

## 17.7.22 pm

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Date: 17 July 2022

Preacher: George Barrie

[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening everyone and welcome to our evening service. We welcome once again George Barrie to lead the service this evening. Notice as this morning, on Tuesday we have little fishes in the morning from 10 until 12.

So any parents with young children will be welcome to attend that. And then on Tuesday night we have Road to Recovery at 7pm. David was just informing me that I think the pray meeting message says pray meeting at 6pm, I don't know how we managed to get that.

7.30pm as usual on Wednesday night for the pray meeting, both here and on Zoom. And then services next Sunday, we'll both be taken God willing by George once more. And if you have a pastoral need during the time that the minister is away please get in contact with one of the elders first of all.

But also Reverend Dean McRitchie from Graver is available to help if cover is needed there. So these are all intimations and I'll ask George now to come and lead us in worship.

Our call to worship this evening is from Psalm 119 at verse 103.

[ 1 : 24 ] How sweet are your words to my taste sweeter than honey to my mouth. We're going to sing our first item of worship.

We're going to sing in Gaelic and we're going to sing from Psalm 23. Psalm 23 verses 1 to 3. The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me. The quiet waters by. The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want.

The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want.

The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want.

[ 3 : 09 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 5 : 39 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 8 : 09 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 10 : 39 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 13 : 09 ] Thank you.

Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 15 : 39 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 18 : 09 ] Let's read together from God's to the Lord.

Amen.

And whether you're in the Maybe one person, going on in Scotland today. There are people who are praying for the students at their local high school and praying for ways they could get in. So she started to pray and her prayer was that God would touch the world through the lives of young people at this local high school. It was quite an ambitious prayer. She got a chance to give a gospel to a boy at the school, a boy in one of the senior years. He became a Christian through reading the gospel and he was one of these guys who would be able to stand at assembly and speak about his faith and through him quite a number of people at his school became Christians. And at college, when they got to the college stage, he and two of his friends began to pray and they realized that there was a real spiritual need in Mexico. So they took their summer holidays from college and they went to Mexico and spread the gospel to anyone who would listen. The following summer, they went to Europe and that went on summer after summer after summer.

By 1963, 2,000 Christians were visiting Europe. This started, this guy who started this, now in his early 80s, he went on to form an organization called Operation Mobilization, which many of you will have heard of and possibly some of you continue to pray for, sometimes just known as OM. They now have 3,000 workers all around the world and they're bringing the gospel to millions of people. They even get the chance to speak to presidents and so many people in authority. The question at the beginning is, what can one person do? And we often think that, what can I do? What can you do as an individual?

Well, the first thing is we've got to come to Christ. We've got to realize that when he was dying on the cross, that this was for you and it was for me. So we come to him, we dedicate our lives to him, and we're willing to go wherever he asks us to go, whether it's locally or to the other side of the world. And under God and praying to him, we have no idea just where that could lead.

[ 24 : 31 ] We're going to sing our third praise now, and we're going to sing the song, O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all thy works thy hand hath made. Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art. Let's stand if we can to sing to God's praise.

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hand hath made.

I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, the powerful earth, the universe display.

How great thou art, how great thou art. Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art. That sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee, how great thou art. How great thou art. When through the woods and forest glades I wander, how great thou art. When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur, and hear the earth and hear the earth and feel the gentle breeze.

And hear the earth and feel the gentle breeze. Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee, how great thou art. How great thou art. How great thou art.

[ 26 : 59 ] How great thou art. How great thou art. And when I think that God is Son not singing, God is the His love. How great thou art.

As the heart of may God, the host of my Saviour God to thee, how great thou art. You peace. How great thou art. You that born good thou art. My burden gladly bating, he bled and died to take away my sin.

Then sings my soul, my Savior, all to thee. How great thou art, how great thou art.

Then sings my soul, my Savior, all to thee. How great thou art, how great thou art.

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.

[ 28 : 39 ] Then shall I bow in humble adoration, and then proclaim, my God, how great thou art.

Then sings my soul, my Savior, all to thee. How great thou art, how great thou art.

Then sings my soul, my Savior, all to thee. How great thou art, how great thou art.

If you have your Bible to hand, please open it again at Revelation 3 from verse 14. I've entitled this sermon, The Lively Church in Laodicea?

Laodicea is now in southwest Turkey. And it's one of these popular places, not Laodicea, but southwest Turkey, is a place where lots of people go on holiday these days.

[ 30 : 08 ] But back in the day, it was the wealthiest and most important commercial centre of its day. There were three main industries.

There was banking, textiles, and their textiles were mainly concentrating on their black wool, and there was their medicine, especially their eye salve.

There had a downside in Laodicea. And I suppose many places, many places that we love and go to on holiday, they have their upsides, but they also have their downsides.

Well, Laodicea did. Their water supply was the downside. Their water supply was both lukewarm and dirty. And it tasted awful.

Whereas nearby Hierapolis had medicinal hot springs, and nearby Colossae had beautiful, cold, refreshing mountain streams.

[ 31 : 15 ] Laodicea was one of the seven churches that's written about at the start of the book of Revelation. And just a reminder that when we come to God's Word, whenever we come to God's Word, three things to think about.

And the same again tonight. What do we learn about God? God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. What do we learn about the people we're dealing with?

The people tonight in Laodicea. And what do we learn about ourselves? 2 Timothy 3 and verse 16 gives us a reminder about all Scripture.

All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuke, correction, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

In six of the seven letters that are written, there is something positive. For example, to the church in Ephesus, that we read about in Revelation 2 and at verse 2, the Lord says, I know your deeds, your hard work, and your perseverance.

[ 32 : 39 ] And to the church in Pergamum, in Revelation 2 and at verse 13, he says, I know where you live, where Satan has his throne, yet you remain true to my name.

But if we look at verses 15 and 16 in our chapter, we see what an indictment at Laodicea.

Verses 15 and 16, I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other. So because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

There was nothing encouraging there. And these people, when Jesus speaks about lukewarmness, oh boy, they knew about lukewarmness from their water.

And can you imagine lukewarm water in a Mediterranean climate? And Jesus obviously sees lukewarmness as worse than being either hot or cold.

[ 33 : 48 ] Cold are people who are hostile to the gospel. And then when we look at other places in the New Testament and we look at Saul, who became the apostle Paul, we realise, boy, was he cold to the gospel.

He was cold to the point of freezing and anti every Christian. And he did his best to wipe out Christianity. And what about people that are hot?

People who are on fire for the Lord. Isn't it good when we meet brand new Christians? They've just come to Christ and they are over the moon with their faith.

And then Jesus says to this church, I will spit you out of my mouth. Now I don't speak Greek, but from what I read about the word spit in Greek, it's a weak word.

Now spitting is never seen. My mother was always against any spitting that was done. Not that I did an awful lot. But this is a weak word. Because the thrust of this word, I will spew you out of my mouth.

[ 35 : 04 ] Elizabeth and I were living in Germany for a year. And we were often invited to people's houses in Germany.

And we had Germans make wonderful coffee, as well as making wonderful other things. Their cakes are just legendary. And so we'd be invited to many places and we would try to have as many people back to our little pokey flat as we possibly could.

But the first night we were having Germans back for coffee, she was a bit nervous because she knew she couldn't quite make the coffee they did. She was so nervous that when they asked for

sugar, she put salt in their coffee.

And you can imagine they had no choice but to spew this out of their mouths. So you just get the feeling of that. Now talking about what people are like, how hot they are when they know Jesus for the very first time.

What about, do you remember the first time you fell in love? Now, some of us, it was a long time ago. But do you remember that first time you fell in love?

[ 36 : 18 ] I see one or two people smile, thinking about it. When you saw somebody and you think, this is going to be my other half for the rest of my life.

Or perhaps you're not in that position, but it's that best friend. You know, that person who just makes you feel good.

And you just love being in their company. You don't have to be in love with them, but you just absolutely adore them. And then we go back to the first time we fell in love with Jesus.

That time when we came, for me it was the 1970s. And when I came to know Jesus, it all seemed, it all seemed to me at the beginning like a mistake.

I wasn't meant to be in a church. I had never any interest in going to a church. But I happened to be there that night. And I fell in love with this Jesus. But we, whoever we are, and it happens in relationships, that we can become lukewarm.

[ 37 : 27 ] And as Christians, we can become lukewarm as individuals. And we can become lukewarm as a congregation. We can become wishy-washy, mealy-mouthed, even jellyfish.

And yet, if that's happening to us, and it does from time to time, it certainly happened to me over my Christian life, we can pretend.

We can fool others. We can go to all the right meetings. We can go through the motions. And sometimes we don't just fool ourselves, but we fool others.

But we cannot fool God. Isn't it interesting in verse 15, what Jesus says there? Verse 15, I know your deeds, he says.

It's as if the Lord Jesus is saying to us, I know you inside out. Are we playing at church?

[ 38 : 30 ] It's so easy to do, isn't it? Play at church. We can so easily become hypocrites. We can wear that mask that the actors wore back in the day.

What is the church? Now, so often, we think of the church as the building. Now, this is a fabulous building. When you think a pub made into a church, this is a fabulous transformation.

But what is the church? And we realize from scripture that the church is not a building. The church is the people of God, the worshiping people of God.

And wherever we worship, whether it's in a building like this, or whether it's in a home the way they used to do in days gone by. Notice, too, that the Laodiceans are deceived about themselves.

Look at what we read in verse 17. In verse 17, we read this. I am rich. I have acquired wealth.

[ 39 : 39 ] And do not need a thing. That's what they think of themselves. They think of themselves as rich. 20-20 vision. Beautifully dressed.

20-20 vision. And then Jesus says to them, No. You are as poor as a church mouse. You are as blind as a bat.

And you are stark naked. Now, what leads them to the conclusion that they're rich and they're beautifully dressed and they've got this 20-20 vision?

It's what we said at the beginning. It's their banking industry that they're famous for. Their textiles. And their medical advances. But there's a degree here of spiritual arrogance.

And oh, to see ourselves as others see us. And to see ourselves as God sees us. When the people of God were about to enter the promised land, way back in Deuteronomy, we read that they were told, they were warned by God, that God said to them, Look, I have been looking after you.

[ 40 : 53 ] You have trusted me all through these desert years. For 40 years, I have provided for you. There's been no Tesco lorries arriving to give you food.

I brought the manna to you out of the sky. I brought the food for you. I brought the quail to you. I brought the water out of the rock.

For 40 years, you had to trust me because there was no other option. But now, as they were about to go into the promised land, the land, as I was saying this morning that God had promised all these years back, as they were about to go in there, he was warning them, You're going to build your houses.

You are going to eat fruit that you have not grown. And you are going to have this land flowing with milk and honey. And you are going to forget all about me.

Now, there are many of us here that we would say, compared how we grew up, especially if you're an older person, if you're my age or beyond, you would have grown up with next to nothing.

[ 42 : 10 ] Life would have been a hand-to-mouth existence. And where food, there's enough to feed the family, but that's it. There's very little else.

And holidays, we're going to your grannies. And here we are now, and so many of us have that wealth, haven't we? We have, we're far richer than we could ever have dreamt of.

Now, richness, of course, doesn't stop us from being a keen Christian. But we've got to watch that we don't depend upon our riches or anything else that would hold us back from being God's follower.

And isn't it wonderful to know that there's a way back as we read in verse 18 as the passage goes on.

Verse 18, the Lord says, I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you can become rich and white clothes to wear so that you can cover your shameful nakedness and salve to put on your eyes so that you can see.

[ 43 : 28 ] Buy riches from Christ. Riches that only he can offer. Isn't it amazing? It's nothing to do with the money.

It's nothing to do with the wealth. But it's the kind of things that Christ alone can give us. He can give us that forgiveness from sin. He gives us that salvation.

He gives us that purity that we were talking about this morning to the boys and girls. He gives us that confidence that we can go into the future with him.

And it gives us the confidence that at the end of the day when we're in Christ that we will go to be with him. We realize and many of us realize that riches can be stolen.

Our shares can go down the tubes. Other riches need to be left behind at the end of the day. We can't take them with us. And Job reminds us doesn't he?

[ 44 : 33 ] He says naked I came from my mother's womb and naked I shall return. Reminding us we came to this life with absolutely nothing and we will leave with absolutely nothing.

Jesus is asking us to put on the garments of righteousness our own garments are described in Isaiah as filthy rags.

The only way we can cover our sin we try and we try in many ways to cover our sin to lead a better life new year resolutions but the only way we can cover our sin is to be in Christ.

there is a there is a rebuke in verse 19 but then it goes on to say why Jesus is rebuking us.

Verse 19 those whom I love I rebuke and discipline those whom I love I rebuke and discipline and isn't it amazing that God loves us so much that he does rebuke us and like we God is our father and like any father they rebuke their children they have to for their own good if they don't rebuke them they are not doing their parental duty look what listen to what we read back in in Hebrews chapter 12 about discipline Hebrews 12 and at the end of verse 5 Hebrews 12 end of verse 5 my son do not make light of the

[ 46 : 36 ] Lord's discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you because the Lord disciplines the one he loves and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son endure hardship as discipline God is treating you as his children for what children are not disciplined by their father if you are not disciplined and everyone undergoes discipline then you are not legitimate not true sons and daughters at all more over we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it how much more should we submit to the father of spirits and live they disciplined us for a little while as they thought best but God disciplines us for our good in order that we may share in his holiness no discipline seems pleasant at the time but painful later on however it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it therefore strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees make level paths for your feet so that the lame may not be disabled but rather healed the discipline of

God and disciplining us for his own good for our own good he wants the very best for us and it's to lead us to repentance if we have strayed from him in any way it's to lead us to repentance either individually as a church as a nation as the world in verse 20 there is that wonderful image of the knocking at the door verse 20 here I am says Jesus I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and eat with that person and they with me Jesus could

so easily force his way in but he could force his way into any one of our lives but he chooses not to he wants to be invited in into our individual lives into our church his church and he wants to be first in our lives and in the life of his church he has always wanted to have fellowship with his people do you remember back in

Genesis 3 just before Adam and Eve sinned they had this perfect fellowship with God isn't that amazing it's so hard for us as human beings as sinners to get our heads round that that they had perfect fellowship with God and then because of disobeying God they had to hide from him and of course then the Lord came to look for them in the garden of course he knew perfectly well where they were but he just said where are you isn't it encouraging this church here in North Harris isn't it incredibly encouraging that here on this site instead of a pub that there is a church there is a group of people who love the Lord Jesus who are worshipping him and their lives are witnessing for him wherever they are and wherever they go at their work in their school at their university in their community among their friends wherever they are and wherever they go it's incredibly encouraging but none of us and no church can rest on its laurels how we've got to be very careful very careful that we don't stray and it's so easy no wonder the Bible refers to us as sheep those of us you know living on this island many of you having sheep you know far better than I do that sheep stray and boy do they stray but we too can stray so so easily and we've got to watch we've got to watch as individuals we've got to watch as a church there was a very good going evangelical church of Scotland in Inverness and it either has closed or it's about to close so there was a church that we thought was there forever right in the centre of Inverness a tremendous witness to anyone passing and now that building will be there and who knows before much time it may well become a pub it may become a restaurant or somebody's house who knows what's going to happen we've really got to watch and we've got to each one of us we've got to step up to the plate there are things requiring done in the Lord's service whether here in the church or in the community or in our Christian lives that perhaps we've been thinking about for some time and it's maybe time for us to step up to the plate and here we are in 2022 we are rich and if there's anything wrong with our eyesight we get help with spectacles and laser surgery and also we can we can often count on our own righteousness but we've got to be so careful we've got to be so careful the warning comes to us from the

Lord himself it's interesting today that there is no church whatsoever in Laodicea there is no church there it's gone the Lord was warning them and they at some point ignored the warning and the church has gone Revelation 3:20 is a very very special verse in my own life where the Lord says here I am I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and eat with him and they with me I was as I was saying earlier on I was in a church in Glasgow a big church there must have been five six hundred people in the church and the minister was just speaking from that one verse

[ 3:20 ] I've read in commentaries over the years that that verse is not really referring to individuals it's referring to a church but that particular night that was the way the Lord spoke to me and drew me but that verse from Revelation 3:20 when he when it was said and it was read out and it was time and time again here I am I stand at the door and knock if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and eat with that person and they with me and that was the night that was the night that I became a Christian I wonder for you is this are you are you in this process of coming to Jesus for the very first time and perhaps tonight that verse is for you to know that Jesus is knocking at your door will not force his way in but would love to be invited or perhaps it's for you to come back as we were saying early on it's it's so easy for any one of us to stray nobody might know we've strayed you know but nobody else might know but God knows and here is the

Lord in his goodness and his kindness and he's wanting us to come back don't we see that when Jesus did the parable of the prodigal son and I just love that image of the father just standing there waiting for that boy to come back I just get the impression it doesn't say anywhere in the Bible but I get the impression that father would have gone to that door or that window or whatever they had in those days time and time again wondering waiting would he come back and it's the same with our Lord wondering would we come back and inviting us back and as the father was in that story over the moon to have his son back or is it time for us to be more committed to him for our commitment that we would learn more and more to love the

Lord our God with our heart our soul our mind with everything that we've got may that be true for each one of us us amen let's sing our final song dear Lord and father of mankind forgive our foolish

ways reclothe us in a rightful mind in purer lives thy service find in deeper reverence praise let's stand to sing God's praise if we can dear Lord and father of mankind forgive our foolish ways we hold us in our rightful mind in purer lives thy service find in deeper reverence grace in deeper reverence grace in simple trust like there to bear beside the syriam sea the gracious calling of the Lord let us like them without a word rise up and follow thee rise up and follow thee O o stop the rest by gallery o come of hills above where Jesus knelt to share with thee the silence of eternity interpreted interpreted by love interpreted by love with the deep hearts of doing all our words and words are drowned the tender whisper of thy call as noises let thy blessing fall as well thy man are down as well thy man are down drop thy peace till all our striving cease take from our souls the strain and stress and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of thy peace the beauty of thy peace breathe through the heat of our desire thy goodness and thy power let sense be done let fresh return see through the earthquake wind and fire oh still small voice of come oh still small voice of come now may the love of God the Father the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen