boys and girls If you head to Sunday school And if we could turn to 1 Peter chapter 1 please 1 Peter chapter 1

And we'll read the first 16 verses Peter Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ To God's elect Strangers in the world Scattered throughout Pontus Galatia Cappadocia Asia And Bithynia Who have been chosen According to the foreknowledge Of God the Father Through the sanctifying work Of the Spirit For obedience to Jesus Christ And sprinkling by His blood Grace and peace be yours In abundance Praise be to the God and Father Of our Lord Jesus Christ In His great mercy He has given us new birth Into a living hope Through the resurrection Of Jesus Christ from the dead And into an inheritance That can never perish Spoil or fade Kept in heaven for you Who through faith Are shielded by God's power Until the coming Of the salvation That is ready to be revealed In the last time In this you greatly rejoice

Though now for a little while You may have to Had to suffer Grief and Trials of various kinds These have come So that your faith Of greater worth than gold Which perishes Even though refined by fire May be proved genuine And may result in praise Glory And honour When Jesus Christ Is revealed Though you have not seen Him you love Him And even though you do not See Him now You believe in Him And are filled with An inexpressible And glorious joy For you are receiving The goal of your faith The salvation Of your souls Concerning this salvation The prophets who spoke Of the grace That was to come To you Searched intently And with the greatest care Trying to find out The time and circumstances To which the Spirit of Christ In them was pointing When he predicted The sufferings of Christ And the glories That would follow It was revealed to them That they were not Serving themselves

But you When they spoke The things That have been told You by those Who have preached The gospel to you Even Who have preached The gospel to you By the Holy Spirit Sent from heaven Even angels Long to look Into these things Therefore Prepare your minds For action Be self-controlled Set your hope Fully On the grace To be given You When Jesus Christ Is revealed As obedient children Do not conform To the evil desires You had When you lived In ignorance But just as he Who called you Is holy So be holy In all you do For it is written Be holy Because I Am holy Amen And may God bless That reading Of his word To us We're going to sing Again to God's praise And we're singing In Gaelic At this time Psalm 139 Psalm 139

And the first two stanzas Of the psalm And we've got the words Now on the screen Psalm 139 And we sing The first two stanzas O Lord Thou hast me searched And known Thou knowest my sitting down And rising up Yea all my thoughts Afar to thee are known My footsteps And my lying down Thou compasses always Thou also most entirely art Acquaint With all my ways These two verses In Gaelic And we remain seated To sing In Gaelic For all my Simeon Who are you And who are you And who are you And who hands who is You And are you CHOIR SINGS

[9 : 57] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

Thank you.

Amen. That you would take away all the distractions of even the last few minutes.

That you would still our hearts. That you would quieten us in this place. And that you would give to us that sense of your presence and that expectation that you will speak into our hearts.

[13 : 35] We acknowledge readily, Lord, that apart from you, we can't do anything. We can't speak. We can't listen. We can't respond. And so we pray for the help of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, that your word would achieve much in our hearts. That those who are still outside of Christ may even hear the call to come into Christ.

To believe in him. And those who are in Christ, Lord, we pray that you would encourage us. That you would instruct us. That you would correct us. Rebuke us.

Sanctify us, Lord, we pray. That we may be made more like Jesus. And we pray all these things in Jesus' name. And for his sake.

Amen. There are some people that we meet in life that we spend time with.

[14 : 33] We form friendships with. Maybe we think back to university days if we were at university. Or we think back to school days or previous jobs.

And we spend a lot of time with people. We get to know them really well. And then circumstances change. We lose touch. And we may think back 30, 40 years to people that we once spent a lot of time with.

And we might think to ourselves, I wonder what became of them. I wonder where they are now. What they're doing in their lives. Even in the media, though.

We see on our TV screens and on internet feeds. We see personalities, celebrities that rise to fame. And then they dominate the tabloids.

And they dominate the chat shows. And they're everywhere you look. And then two, three years later, you wonder, I wonder where they are now. You know, they won the X Factor in a great, dramatic, final show.

[15 : 38] And two years later, you hear nothing of them. And you're thinking, I wonder where they are now. Well, we've, over the last few months, been going through Luke's gospel.

And we've been focusing on Jesus. That's the focus of Luke's gospel. Luke, as he writes to Theophilus, as he writes to us, he's focusing on Christ.

And yet, as we've been going through Luke's gospel, we've also got to know the disciples. The disciples of Jesus. And probably the most famous disciple, and probably the disciple that most of us feel most connected to, is Peter.

And as Luke's gospel finishes, Peter isn't having the easiest time. He let Jesus down.

Even though he promised loudly to Jesus that he would never let him down. That he would never deny him. He would never forsake him when the heat was on.

[16 : 50] And when Jesus was being taken in the direction of the cross, Peter, he disappeared. Then when a little girl asks him, aren't you one of them?

He caves. Just as was predicted, he denies Jesus three times. And then when the news breaks through that Jesus, who died on the cross, was risen from the dead.

When that news breaks through, as the woman rushed from the empty tomb to find Peter. Peter is scratching his head. He's struggling to believe it.

And then if we were to cross over from Luke to John, we can see that a little after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter isn't on track.

Peter's off track. He's gone back to the fishing boat. And yet he couldn't even catch fish anymore. So, we might sensibly ask the question, as we come to the end of Luke's gospel, what happened next for Peter?

[18 : 04] Did he keep on keeping on as a disciple of Jesus? And the good news that I think most of us already know is that he did keep on keeping on.

And we could go to Acts, the Acts of the Apostles, which is Luke part two. And we can see Peter serving the Lord Jesus and preaching boldly, fearlessly, and doing amazing things in the name of Jesus.

But I don't want to actually go to Acts at this stage. What I want to do over the next few weeks is hear from Peter directly through the letter that he wrote.

The first bit of which we read, 1 Peter. And if you're wondering when this letter was written, it was written about 30 years, they think, after the death and the resurrection of Jesus.

They think it was written around about AD 60, AD 65. And through this letter, we get an insight into the Christian life of this disciple, Peter, 30 years down the line.

[19 : 16] And we also get instruction for ourselves on how we can be Christians today, how we follow Jesus. You know, just in the same way that you open the glove box of a new car, or you used to be able to anyway, you'd find the book, the instruction manual.

In some sense, this letter that we have from Peter, it's like a discipleship manual. It's a guide from a man of great experience on how we follow Jesus.

So how does Peter begin this letter? What's Peter's opening theme? As we read these verses, as Peter addresses disciples in AD 60, and as we are addressed in AD 20, 23, what is the opening theme that we have in this letter, this first letter of Peter?

Well, the opening theme, the glorious truth that Peter focuses on as this letter begins, is on the fact that we are saved.

Peter begins this letter by rejoicing in the fact that if we are disciples of Jesus, we are saved.

[20 : 44] We are safe. And I want to ask a question by means of opening application.

I want to just be as blunt as Peter is, and ask you the question this morning. Are you saved? Are you saved?

It's a direct question. It's a straightforward question. It's a personal question.

But some of us find it a hard question to answer. And even as the communion season approaches, some people in this room are likely wrestling with this question, am I saved?

And when the call goes out, when the invitation is extended to come and sit around the Lord's table, should I be there? Well, Peter gives us some help in knowing how to answer this question of, am I saved?

[22 : 05] Peter gives us some of the distinguishing marks of salvation. And I want to think about three of them this morning in the time that we have.

If we are saved, we are first of all chosen by God the Father. And secondly, we're cleansed by God the Son.

And thirdly, we are being changed by God the Holy Spirit. So, just following through the first two verses, we're not going to get past that this morning.

But we see that Peter, he begins this, this letter by, well, by using the name that Jesus gave him. Remember, he was Simon, but he introduces himself with the name that Jesus gave him.

He introduces himself as Peter, and not just Peter, but Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. And I don't know about you, but I can just imagine a smile breaking out over Peter's face as he wrote that.

[23 : 16] He's an apostle of Jesus Christ. His identity was that he belonged to Jesus. He was an apostle.

He was a saint one of Jesus Christ. And Peter was an apostle, not because one day he suddenly decided to have a career change and become an apostle.

Peter was an apostle because he was chosen, because he was elected by God. And if we were to go back to the beginning, in any of the Gospels, when we first meet Peter, we see him, and he's busy with his nets.

He's busy fishing. He's got no word of Jesus. Then one day, Jesus chose to call him. He calls him to follow.

And Peter heard the call of Jesus. And he responded to that call. And that was true of all the disciples. Jesus chose them.

[24 : 27] And they followed. And in the upper room, just in case they had any doubts over this, in John 15, Jesus made that clear to the disciples as they sat around him.

Just before they were going to make an absolute mess of things, Jesus says to them, remember this, you did not choose me. I chose you.

And for Peter and all the disciples, a lot of water had passed under the bridge. there had been good days, there had been bad days.

There had been days when they had been faithful and they received a commendation from Jesus. And there were days where they had been unfaithful and they were rebuked by Jesus.

There were days, there were even weeks when they walked away from Jesus. They denied him and they deserted him. But today, in AD 60, whatever it was, as Peter is sitting at his desk and he's writing this letter, he's able to say that he is still an apostle of Jesus Christ because he was chosen by God.

[25 : 54] Chosen, it says, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. God the Father knew Peter before he ever chose him. And yet, he's still chosen.

I can think back to a car that I once owned. It's a lovely car to look at. It's a lovely car to drive. But it was a disaster.

Everything was going wrong with it. And every time I took it to the garage, it cost me a thousand pounds. I hated the thing. And if I had known beforehand what kind of a car it would be, I would never have chosen it.

Never have bought it. But the truth is that God the Father, he knew beforehand.

He had foreknowledge of exactly the kind of apostle Peter would be in advance of ever calling him. none of the failings and none of the falls of Peter were a surprise to God.

[27 : 07] And yet, these failures and these fallings did not stop the Father choosing Peter. and that was true of all these believers in Pontus and Galatia and Cappadocia and Asia and Bithynia which is modern day Turkey.

They are, as Peter describes it, God's elect, God's chosen. And I think that's just such a comfort and it must have been such a source of assurance for Peter and for all these disciples to know that the God who searches us and who knows us as we sang that he chooses us.

Not blindly but he knows us. he knows how we're going to live in 10, 20, 30 years time. He knows about all the secrets that maybe we try to hide from others.

God knows that and yet he still chooses us. And you might be sitting here this morning saying, well I don't know if God is choosing me.

I know he chooses some, I know he chose Peter but I don't know is he choosing me? Am I part of this group of the elect?

[28 : 43] Well, how do we know that? Well, I think the first thing we can say is, you know, we're here this morning.

That's no coincidence. Some of us are here because we've got a desire to be here that God has put in us. He's chosen that we would be here.

Some of us are here perhaps under duress, would rather not be here, would rather be somewhere else, would rather be sleeping in our beds. And yet God has ordered events in our life and our family that we would be here.

here. He's speaking to us. We are here this morning not because we made a determination to be here, but because God has ordered our lives in such a way that we would be present.

Because he has something to say. He's choosing to speak to us. And you know this morning if you're here and you see that you're a sinner, it's because God the Holy Spirit is showing that to us.

[30 : 07] Because I can go out and speak to a thousand people who will protest and object to the truth that they are sinners. But if you can see that you're a sinner, it's because God is showing us that.

He's choosing to show us that. And if we can think about the cross, if we understand that Jesus went to the cross to pay the price for sin, if we understand what Jesus was doing on the cross, that he was taking the punishment for our sin, it's because God is showing us that.

He's choosing to reveal these things to us so that we will come to him. And there should be a great thrill in our hearts because of that.

You're here this morning because God the Father has chosen that you would be here. and if you see your sin, if you see Christ the Savior, it's because God the Father is choosing to show that to us so that we will come to him.

will come to the Father through Jesus the Son. These were the words we were going to sing to begin the service.

[31 : 44] So that's the call of the gospel, will come to the Father through Jesus the Son. Give him the glory, great things he has done.

So we're chosen by God the Father. The second thing is we are cleansed by God the Son. And this is just the next step on. We might ask the question if we're unsure about all of this, what happens when we come to the Father if our eyes are open and we see our sin and we see and can make sense of the cross and we can see something of Jesus, what happens when we come to God the Father?

How will he receive us? Will he receive us? Because all of us in life have experienced rejection in different places. We've all at times come to somebody or some organization or gone someplace for help and we've been rejected, we've been pushed away.

But when we come to Jesus, as it makes clear in John 6, he doesn't drive us away. he will not drive us away, but he will cleanse us.

When we see our sin and when we come to Jesus, he cleanses us. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

[33 : 17] Peter, in verse 2, he writes to the believers about the blood of Jesus. He writes about the sprinkling by his blood. And for these believers in that place, that would have resonated with them, that would have sent them back in their minds to Exodus chapter 12, the Passover.

And you can remember the story. The plague of death is sweeping through the land, and those whose homes were covered, were sprinkled by the blood of the Passover lamb, they were saved.

And just as the blood that was sprinkled over the houses in Egypt brought salvation, if the blood of Jesus is sprinkled by faith over our lives, we are cleansed from sin.

We are cleansed by God the Son. one of Peter's close friends, a fellow disciple, John, said in 1 John 1, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

[34 : 50] us. You know, you can walk in the door of the church this morning with the weight of sin on our shoulders and with that sense of the stain of sin in our hearts.

sin in us. And yet, as we come in faith to Jesus, as we ask for that cleansing, because of the cross, because of that place where his blood was shed, we can be purified from all sin.

Our hearts can be made clean. every cringing offense that we remember, gone.

And we are given what Peter describes there in verse two, grace and peace in abundance. that's the promise of the gospel.

And that's a promise that would have caused another smile to break out over Peter's face. And Peter knew what it was to sin.

[36 : 18] Day by day, he, like all of us, would have sinned. So Peter took his sins to Jesus, and not just once or twice, but many times.

He has to come to Jesus, seeking that cleansing from sin. And Peter can think back about sins that were not little and secret, but sins that were big and public.

And yet Peter knew as he wrote this letter that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ. He was still chosen. He was secure, he was saved, and he was cleansed from all his sin.

He was writing this letter, rejoicing in the fact that he was a recipient of grace and peace.

peace. It's such a thrilling truth. We sing the words of that hymn often, what can wash away my sin?

[37 : 36] Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.

No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Or we can sing what we sang last Sunday night, there is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

Have you and I come to Jesus to be sprinkled, to be cleansed by his blood?

It's another very simple, personal, direct, blunt question. have we come and sought that sprinkling, that cleansing?

We can't be saved with our sin. We need to be saved from our sin. And only Jesus can take it away.

[38 : 51] So we are chosen by God the Father, we are cleansed by God the Son, and finally we are changed, we are being changed by God the Holy Spirit.

And I think this is a truth that often we lose sight of, we perhaps don't have as firm a grasp on. I think from observation in pastoral ministry over the last 15 years, faith, I think one of the things that holds people back from either coming to Jesus or professing their faith in Jesus is a fear that we're not going to keep on keeping on, that we're going to make a hash of it, that we're going to bring shame and disgrace to the name of Jesus.

we fear that we're going to take a step in faith and that there's going to be no change in our lives and we're just going to go back to the way that we always were.

And rather than face that fear, we hold back and hesitate. but to think that way is to misunderstand what it means to be saved.

See, when we come to Jesus, when we are saved, Jesus doesn't just cleanse us from our sin and then send us off to get on with our Christian lives and our own strength.

[40 : 29] No, when we become Christians, we are given the Holy Spirit we read these verses last week. When we become Christians, the moment we believe the Holy Spirit, He comes into our lives and God the Holy Spirit, He is the one who gives us the strength to keep on keeping on.

It's not us. Peter in verse 2 talks about the sanctifying work of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ.

Now, what does that mean? Well, to sanctify means to change us, to make us holy. And what does it mean to be holy?

Well, to be holy in the simplest and yet most profound sense is to be made more like Jesus. Peter will write in verse 15 and 16, just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do for it is written, be holy because I am holy.

Now, we look at that command and that's impossible for us. It's a work of the Holy Spirit and it's a work that he, the Holy Spirit, will do.

[41 : 52] from the moment we believe to the moment that we pass into eternity.

The Holy Spirit is working in us and he is working on us to make us more like Jesus, to make us more obedient to Jesus.

intentions. You know, there are lots of projects that we start with great intentions but we just give up on.

We look at gardens that are half done. We've got chests of drawers, perhaps in some houses that are, you know, we spent ten minutes with an Ikea guide and then just aborted the whole thing.

You know, there's lots of projects that we start but we just don't have the strength and the stamina or the skill to persevere in. But God, the Holy Spirit, never gives up on any of us.

[42 : 58] As the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 1, that when God begins a good work in us, he sees it through to completion. We're never written off.

And Peter could write that from experience because he gave up at one stage, he goes back to fishing, only to find that he couldn't even catch fish anymore.

Peter let go of Jesus for a period and he wanted to go his own way, but Jesus did not let go of Peter.

Spurgeon wrote, there is not your hold of Christ that saves you, but his hold of you. And Peter, with tears in his eyes likely, could testify to the holding power of Jesus.

Peter could testify to the persevering work of the Holy Spirit in his life. And Peter, in AD 60, whatever it was, was keeping on, keeping on.

[44 : 21] Not because of Peter, because God, the Holy Spirit, was still at work in him. And if you and I come to Jesus, seeking that cleansing from sin, we have the promise that God, the Holy Spirit, comes into our lives and he begins a changing work of making us more like our old, making us less like our old, sinful selves and making us day by day more like Jesus.

And even though there will be times, there will be seasons where we resist them, even though there will be phases in our lives and we slow that work down through our sinful disobedience, God does not give up on us.

Just as he didn't give up on Peter. our salvation is secure because it's God's work. It's not ours.

So are you saved? Are you saved? saved? We are chosen by God the Father.

We are cleansed by God the Son. And day by day we are changed by God the Holy Spirit.

[46 : 11] See the security and the strength of our salvation. Father, Son, Holy Spirit involved in saving us and keeping us.

And so Peter writes from his desk all these years ago with great joy. He's saved. And the question that comes from him to us is are you saved?

If not, there's opportunity today. Take it. And if we are saved, let's rejoice in our salvation and praise the God who saves us.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We'll pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and we thank you for the assurance that we receive as we hear your word and as we understand our sin and our need of salvation.

We thank you for the reassurance we are given that you are working in our lives, that you are calling us, that you are choosing us as those who are to come to Jesus.

[47 : 49] Help us, we pray, to make that determination in our wills to come to Jesus, to seek that cleansing, to know that salvation, and day by day, to know that changing power of the Holy Spirit, that we will be made more like Jesus until the day that we are called from this world and our promise that we will be made like him.

So hear our prayers, take away our sin, we ask, in Jesus' name, Amen. We'll sing to finish 396 in mission praise, just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come.

It was time to sing. Amen. Just as I am without one plea, be, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst thee come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

just as I am and waiting not to rip my soul of wonder blood to thee whose blood have cleansed in such O Lamb O God, I come, I come.

Just as I am no tossed about, with many a conflict, many a doubt, fightings within and fears with love, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

[50 : 35] Just as I am the wretched blind, sight which is sinning of the mind, yea, all I need indeed to find O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, the wilt receive, with welcome, heart, and glenn's relief, because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown, hath broken every barrier down, now to be thine, yet thine alone, no love of God, I come, I come.

And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.