

11.12.22 am

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 December 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning, a warm welcome to the service this morning. Those who are visiting with us, it's good to have one or two visitors this morning. Good to have some who have been away for a while and who are back.

It's good to have everyone. Those who are in the building, I'm conscious, it's very icy. So there's probably a few more online today as well. So a warm welcome to those who are tuning in at a distance as well.

The intimations are on the screen, you've seen them. So Shona just flicks through them. I don't have them in front of me. Tea and coffee after the service. If you're able to stay behind, please do so. The evening service is at six just to let you know when we're stepping through Christmas texts over the next couple of weeks.

So we're doing that this evening as well. Ladies' Fellowship tomorrow night, you've got details there on the screen as usual. And on Tuesday, as usual, we've got Little Fishes and Road to Recovery. Little Fishes in the morning. And Road to Recovery in the evening. Pray for these ministries. It's great to see the wee ones. Pray that they'll grow up to know the Lord and trust the Lord. Pray for those who are struggling with alcohol, especially just now.

[1 : 11] It's a difficult time of year. Prayer meeting on Wednesday, half past seven in the building, if you're able to do so. It's very encouraging to see real live people.

If you have to be on the screen, then that's fine. But it's great to see people actually together and have the warmth of fellowship. Friday clubs. We don't actually have jam this Friday.

It's not on this Friday. We had the party last Friday. But Connect and Rooted are both on. So 3.45 through to 8.30. There's these two clubs. So take note of that and pray on for that.

Family carol service in Taonamara on Friday 23rd of December at 7pm. So take note of that. I don't know too much more than that. But there's a carol service that's going to involve all the churches and from different areas.

So that's 7pm on Friday the 23rd. And you've got the notice there. Free church youth camps. And I'm not going to read all that out.

[2 : 16] But those who have children who are eligible to go to camps, be encouraged to go. So it's a great thing to go along and to be part of. I'm cleaning the church this week with Maddie.

So if it's dirty next Sunday, you'll know it's my fault. Service is next Sunday at 11 and 6. Morning service will be a normal service with a Christmas theme. And the evening service will be a carol service.

So as we've had community carol services in the past, we'll have a carol service. More carols and readings on Sunday evening next week at 6. So be encouraged to come.

And it's a very easy opportunity for those who are believers to invite those who don't normally come to come to church. So let's pray for courage to do that.

And the other thing I was going to say is on the 24th, just for your diaries, we'll have a late night service here as we have done in the past few years.

[3 : 19] Quarter past 11 taking us through into Christmas morning. And there may be other short services or events.

We're not quite sure yet. But on the 24th, there may be a couple of praise type events. But not crystal clear on that yet. We're working on the details. So we'll give an update on that next Sunday. And on the 25th, Christmas Day, there'll be a family service here at 11 o'clock. So a short family service. So these, I think, are all the notices.

So let's now begin this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise. The words on the screen. Mission Praise 102 to begin. Come, thy long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.

Come, thy long-expected Jesus.

[4 : 28] Born to set thy people free. From our fears and sins releases.

Let us find a rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation.

Hope of all the earth thou art. Dear desire of every nation.

Joy of every longing heart. Born thy people to deliver.

Born a child and yet a king. Born to reign in us forever.

[5 : 27] Now thy gracious kingdom bring. By thy Lord, eternal spirit.

Rule in all our hearts alone. By thy own sufficient merit.

Praise us to thy glorious throne. Lord, let's unite our hearts in prayer.

Let's pray together. Amen. Amen. Our heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day.

And we thank you for the words that we've sang. The words that point us to the Savior. Jesus, the one who was long expected. The one who was promised from the beginning.

[6 : 34] Amen. We thank you for the Lord. We thank you for the Lord. From the moment that we fell as a people. As we thought about last Sunday. There was the promise that there was one coming.

Who would save the people who had fallen. Who would rescue those who had fallen into sin. And grant to them salvation. If they believed in him.

We thank you that Jesus is the light. Who shined into the darkness. We thank you that Jesus is the one who is the hopes of all the years. And the one who gives us the hope and the rest that we need.

In our hearts and our souls. So we thank you that just as we read in the Old Testament. Of those who for many, many years looked forward. To the Messiah who would come.

We thank you that you are the God who keeps your promises. And we thank you that we look back. At this time of year especially. To the Messiah Jesus who did come. The one who came to deliver his people.

[7 : 37] The one who lived for us that life that we could not live. The sinless life. The one who died on a cross to pay the punishment for our sins. So that the wage of our sin.

Which is death. Would be paid by him. So that we could have the everlasting life. That is promised to all who believe. We thank you for the grace of Jesus.

We say these words every Sunday as we meet. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with us. We thank you for the wonder of that grace. The cost of that grace.

That God the Son would leave the realms of glory. To come to this broken world. To go to the cross. To suffer darkness and desolation.

So that we who are deserving of nothing but punishment. Could be given peace and eternal life. We thank you that grace is God's riches. His peace. His hope.

[8 : 33] His joy. His eternal life. At Christ's expense. And help us we pray. And especially over this month. To meditate upon the wonder of these things.

Help us in the lights that we see before our eyes. And all these alerts to Christmas. That are in our faces every moment. May each one of them cause us to think of Jesus.

Help us we pray. In the busyness of this season. To be still. And to know that you are God. And that you are with us.

We pray Lord for all those who. Are struggling today. And those who need your help. We thank you that each week. As we meet.

We can bring them to you in prayer. And once again Lord. We do that. We pray for those in our community. Who are suffering at this time. We are conscious of so many.

[9 : 36] Who are ill. Who are at home. Some of them struggling. Having returned from hospital. Others who are in hospital. Receiving treatment.

Even at this time. And Lord as our minds go to. All these people. As our minds go to. These faces that we love. We bring each one of them to you in prayer.

We name them in our own hearts. And we ask Lord Jesus. That you would meet them. At the point of their need. That where it's your will. That you would grant healing. And health.

And Lord where it's your will. For those whom you love. To go from time into eternity. We pray that each day that they are given. In time would be a day.

Where they know the wonder of your grace. And the blessing of your presence. So Lord we ask Lord. That you would minister to those who are sick. We pray Lord that you would minister to those.

[10:33] Those who are at home. And whose desire would be to be with us. But who have been unable to be present. For many months. Even years now. We thank you that you are the God.

Who is not bound by these walls. And we ask Lord. That we are. There are those who are with us in spirit. But absent physically. That you would minister to them.

As we pray that you would minister to us. We ask Lord. That you would meet with them. That you would bless them. And that they would know. Your hand upon them for good.

We pray for those who are grieving. We're conscious. Always of those. Who are struggling with grief. And especially over these last few weeks. As we think of those who have lost loved ones. In recent days. We thank you. That you are the God of all comfort. And we ask Lord. That you would comfort them. That you would strengthen them. We pray for the wee ones.

[11:32] We thank you for their voices. We thank you for their presence. We ask Lord. That they. Who are here with us today. And those who come on Tuesdays. Would. Know that.

You are the God who loves them. We pray that they would grow up. To know. That you are the God who made them. A truth that. Was so. Steadily taught to us.

In our childhood. And yet we're conscious. It's a truth that's denied. Year on year. In the lives of those. Who are growing up today. Help them to know. That you are their God.

That you are their father. That Jesus. Is their savior. And may they. Grow up Lord. To be close to you. We pray Lord for. Those who come in here. On Tuesday nights as well.

Who battle with addiction. And especially at this time of year. We ask Lord. That they would look. To you. That they would know the Holy Spirit. In their lives. Giving strength.

[12:27] And giving rescue. From the spirit. That binds them. When this world. Has a grip. So hear our prayers Lord. Help us. Touch us. In our community.

Over this time of year. Give us courage. Give us opportunity. To point people to Jesus. To invite people. To come and hear. The good news about Jesus. To sing through these carols.

Where the Christmas message. Is spoken so clearly. Help us Lord. To be salt. And to be light. And we pray for those. Who would desire to meet.

As we meet today. Those who are in different countries. Where there's persecution. Where your people are hated. Where the name of Jesus is trampled. Lord. We ask Lord.

That you would. Minister to. That you would encourage. That you would strengthen. That those who still feel. That depth of darkness. Around them. That the light of Christ.

[13:23] Would shine. All the more brightly. So hear our prayers. Take away. Our sin. As we confess it. Lead us and guide us. In the power. Of the Holy Spirit. Help us to have our eyes.

Fixed on Jesus. For we pray this. In Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls. Would you like to come out please. The wee ones are in good voice today.

Don't stress. How are you all today? Good. Good. They've all got their own seats.

You notice that. You've all got your own seats. You all gravitate to the same position. John Roddy.

And John always just snuck in there. Behind the presenters box. And you've all got your seats.

But it's good to see you. I don't think we have pictures. Shona Dewey. No. The old computer is on its last legs. I think. So. We're going to use something called. We're going to use something called.

Our imagination. And I want you to imagine.

[14:31] It's nine o'clock at night. Okay. And you're walking down the street. In Tarver. Okay. Close your eyes.

Can you see it? You're walking along maybe. Past the school. Just take a wee look down the direction of the school for a second. We're carrying along.

And we're coming past the Harris Hotel. And we look over in the Harris Hotel. And then we're on to the main street. And it's nine o'clock. Remember.

So everything's dark. But when you look around. Is there anything. In Tarver. That you could see.

That would make you think. It's Christmas.

You can open your eyes now by the way. Camera. The Christmas lights. And if you can imagine.

On that screen just now. All the lights.

[15:30] Where's the Christmas lights? Where do you see lights in Tarver? Henry. Up against the shops. Lights everywhere. Christy. At the houses.

Around the windows. Inside the one is Lois. The big Christmas tree. The big Christmas tree. That's made of lights. Down the distillery. Where else do you see lights?

Murder Farrakhal. I'll not be happy. If you haven't seen some of these lights. Where do you see the lights? What else? Johnny. At the school. Murdo had his elf suit on. And he was going round. Up on ladders. Putting all these lights. And then at the Harris Hotel. It's on that big bush. You see all the lights. So. Johnny. Hotel Hebrides. Don't forget them. Lights. Yeah. That's right. So. When you're walking around. In Tarver. In December. Even if you got confused.

[16:29] And you thought. I've forgotten what month it is. If you looked around. You would know right away. It's December. Because of all. The lights. Now. Oh.

Here she comes. We've got a new entry. To the children's talk. The day. Evelyn's making their way over. Good. Good. Now tell me this.

I wondered what was happening. They were all looking that way. Not my way. Now tell me this. Why do we have lights at Christmas? Christy. Why do we have lights at Christmas? Because it's dark. Because it's dark. And then. You have to see at night. It's dark. And you have to see at night. Yeah. So that's one reason. Shawnee. To celebrate God's birthday. To celebrate God's birthday. So we have lights for that. To decorate. To decorate. Yes. John Roddy.

[17:25] They look good. Because they look good. Let me ask the question a different way. Henry. You go first. Is it about like. Is it about like.

God's light. It's. Exactly that. That's what I was looking for. The lights. Tell us. About who? About God.

About Jesus. And. Do you remember what Jesus said about light? What did he say? He's the light of the world. And. We're going to be reading today.

With the older ones. You can test them over lunch. About a prophet called Isaiah. And it was very very dark. When Isaiah was living. The people. Were.

Were not feeling very good. Because there's all kinds of dangers. And darknesses. And. They didn't feel much hope. And God spoke through a man called Isaiah. And he said.

[18:20] The people walking in darkness. Have seen. A great. Light. And that was a promise. That was pointing them to. Jesus.

Jesus. See. Sin makes this world dark. Doesn't it? And sin makes our hearts dark. Doesn't it? So who is the one.

Who is the answer. To the darkness in this world. Who is the one. Who can chase away the darkness from our hearts. Jesus. Jesus. So every time.

When you're walking around. Here's something for you. And I want you to think about this tomorrow. And the next day. And the next day. When you're walking around Tarbert. When you're going to school tomorrow morning. And it's still quite dark.

And you get down to the school. And you see all the lights. Who do you want. Who do I want you to think about? Jesus.

[19:15] Jesus. You know. You can even say to your friends. See all these lights. They're for Christmas. And Christmas. Is about Christ.

Jesus. All these lights. Give us the chance to say. See these lights. They're pointing us to the great light.

And that's Jesus. So let's pray. And thank God for that. Father we thank you. That in this dark world. You didn't leave us in darkness.

But you sent. The greatest light. That we could ever see. We thank you Father. That you sent. Your son Jesus. Into this world. We thank you. That he came.

And said. I am the light. Of the world. And we thank you. That everyone. Who looks to Jesus. And who trusts in Jesus. Is promised that light. Of everlasting life.

[20:14] So we pray. That as we walk around. And as we see. All these different lights. Help us to think about Jesus. Help us to believe. In Jesus. To ask him.

To take away. The darkness of our sin. And help us. We pray. To tell our friends as well. That Jesus. Is the light. So hear our prayers. Take away our sin.

And bless us. Over this Christmas. Help us not to be distracted. By all the other things. But to look. To the light of Jesus. We pray this in Jesus name.

Amen. We are going to sing now. And we are going to sing. A carol. Who knows Silent Night. Have you heard that one before? Yeah. 597.

In mission praise. Silent Night. And listen to this. Remember the shepherds. Silent Night. Holy Light. Shepherds first. Saw the. Light.

[21 : 10] And then. They were directed to Jesus. So let's. Stand in a second. And we'll sing. This carol. To God's praise. Silent Night.

Holy Night. Sleeps the world dead from sight.

May you Joseph and stable bear. Wash for the child beloved unfear'd.

Sleep in heavenly rest. Sleep in heavenly rest.

Silent Night. Silent Night. Holy Night. Shepherds first.

[22 : 26] Saw the light. Her resounding fear alone. Far and near the angels home.

Christ the Redeemer is here. Christ the Redeemer is here.

Silent Night. Holy Night. Son of God.

Lord of Pride. Love is shining from your face. Christ was now the out of grace.

Savior since you are born. Savior since you are born.

[23 : 34] enchantment for you. Ladies and girls have you head to Sunday school. Good night.

Good day.

Good day. Good day. Good day.zer. Good day.

if we could turn our Bibles now please to Isaiah chapter 9 and you can put a finger in Luke chapter 2 as well Isaiah chapter 9 and we'll read from verse 1 to verse 9 about 700 years before Jesus was born and as I was saying things were dark but God used Isaiah and he also used other prophets like Micah who we'll look at this evening to make promises that will come true in the coming of Jesus into the world and for any who are maybe unconvinced about the truth of the Bible and the truth of Christianity these texts are great texts to go to because we're looking at texts which are accepted by everyone historians, non-biblical historians has been reliable has been very easy to time date and we're looking at texts that are 600-700 years before Jesus came and yet they very, very clearly make a prediction that is fulfilled in Jesus we see that at the prediction of the birth of Jesus we could go to Isaiah 53 and we're given such a clear striking picture of the crucifixion of Jesus 700 years before crucifixion ever happened it made no sense when it was written by Isaiah but when we read it back from the position of the cross it is so clear and these are evidences for those who maybe struggle with is this true?

these are evidences that point to how true the Bible is Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 1 nevertheless there will be no more gloom for those who are in distress in the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali but in the future he will honour Galilee of the Gentiles by the way of the sea along the Jordan the people walking in darkness have seen a great light on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned you have enlarged the nation and increased their joy they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest as men rejoice when dividing the plunder for as in the day of Midian's defeat you have shattered the yoke that burdens them the bar across their shoulders the rod of the repressor every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning will be fuel for the fire for to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders and he will be called wonderful counsellor mighty God everlasting father prince of peace of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end he will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever the zeal of the Lord almighty will accomplish this amen and just a short section from Luke chapter 2

Luke chapter 2 and we'll read up verse 10 so we have the shepherds and the angels I'll just read in from verse 8 but verse 10 is on the screen and there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby keeping watch over their flocks at night an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified but the angel said to them do not be afraid I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you he is Christ the Lord this will be a sign to you you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God and saying glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again now we'll sing from Psalm 23 the first two verses of Psalm 23 and we'll sing these verses in Gaelic familiar words to us the Lord's my shepherd

[29 : 53] I'll not want he makes me down to lie 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 even for

his own name's sake I think we've got a preacher there we'll stand to sing to God's praise no we won't we'll remain seated sorry to sing in Gaelic to God's praise Lord oh oh oh oh oh oh Even if I never could lie in cheer

I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer
I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer

I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer
I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer

I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer
I never could lie in cheer I never could lie in cheer through all that he came to do.

Help us we pray and help the children in Sunday school help them to understand and to believe be with those in the churches around us those who are preaching the same message in different places.

[34 : 45] We ask Lord that whatever Christ has lifted up that many would be drawn to him and Lord that your name would be glorified. We ask this in Jesus name.

Amen. Isaiah chapter 9 if you've got that open in front of you that will be helpful.

What we've been doing over the last couple of weeks is maybe approaching Christmas at a slower speed. Sometimes as we are aware Christmas is coming we head straight to the shepherds and the wise men and the manger and Bethlehem and we go straight to where it all happened but it's good on occasions to take a little more time and try to trace back through the Old Testament these promises of God that are fulfilled in Jesus.

And they begin right at the very beginning of the Bible. Last Sunday we thought about Genesis 3.15 man falls sin comes in everything gets dark but the moment man falls God makes a promise that he will send a saviour.

And now if we fast forward from Genesis to Isaiah we come to this book that was written 6 to 700 years before Jesus came but it's a book that very clearly points us to the coming of Jesus and it's a book that shows us very clearly how comprehensive Jesus is as saviour.

[36 : 31] When I was studying I got taken back in my studying time to when I was I don't know 10 or 11 years old I was in Aberdeen and I used to go to a kind of club like Connector Jam on a Saturday night there was a Sunday school a wee brethren Sunday school I used to go to and on a Saturday night they would take us to something called camp club we would play football until we were dripping wet and faces like Beatrice sweating they'd open the tuck shop we'd have coke we'd have Mars bars we'd be high up on energy and then we would sing all these choruses where the very simple gospel message would just be put in our minds and the chorus that was in my mind today or in the course of this last week when I was studying is a chorus that we used to sing there and it was Jesus is the answer for the world today above him there's no other Jesus is the way

I can hear the tune but I'm not going to subject you to it Jesus is the answer for the world today above him there's no other Jesus is the way and essentially that that was the message that Isaiah was bringing to the people of 700 BC and that's the message that we still need to hear today in 2022 AD Jesus is the answer for the world today Jesus is the answer for your life and mine today so through the lens of Isaiah I want to ask the question and try to answer the question what did Jesus come to do how and in what way was and is Jesus the answer first point

I've got a few points and we'll just see how we go we'll step through them the first thing we see is that Jesus gives deliverance to those who are in distress Jesus gives deliverance to those who are in distress and we sense that distress in verse 1 of Isaiah 9 nevertheless it says there will be no more gloom for those who are in distress and we have this narrative about Zebulun and Naphtali and what was going on there so Isaiah without going into great detail Isaiah was writing to God's people and they were experiencing gloom they were in distress so what was going on well perhaps the best way to grasp what was going on imagine you were a Ukrainian national a year ago you're aware of this menacing thread that's around you and it's in the newspapers and it's on the news stories and you're hearing about forces that are being gathered you're hearing about the prospect of war you're not sure is it going to happen or not but there's anxiety and there's stress levels rising well that was the situation that God's people were in

Assyria was the power that was seeking to attack there was no political peace everything was very turbulent there was a changeover in leadership in Assyria and there was the menacing political and military threat that was there and they were living with it every day and it was causing stress distress and people were experiencing a sense of gloom at the prospect of attack one commentator

John MacArthur says Zebulun and Naphtali those who are mentioning in these verses on the northern border in northeast Galilee west of the Jordan River they were the first to suffer from the invasion by the Assyrian king marking dark days for Israel so that was the context everything was unstable the people were stressed out and if we go from there to today

I think we could say in large measure nothing much has changed we only need to open the newspaper or scroll through a news app any day and we can find widespread distress we can think of friends that we have we may in our own lives to some degree be experiencing stress and distress because ever since sin came in that's been the reality and God's people can actually suffer a greater kind of distress because not only are we living in a world of sin but Satan who is active in this world has a particular interest in making it worse for God's people because we are children of the God he hates and so that was the context but into that context comes this promise that there will be no more gloom for those who are in distress so how would this turnaround happen how would this distress be dealt with what who would be the answer to all the problems they were facing well the answer was

[42 : 30] Jesus the promise of this child who was to come this turnaround would happen through Jesus Jesus was and Jesus is the answer he's the one who can who can deliver us Jesus was and look at verse 4 Jesus is the one and he's the only one who's able to shatter the yoke that burdens his people so that we can be free in him you know we all know people and we all have people that we love who at times are under a burden that they just can't shake think about those who have struggles with alcohol and we see them and we love them and it's like they have chains around them and they want to break them and they can't break them not in their own strength and so there's distress and there's gloom and they ask the question who can help me where can I get help where can I get strength and the answer is

Jesus tell them about Jesus and yet alcohol is just one picture of what sin does to all of us so how can we be rescued delivered from the distress that sin causes us to feel and be trapped under and the answer is Jesus Jesus is the one who can take us from the distress and the gloom that we feel because of sin in time Jesus is the one who can take us from an eternity of distress and gloom hell to an eternity of joy and peace and rest and freedom if we believe in him so Isaiah as God speaks through him says there is deliverance for those who are in distress we need to hear that today there are people stressed all around us there are people stressed out in this room there is one who came to deliver us from distress and his name is

Jesus the second thing here is Jesus is the answer in terms of the promise that he is light to those who were in darkness we come to the familiar verse of verse 2 the people walking in darkness have seen a great light on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned and I suppose another way to speak about gloom and distress another connection with gloom and distress is to talk about darkness and at this time of year when it's dark for so much of the day when we're taking the kids out to school at nine o'clock in the morning and it's dark and we're picking them up again at half past three and it's dark when you speak to people people are more gloomy there's a kind of gloom that just rests over us for a month or two of the year but then as the days start to stretch we get past the longest day and more light starts to flood in and the sun starts to shine the gloom lifts and hope breaks through and that's the picture that Isaiah is painting here in these verses the people were living in a land and in a context where the shadow of death was cast over them but we know that where there are shadows there must be light

I always think of that when I see the word shadows in Psalm 23 yea though I walk through the shadow of the valley of the shadow of death you only get you only get shadows if there's light don't get shadows in the middle of darkness in the middle of the night and the promise of Isaiah was that a great light was coming someone was coming who would live with his people who were struggling in this land of the shadow of death one was coming who would be able to take them through the shadow of death and take them into a place of light and life his name was Jesus we can hear Psalm 23 in our minds yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me and the psalmist in

Psalm 23 is pointing us to Jesus in Isaiah in Isaiah 9 as he's seeing this glimmer of light he's pointing us to Jesus because if we fast forward 700 years we see the magi the wise men and they're looking up in the sky and they're seeing a light they've never seen before and they follow the light they follow the star and it takes them to the child who would be born the child who would grow up and who would say I am the light of the world and whoever walks with me whoever follows me

will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life there is there is light promised to those who are in darkness can I ask have you got the light of Christ in your life I mean are we following Jesus it's the light of Christ flooding into our hearts and filling our lives remember what [49 : 12] John said in John 1 and verse 5 the light shines in the darkness that's what Jesus came to do the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it and that was a prophecy that went from the cradle to the cross because the light would not overcome the darkness on the cross but the light of Jesus would overcome death and Satan and sin and give us the promise of everlasting life and light light to those who are in darkness third point third element in this promise is there's the promise of counsel to those who were lost and if we look at it verse 4 in front of us we have the names of Jesus as they're expounded and his name is wonderful counselor his name will be wonderful counselor he will give counsel to those who were lost

I can still remember being just a wee boy in Inverness and I'd come from Stornoway and I was in Inverness for the day you see the names of Jesus in verse 6 not in verse 4 but I remember being in Inverness as a wee boy from Stornoway one when everything was fine and I was with my cousins and I recognized where I was next minute they were all gone and all the houses looked the same and I can still remember that feeling of I'm lost I was only lost about 30 yards from the front door that's another story but that feeling of dread and that feeling of panic that comes with lostness you know in our natural fallen state we are lost we're restless we're like sheep without a shepherd we end up going down lots of roads that are dead ends we listen to lots of voices in this world and they take us in the wrong direction sin causes us to lose our way we get lost and that was the situation back then on the national level there was gloom there was darkness there was distress the people felt lost they felt gloomy they felt hopeless and they wondered where they could go and what they could do so they consulted verse if you look at Isaiah verse 20 of the previous chapter 8 in their stress and distress they consult with mediums and spiritists they consult the dead something we're doing a lot today a whole lot more interest in spiritual things and occultish things in an attempt to try and find out what is beyond and yet all that that did to Israel as they tried to find their way is they just went deeper into darkness verse 22 of chapter 8 they get more lost and God can see them in their lostness and God says what you need is a wonderful counsellor someone who can show you the way to go and they wouldn't find that by looking to the dead they wouldn't find it by looking towards the earth verse 22 of chapter 8 they needed to look to the living

God and the message that Isaiah is bringing is that the living God is coming to be with them Isaiah 7 verse 14 says the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and will call him Emmanuel you know wise saving counsel comes not from us and not from all the voices that shout at us in this world but it comes from God and the message of Christmas was that God the son was coming and he was coming to seek and to save the lost and so if you and I want to be saved from our lost state if we want to know how to be forgiven for our sin if we want to know how to get to heaven we need Jesus he is the way he is the one who came from heaven to earth to show us the way he is the one who through his death on the cross opened up the way and he calls us to take him to be our counselor to listen to him to trust him to follow him there is no other way to be saved Jesus is the one who gives wonderful counsel to those who are lost the next element of the promise is that Jesus gives strength for the weak if we continue looking at the names of Jesus he is a wonderful counselor he is the one who guides us when we are lost shows us the way and he is the one who gives us strength when we know that we are weak and God's people if you think back to Isaiah today they were very obviously weak they were weak politically they were all over the place they were weak in the military sense they were very vulnerable and then if we look back through the history of God's people in the Old

Testament we see that they're continually weak they're enslaved by Egypt for years they're in slavery they're attacked by Assyria they're overtaken by Babylon remember the whole story with Daniel so when they are distant from God they were weak but they weren't very good at admitting their weakness like the toddler who doesn't want help when they need help God's people Israel even when they were in awful situations they didn't like to admit their weakness and then if we fast forward to the New Testament and think about the disciples that Jesus called around him they also were slow to admit their weaknesses think about Peter we love him but he makes an absolute mess of things time after time and he doesn't like to admit that he's weak he thinks he can do it he tells [57 : 10] Jesus time after time I can do it don't worry about me and yeah that's our situation that's our lives you know when we think we can do things in our own strength but we can't can't save

ourselves we can't keep ourselves we need God and it's only when we admit our weakness and ask God for help that the mighty God the mighty God rushes in to our lives to give us strength and to help us and that was what Isaiah was seeing if you glance at verse 3 to verse 5

Isaiah he sees a victory in his mind's eye God's people they were going to be rescued the gloom was going to lift the light was going to shine in you have enlarged the nation verse 3 says Isaiah as in the day of Miriam's defeat you have shattered the yoke that burdens them he's foreseeing victory but what he's saying is it's not us it's God the mighty God will step out and that's the message of Christmas it's the promise of Emmanuel which means God with us the mighty God the second person of the Trinity God the Son with us that was what they needed all these years ago they needed

God's help God's salvation God's deliverance God's counsel God's strength Isaiah says it's coming and we look back and we see at Christmas that it came Jesus came and he offers his strength to us his counsel to us his deliverance his salvation to us but we have to ask for it we have to be humble enough to say I can't do this I need your help I'm a sinner I need your forgiveness I need your grace will you help me it says everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved we have to call before that salvation comes we have to admit our weakness before we get help so have we have we done that have we told God about our sin we confessed it have we looked to Jesus and said will you be my saviour and for those who are

Christians we're so like Peter at least I am so are we saying day by day Lord will you give me strength to keep on keeping on I can't do this yesterday's grace is finished I need more will you help me remember Jesus lesson to the disciples in the upper room he says I am the vine you are the branches he who abides in me and I in him bears much fruit without me you can do nothing why would we try to persevere in our own strength achieving nothing when the mighty God says I have come to this world to give you my strength to give you my salvation to give you my counsel to give you my deliverance my salvation my love we're not going to get to that today my peace the everlasting father the love of the everlasting father

Jesus is the one who says come to the father through me you feel lonely you feel distant come to me and know the love of God the strength of God the counsel of God and the peace of God Jesus is the prince of peace and we need that peace in the world in this place in this church and in our hearts it doesn't come from within us it comes from outside of us the God who came to this world to be our peace and we'll pray our heavenly father we thank you for your word we thank you for this text that we've just glanced at that has so much hope and so much promise and so much light and so much life in it we thank you that

[63 : 58] Jesus was and Jesus is the answer for the world of yesterday and for the world of today and for the world of tomorrow and we agree with you Lord that you are the answer for our lives the stress the distress we feel you are able to deliver us from that the darkness that overwhelms our souls at times your light is able to break through that and the lostness that we feel you are able to guide us from that place and the weakness that we that we should know day by day you are able to replace with your strength and the love that we crave and this world does not give to us you are able to give us in Christ and the peace for our souls today and every day and time and then for eternity is a peace that only

Jesus can give and we thank you that what the shepherds heard on that day and what Isaiah spoke all these years ago and said to us today to you a child is born to you a son is given this is a gift Jesus is a gift peace joy deliverance salvation love is a gift to all who believe in Jesus so give us faith that we would believe and that we would know the reality of these things today and forever we pray this in Jesus name amen we'll sing to finish the words on the screen hymn 168 the race that long in darkness pined have seen a glorious light

Have seen a glorious light. The people dwelling deep who dwell.

In death's surrounding light. To us the child of hope is born.

To us the Son is given. Then shall the tribes of earth obey.

[67 : 18] In all the hosts of heaven. His name shall be the Prince of Peace.

Forever more adored. The wonderful love comes to the Lord.

The great and mighty Lord. His bow and kissing still shall spread.

His way the wind shall grow. Justice shall guard his road.

The peace of the people. And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[68 : 17] And the love of God the Father. And the fellowship. The comfort. The peace of God the Holy Spirit. Be with us all. Now and forevermore. Amen.