

26.2.23 am

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Date: 26 February 2023

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 you as well. And if you're able to stay behind, there's tea and there's coffee at the end of the service.

It would be good to get the chance to have fellowship together. The notices have been on the screen before the service began. And I'll just highlight a couple of these. First to remind you, the service this evening will be a Gaelic service, the monthly Gaelic service. And that service will be taken by the Reverend Donald MacDonald, or Dolan as we know him. And afterwards, there's a fellowship at half past seven. And Duncan Norman from the school, who's worked in the school here for quite a number of years. Maestro McClodge, as the young ones know him, will be coming to the fellowship this evening to share testimony. Come on, Ian. Good to have you. There's various things in the course of the week, as you would expect as usual.

[1 : 09] Ladies' fellowship, Little Fishers Road to Recovery, a prayer meeting on Wednesday. I'll actually be away Wednesday in Kinloch, doing a quinquennial Presbyterian oversight visit.

So Farahir will lead a time of prayer. There'll be just a prayer meeting on Wednesday, and Farahir will lead that. So be encouraged to come along. Hope Explored, we have the third session on Thursday night at half past seven.

It's just a short course. We're coming to the end of it. There's one or two people who've said they'd have liked to have gone, but for various reasons couldn't go. So if you would like to have another Hope Explored course, come and speak to me at the end, and I can schedule something for the next wee while.

But it's been a good course, and pray on for that this coming Thursday. Friday clubs as usual for the children, and the services next Sunday as usual.

I'll be taking that myself, God willing. Saturday, 4th of March, that's this coming Saturday, the Island Study Conference is holding its AGM, and they're holding that here at 2 o'clock.

[2 : 18] The reason they're having it here at 2 o'clock is because in the past it was organized all by people who were in Lewis, and then it happens in Harris. They won't have a Harris input, and so if there's those in the congregation who would be willing to get involved in that, they'd love to see you at that meeting at 2 o'clock this coming Saturday.

The communion services, the communion weekend is approaching 10th to 12th of March. That's two weeks, I think, today. There may be some who have come to faith and who are wrestling with that call to profess faith.

It's very straightforward if we are saved, if we have believed in the Lord Jesus, if we have been saved by all that he has done for us on the cross.

If we have been saved by all that, then his words are very straightforward. He says, do this in remembrance of me. Take the bread, take the wine, profess your faith in him.

And so be encouraged to do that for those who have come to faith. The last intimation I think I want to just highlight, I don't know if it was on the screen, is that for the Connect Club, if anybody has old electrical appliances, not washing machines or tumble dryers or anything, but maybe like old radios or skyboxes, that kind of thing, and you're willing to donate them, please do so.

[3 : 48] So we had Michael and Cameron dismantling a skybox on Friday of last week at Connect. I think they're going to make a machine that's going to take over the world.

So please be generous in your old electrical items. I see a sheet of paper in front of me here, and I think this sheet of paper is for those people who said they wanted Thomas Davis's book but didn't get one.

So if you want a copy of the book that Thomas spoke about and you didn't manage to get one, please come and speak to me and I can put the name on the sheet and pass it to Thomas and arrange to have that.

If you took a book and you haven't yet paid for it, like me, then please speak to David Cameron or someone and we can arrange for that payment to go forward to Thomas.

I think these are all the intimations. We will begin this time of worship and we'll sing to God's praise in a hymn that we've maybe sang quite a lot over the last while, but especially in the light of the week past with all that we've heard and seen on the news in terms of reaction to the Christian faith, to Christian witness.

[5 : 06] It's good to know that although we may be living in Scotland in a turbulent and challenging time as Christians, we have a God who is sovereign and he is ruling over all.

And this hymn is a hymn that reminds us of that. And so let's praise his name as we sing this first hymn, The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days.

The Ancient of Days.

The Ancient of Days.

The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. None above him, though before him, all the time in his hands, all his knowledge shall remain and ever stand.

[7 : 15] All the power, all the glory, all the glory, all the glory, all the trust in his name. For my God is the Ancient of Days.

The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days.

joy complete, standing face to face in the presence of creation of faith.

None above him, none before him, all of time in his hands, for his throne it shall remain and ever stand. All the power, all the glory, I will trust in his reign, for my God is the Ancient of Days. For my God is the Ancient of Days.

Just before we pray, let's read a few verses at the beginning of 1 Timothy chapter 2. God, through the Apostle Paul, says, I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

[9 : 16] For there is one God and one mediator between God and people, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people, the testimony given in its proper time. Amen. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day and we thank you for your word and for the truths that we are able to sing in these hymns that cause us to lift our eyes from this world and to lift our eyes from ourselves and to look to you. And we thank you that you are our God and we thank you that you call us and you give us this privilege to be able to come and to openly and publicly worship you.

and we acknowledge that you alone are worthy of our worship and our praise. You are the God who is worthy of all glory. We thank you that you are the eternal God, the one who was there in the beginning, before the beginning as we know it. You are God and you are God and you will eternally be God.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We confess that these things, even as we speak them out and as we read them in your word, we confess that these things are beyond us. We cannot understand, we cannot grasp fully in our minds and we thank you that we thank you that we thank you that we thank you that everything that we read, although we cannot understand it and grasp it with our finite minds, we thank you that it is true and you call us to believe, to believe more than our eyes can see, to believe more than our minds can comprehend.

And we ask that you would give us faith, each one of us, that we would believe. And when we come under pressure from outside of us and from inside of us, when doubts at times will crash in, when circumstances can be challenging, when the enemy of our souls attacks us and seeks to tell us that you are not who you are, that you are not the God who is merciful and loving, when the enemy of our souls comes and says to us that God is not real or God does not care, we pray that you would grant to us that faith, that would overpower the voices of darkness, that would overpower any doubts that we may encounter, that we may worship you, that we may trust you.

[12 : 36] And Lord, that we may glorify you with our lives. We thank you, Father, for sending your Son, Jesus, into this world, the mediator between God and people.

When we were in sin, when we had no way to come to you, we thank you that Jesus came into this world to seek and to save sinners like us.

And we thank you that his life and his death and his resurrection are the means through which we can be saved, through which we can have a living hope, through which we can have a security that is eternal.

So we thank you for the work of salvation. We thank you that it is finished. We thank you that all that we are required to do, the work that the Lord requires us to do, is to believe in the one who was sent, to come to the foot of the cross, to confess our sin, to believe in Jesus, to be saved.

So be at work, Lord, we pray amongst us this morning. Pray for any this morning who are here, or who are listening, or watching, or who are not yet saved.

[13 : 56] We ask, Lord, that you would strive with them in the power of the Holy Spirit. That you would open their eyes to see their sin and their need of Jesus. that you would open their eyes to see the sufficiency and the glory of Jesus.

Open their ears, we pray, that they would hear that call that Jesus makes to all of us to come in our weariness and with the burden of our sin, confessing it so that we may receive rest for our souls.

So be at work, Lord, we pray, convicting and converting those who are still lost. And for those who are found, those who are saved, those who are following Jesus, we pray that you would sanctify us. That you would make us more like Christ. That you would embolden us. That you would enable us to speak the truth about Jesus into a world that in so many ways now doesn't know the truth of the gospel.

And even though we know that that will provoke opposition, and even though we know that that may bring persecution, we pray for courage for all of us that we may proclaim that Jesus is our Savior and our Lord.

[15 : 16] We pray for the communion weekend and for any who may have trusted Christ and who are hearing that call to profess him as Savior and Lord, their Savior and Lord, and who are wrestling with that and hesitating.

And we pray that you would grant them courage and obedience, that they would come and proclaim that Jesus has saved them. We thank you for the amazing grace that we are able to sing of and celebrate the amazing grace that saves wretches like us.

So help us, Lord, we pray, to receive that grace and to show that grace to those that you put around us. We pray, Lord, for our nation. As we have sang, Lord, we have our eyes on you, but we are aware of our nation and how far we have strayed from your word.

And we ask, Lord, that you would have mercy upon us. We pray again, Lord, for awakenings and for revivals in this land that once was known for our love of Christ.

We pray as we hear the attacks on your people, Lord, that you would give courage and perseverance to those who are trusting you. And we pray, especially for Kate Forbes this week, we thank you, Lord, for the stand that she has taken.

[16 : 42] We thank you that she is not ashamed to say that you are her Lord and her Savior. And we pray that as she is given opportunity, when interviewed, to speak of her trust in you, we pray that you would put the words in her mouth.

And, Lord, that you would protect her and her family and those working with her, that the light of Christ would be seen in the darkness of this time. And, Lord, we pray that if it's your will for her to have a position of authority in the land, that you would grant that, open the door.

And if not, Lord, that you would make that clear to her. We pray for all those who are in authority.

We recognize that none are there without your permission. And we know that we are called to pray for them.

And so we pray for the Prime Minister, we pray for the Royal Family, we pray for all those who you have allowed to be in positions of influence. And we ask, Lord, that you would cause them to look to you and to trust in you.

It's a prayer that seems so far removed from the reality of what we live in. And yet nothing is impossible for you. And we ask, Lord, that you would do in this place more than we can ask or even imagine.

[18 : 03] We ask that you would continue with us now in this hour of worship, that we would worship you in spirit and in truth. And for those who would desire to be with us but who can't be, for those who are struggling with their health, for those who struggle with grief, for those who struggle with addictions, for those who have responsibilities that take them elsewhere this morning, we commit each one to you, asking, Lord, that where there is that desire to be in worship but where there is no opportunity, that you would bless them where they are, minister to them and to us in our need.

And for those who have no desire, again, Lord, we pray that you would awaken souls, that they would look to Jesus, the living water, the only one who can satisfy our souls.

So hear our prayers, forgive our sins, and lead us in the power of your spirit, for we ask all these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

How are you all today?

All good today? Good stuff. I'm going to move this just so I can actually see you. What's right, all right, please?

[19 : 37] All right, boys, come through. I'm going to go out so I can see you. I want to tell you about something that I had to do.

It wasn't actually this week past, it was the week before. I was going to tell you about this last Sunday but then, remember, the lights went off and everything went a bit of ski whiff. But, not last Monday but the Monday before, I had to do something very, very nerve-wracking.

And do you know what it was? I had to come back from Stornoway in the car. And it was very, very nerve-wracking.

How, says Michael, how do you, how do you think? Henry? Because your car is very slow. Because my car, I was just starting to go over the car.

Because your car is very slow. Well, that was part of it, I suppose, yeah, but that wasn't what I was getting at this morning. Michael? Were you scared that someone was going to hit into you? Well, I was a little bit scared that someone was going to hit into me.

[20 : 53] Because I can't really see you. Okay, enough jokes about my car. Okay, still painful. Fraser, what were you going to say? I was going to say, if it was night time, like maybe it would be a wee bit weird because it would be like dark and stuff.

Yeah. Yeah, it can be a bit tricky driving at night. But no, this was daytime. And it was really, really nerve-wracking. And I was really quite scared at some points when I was in the car.

Shawnee? No fuel. No fuel. No, I had fuel. Full tank of fuel. I'm going to give you a clue. What made me nervous?

You never drove. You just got your driver's license. No, I didn't just not.

It wasn't that I just got my driver's license. Had my driver's license for 30 odd years. Yeah, Shawnee, stop fighting, just sit down. Someone was driving that just got their driving license.

[22 : 05] Someone was driving that just got their driving license. In front of you or behind you? Not in front of me, not behind me, but I was in the passenger seat and they were out of the wheel.

It was Anna. It was Anna. So, that's what made me, that's what made me nervous. See, I'm used to being in the driver's seat in the car, but on this journey on the way back from Stornley, I had to sit in the passenger seat and Anna was in the driver's seat and how much control did I have?

None. Absolutely none. So, it was a bit nerve-wracking. See, the thing is, we don't like being out of control, do we?

Do you like being out of control? Well, it depends what it is, maybe, but it's not nice to be out of control. Even like, you know, think about if you're, have you ever been on roller skates?

Yes. Yeah. Have you ever been on roller skates and started going down a hill? Well, you very quickly lose control. I wasn't on roller skates, so get that picture out of your mind, but I've seen people going down on roller skates and when they lose control, they're not having fun.

[23 : 25] Or when you're driving in the car, even if you're an experienced driver and you start to go into ice and it starts to slip and you don't have control, it's not a nice feeling. See, it's not a nice feeling to be out of control.

It's a bit scary when you're in the passenger seat of the car and you're having to trust someone else. But you know, that's kind of what Jesus asks us to do.

Because, tell me boys and girls, what happens when you become a Christian? How do you become a Christian? What do you do? Shawnee? You trust in Jesus.

And so that means that we ask him to forgive our sins, don't we? We pray and we say, please, will you take my sin away? Will you save me and take me to heaven when I die?

But, when we trust in Jesus, we're not just saying, when I die, will you take me to heaven? What we're saying when we trust in Jesus is that we're going to give him our lives. He's going to be our Lord.

[24 : 34] And so he's the one who's going to take control of our lives. So, if you can imagine, before you're a Christian, you're kind of in the driver's seat, or at least you think you are. You're driving and you're saying, I'm going to go this way and I'm going to do that and it's my life and I'll do things my way and I'm going to go in my direction.

But then, when we trust in Jesus, we're saying to Jesus, I want you to be my Lord. I want you to take over my life.

And it's like we say to him, I'm going to get out of the driver's seat. And Jesus, I want you and I to go in the driver's seat and I'm going to sit in the passenger's seat and I'm going to trust you.

And when you think about the disciples, the disciples, Jesus, do you remember what he said to the disciples at the beginning? He said, follow me.

And sometimes Jesus took them to places that they didn't really want to go. Sometimes Jesus asked them to do things that they were terrified to do.

[25 : 42] Well, I tell you a secret. Every Sunday morning and night when I stand up here, I'm terrified. I'm full of nerves.

I'd rather be sitting in one of these chairs, to be honest, but the Lord Jesus said to me, I want you to preach the gospel. That's right.

And so, even though it scares me, I have to trust him and say, well, you put the words in my mouth and I hear people like Michael on the prayer meeting on Wednesday night praying that I'll be given courage to speak.

And so, that's what it is to be a Christian. He, the Lord Jesus, he says to us, I want you to step out of the driving seat of your life and I want you to let me drive and I'll take you to the places that I want you to go and I'm going to ask you to do things you might not always want to do, but trust me.

Can we always trust Jesus? Always. You know what I learned? What I learned on the journey back from Stornoway was I didn't really need to be scared because Anna, she didn't hit any of Dan Maddox's sheep.

[27 : 05] She didn't go off on any of the corners. She was quite a steady driver. But with Jesus, he is steady, he is faithful, he is trustworthy all the time and what he asks us to do is to trust him.

So let's pray and then we are going to sing and talk about how we are going to trust the Lord Jesus. Thank you Lord Jesus that you are trustworthy. We thank you that you love us and as we look at the cross we see how much you love us, that you laid down your life and you died so that our sin could be taken away and we could be saved forever.

And yet we know that today we are not out of this world, we are in this world. We know that there is a place in heaven for us if we are trusting you where we are safe and that's where we are going if we are trusting in Jesus.

But as we travel through this world, we pray that you would help us to trust you and even when sometimes it can be scary and even when sometimes we might not always want to do the things that you call us to do.

In case somebody laughs at us or in case somebody's cruel to us, we pray that you would help us to trust you and help us to remember that you are trustworthy and that you love us more than anyone has ever or ever could love us.

[28 : 35] So help us to trust in you alone and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now and it's a version of Psalm 23. Mission praise 1008, the Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

And the chorus says, and I will trust in you alone. Amen. The Lord's my shepherd, I love one.

He makes me lie in pastures green. He leads me by the still, still waters.

His goodness restores my soul. And I will trust in you, our Lord.

And I will trust in you, our Lord. Lord. For your endless mercy follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

[29 : 58] He guides my ways in righteousness, and he annoys my head with oil.

joy. And thy love is over, and flows with joy, I fished on his beauty lies.
And I will trust in you, our Lord. And I will trust in you, our Lord.
For your endless mercy for o't see, your goodness will lead me home.
Before the dark is try, how do my fear what matters?

[30 : 59] For your heart put your hand Your rod and staff Are the comforts I need to know And I will trust in you alone And I will trust in you alone For your endless mercy follows me Your goodness will lead me home And we can turn to 1 Peter chapter 1

And we will read from verses 1 to verse 12 This is God's word 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 our 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 had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials 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 of the things that now That have now been told you By those who have preached the gospel to you By the Holy Spirit sent from heaven Even angels Long to look into these things Amen And may God bless that reading Of his word to us We're going to sing again now To God's praise We'll sing from Psalm 91 Verses 3 and 4 Two stanzas I'll read them in English Assuredly he shall thee save And give deliverance From subtle fowler's snare And from the noise and pestilence His feathers shall thee hide Thy trust under his wings shall be His faithfulness shall be a shield And buckler unto thee

These two verses we sing in Gaelic And come what I mean Seated to sing in Gaelic God bless my little Good try and search And there Good for you Good-bye Thank you.

[36 : 11] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[38 : 55] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

We pray for the congregations surrounding us, different denominations, wherever the truth of the gospel is preached. We ask, Lord, that you would be adding your blessing and building your church. And for those who are a little more distant from us as well, we think of Gordon preaching in Lewis today, and we ask that you would help him and give him that clarity of thought and fluency of speech.

[39 : 56] We pray for that freedom that we know when the Holy Spirit is at work in this place. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're in danger this morning.

That clock tells me it's just past 20 past 11. So I'll put this big clock in front of me to remind me that it's not 20 past 11. There are certain times in our lives where we go from feeling settled and secure to feeling unsettled and insecure.

When our health breaks down, when money gets tight, when work starts to go wrong, when the relationships that we value come under pressure and start to crack, we can suddenly feel very

insecure and very vulnerable.

And even as we think about us together as Christians in Scotland, when we've listened and read articles over the last few days and heard the way in which the media has attacked what one journalist called a little woman who loves and follows Jesus.

It's a bit of a wake-up call. And we might be tempted as Christians to feel insecure, even in the country that we call home, Scotland.

[41 : 36] And so this letter from Peter is a timely letter. He writes to Christians who were under pressure.

He writes to Christians who were suffering. And it was going to get worse. He writes to Christians who felt like strangers and aliens in this world.

He writes to Christians who felt insecure. And he reminds them that if we are followers of Jesus, we are secure eternally.

And that's the first point. That's the first truth that we can take from this section. We're looking at verses 3 through to verse 12 today.

Last week we thought about what it means to be a Christian. Peter, he writes to those who are Christians and he reminds them, he reminds us, that Christians are those who are chosen by God, the Father.

[42 : 48] He chooses to speak to us and to call us to come to him. Christians are those who are cleansed by God the Son, the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross.

It cleanses us because we've asked for that cleansing. And Christians are those who are being changed by the Holy Spirit to become more and more like Jesus.

And Peter, he goes into that in the first two verses. And then writing to Christians about their salvation, our salvation, the first thing he says from verses 3 into verse 4 is that we are secure eternally.

We might feel insecure in the temporal sense, but we are secure eternally. He says there in verse 3, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Literally, literally in the Greek, it's speak good about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe we should pause there and just take that in as an application challenge.

[43 : 58] Did we speak good of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the last few days? We've maybe done many things, but have we spoken good about Jesus?

And then when communion comes in two weeks' time, will we take the opportunity to come to the table and to, with our witness even, without words, speak good about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his great mercy, verse 3, 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.

So Peter's saying to these people, you are secure forever. Now, we need to think before we take this for ourselves, we need to think back in time to when this was first written.

And this is a letter that's addressed to Christians in various locations, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. It's modern-day Turkey.

[45 : 21] So what do we know about these people that Peter is writing to? Well, we know that they had trusted Jesus. We know that they had new birth.

They had what Nicodemus needed, but didn't have. John 3. They have living hope. They are those who have professed that Jesus was Lord and Saviour.

Their Lord and their Saviour. They are those who have received mercy because they've asked for mercy. They are those who accept and who professed and who professed that Jesus was the Christ, that he was the Messiah, that he was the Son of God, that he was the one who came and lived and died and rose from the dead.

And so the people that Peter is writing to, they believed that and they professed that and because of that they were persecuted. That's what caused them to be scattered.

They were under pressure. They were persecuted. And we should note here before we move on that there is a cost to following Jesus.

[46 : 36] If we don't have any cost, then we would have to question to what degree we are following. There is a cost to following Jesus.

The Christians in that place at that time, they knew that and it's something that we will increasingly have to face. There may be some here this morning and you're weighing that up just now. You're hearing the call to trust in Jesus. Or maybe you're hearing the call to profess faith in Jesus but you're frightened because there may be friends that you lose if you profess faith in Christ. There may be family members who will distance themselves and be different towards you if you come out as a Christian. There's a fear with that and that's a valid fear. Likely to some degree we will lose friends and it will change family relationships if we follow and profess faith in Jesus.

[47 : 50] Those that Peter wrote to they lost friends. They became isolated. They had to scatter. They were driven out of their homes.

They were disowned by their families. They were disinherited. The commentators tell us that back in that day there were families who held funerals for family members who became Christians because they were making that statement you are dead to us now.

And that's the situation that they were in. You know we've we've seen in Turkey over these last few weeks people who threw an earthquake in seconds have lost everything.

And these Christians in AD 60 in what we now call Turkey they were being shaken by persecution. They lost everything.

Material. But Peter reminds them that they they have everything that they need in Jesus. And Peter isn't writing as the the the pastor of some mega church from a big fancy wood paneled study Peter is is one who was persecuted all through his life as he followed Jesus.

[49 : 26] Peter in AD 67 AD 68 he will be martyred he will be murdered because of his faith in Christ and Peter knew that was inevitable it was going to happen and yet he's bursting with with joyful praise in verse 3 verses 3 and 4 they're not just words they're a song they're a hymn and so Peter is is speaking about this immense cost and yet this incredible joy and we might ask the question how how does he how does he have this mindset how can he be this way and the answer is because his focus was not limited to this world Peter knows that he is secure eternally although he will die

Peter knows verse 3 that he has a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead Peter could recall Jesus saying because I live you will live I am the resurrection and the life the one who believes in me though he dies he will live and those who live and believe in me will never die Peter knows that he can remember that he believes that and so he has joy and even though Peter can go to the hole in the wall and look at the statement from his bank account and see a big fat zero well he had likely very little in terms of monetary or material possessions he has in verse 4 the promise of an inheritance that can never perish spoil or fade and Peter knows that he and those that he were writing to they are secure eternally and I want to ask the question do you do you and I have that assurance do we have that joy you know all the so-called securities of this world can dissolve in a minute houses fall down good turkey our cars break down clothes wear out you know we can lose our money in one bad transaction we can lose our health nothing in this world is secure but the salvation that Jesus offers is secure and the inheritance that Jesus has prepared for his people it can't be lost but he he says through Peter here it's kept in heaven for you if you're trusting in Jesus you know sometimes we we go into a shop and we we see something we want to buy but there's there's one of these well there's one right in front of me here there's one of these things one of these reserved signs that's slapped across the thing that we that maybe has caught our eye and we might go to the assistant and say is there any chance

I can I can I can purchase that thing and they'll say no I'm sorry that's been kept for someone and if you're a Christian there's an inheritance in heaven that has your name on it it's what we're being taught here and it's being kept it can't be spoiled it can't be it can't decay you know sometimes we we can put things into storage because they're so valuable and we we want them to be safe and then when we go back to the storage container and check the thing it's covered in mold it's rotten it's decaying it's worthless there's no fusty storage containers in heaven the inheritance that is kept for God's people it cannot be spoiled it doesn't fade it can't perish so I suppose the question for you and for me is why do we hold the stuff of this world so tightly because we do why do we hold it so tightly when it's breaking in our hands and it's rusting and it's perishing and it's fading now why not trust in Jesus why not let go of this world's fading treasures that so often hold us back and take hold of

Jesus there's a hymn that's in the book it's got great words but we usually make a bit of a broken of the tune of it we don't know very well but the lyrics are I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold I'd rather have Jesus than riches untold and that's really what Peter is saying I don't have riches I don't have gold I don't have a position of status in this world my reputation is shredded because of the faith that I have but I'd rather have Jesus than have anything that this world has to offer because there is eternal security for those who are in Christ do you have it if we're in Christ we are secure eternally the second thing here is we are shielded constantly now still glancing at verse 4

Peter talks about an inheritance that can never perish spoil or fade kept in heaven for you some of us might be saying well you know I believe that I believe that the things the inheritance that Jesus manufactures that he prepares that's in heaven I believe that's secure but my question and my anxiety is am I actually going to get to heaven I believe there's something in heaven that's secure and shiny and solid and substantial but am I actually going to get there because we look at ourselves and we see how unfaithful we are and how unsteady we are and we think am I going to be able to keep on going as a Christian am I going to actually get over the line and get to heaven and the answer is if we are actually Christians if we are in Christ we will get to heaven we will keep on going we will be kept now let me say there are those who make an emotional response to the gospel there are those who who want to have

[57 : 16] Jesus as saviour but never bow to him as Lord and that's not a Christian and that kind of person who wants a ticket for heaven but wants to keep control to stay in the driving seat of their own lives that's not Christianity so when things get tough for somebody who who's in that place they just give up and I can think of various people over the years I can think of a friend of mine back in sky days Billy Graham came to Scotland there was a satellite link in Broadford in a big tent loads of people came forward and responded to the call of the gospel my my pal was one of them he wanted heaven he was scared to die he wanted to avoid hell but he wanted to keep control of his life still wanted to drink he still wanted to go out to the pub he still wanted to live his way and three days later his profession of faith is gone and he's not following Jesus and I don't think he is today you know it's possible to make an emotional response to the gospel but never trust in Christ and that kind of person will give up because that kind of person is not a Christian but when we truly trust in Jesus when we ask him to be our saviour and to be the lord of our lives he saves us and he shields us and he shields us constantly we sang it in in Psalm 91 assuredly he shall thee save and give deliverance from subtle fowler's snare and from the noise and pestilence his feathers shall thee hide thy trust under his wings shall be his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler unto thee and that's what Peter is telling us in his words in his letter he is telling us that we if we are in

Christ we are shielded constantly he says verse 5 that we through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time so Peter is saying that we are shielded constantly but not only is Peter saying that with his words he's showing us that with his life because this is 30 years after the resurrection of Jesus and Peter is still going Peter who we've seen who is so impulsive and so often and so often flawed as we see him in the gospels as he makes these great protestations about how he'll follow Jesus and he'll be there till the end and then when testing comes he falls flat on his face this same Peter who made a royal mess of things he's able to say 30 years after the resurrection that God is shielding him

Peter is keeping on keeping on not because of his own strength and determination but because of the shielding power of God so let's take the encouragement of that Calvin talks about the perseverance of the saints if we are truly saints if we are truly Christ's people we will persevere sometimes we'll go off course a bit sometimes there will be blips there will be falls there will be fails but we will keep on going not because of who we are but because of who Jesus is not because of our strength but because of the work of the Holy Spirit in us so take the encouragement of that and let me say to those who are hesitating to either trust and follow Jesus or to profess faith in Jesus let me say to those who are hesitating because you fear future failure listen to Peter and be encouraged to come to Jesus be encouraged to profess your faith in Jesus because he will shield you he will give you the strength to keep on keeping on there's a hymn called how firm a foundation and two of the verses I'll read to you fear not he is with thee or be not dismayed for he is thy God and will still give thee aid heal strengthen thee help thee and cause thee to stand upheld by his righteous omnipotent hand that's where our faith is not in us but in him the soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose he will not he will not desert to its foes that soul though all hell should endeavor to shake he'll never no never no never forsake when I fear my faith will fail we sin he will

hold me fast we are shielded constantly we are secure eternally and yet the reality for those that Peter writes to and for us is we are suffering presently we can imagine Peter sitting at his desk writing this letter maybe at this point his mind went back to when

[64 : 08] Jesus said to them in John 16 and verse 33 in this world you will have trouble and so Peter he reassures these Christians that the trouble that they were experiencing was not some strange and unexpected thing but this is what Jesus said was going to happen you know in this world we will all suffer to some degree because this world is sinful now when sin exploded into this world there was shrapnel flying everywhere still flying and all of us to some degree will be impacted by that we will all feel the effects of living in a sin fallen world but God's children Christians will suffer in a particular way if we insist that Jesus is

Lord that he is the Lord if we maintain that God is the singular God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ if we take the Bible and we hold it up and we say this is true and I'm going to stand by it and I'm going to live by it that will bring trials and conflict that will bring suffering Jesus said that's the way it was going to be if they hated me they'll hate you they persecuted me they will persecute you and we've seen that in real time this week Kate Forbes the trials that she has had to endure have not been over politics they've been for Jesus sake they've been because she said the Bible has things to say about moral issues and I'm going to stick to that and all hell has been unleashed against that stance there is suffering because of that there is present suffering so pray for her even if you don't agree with our politics and in a large measure

I don't but pray for her but what does Peter or what does the Lord have to say through Peter to people who are going through trials and conflict and sufferings what would you expect Peter to say if we didn't have the next verse or two and we were thinking I wonder what Peter will say to these Christians who are suffering I think we would expect Peter to say I'm really sorry that you're having to suffer and I hope the suffering doesn't last very long I hope things ease soon that's what we expect him to say but that's not what he says Peter doesn't actually give them or take for himself any sympathy Peter actually just tells them that their trials and their battles are the means through which God will strengthen them and glorify

Christ and so Peter says you're suffering you're in pain but this is good pain now some people here go to the gym and go to the circuits and have to suffer the exercises that Kami imposes on them and it's painful but it's a good muscle building fat burning pain and Peter reminds these believers that the sufferings that they were facing would not be wasted and that the pain that they were enduring was not a non-productive pain but rather it would build spiritual muscle it would build spiritual strength and through these trials

Peter says be encouraged because the world will see that you're not fake but your faith is actually genuine in this verse 6 says Peter you greatly rejoice though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials 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 the praise glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed though you have not seen him you love him 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 what does the first catechism say man's chief end man's chief end is not man's chief end is not to avoid all suffering and to live a comfortable secure and safe life man's chief end is to glorify

[70 : 03] God and as one commentator weersby put it suffering plus grace equals glory glory plus grace equals glory glory to Jesus so let's be realistic about the fact that if we follow Jesus we will suffer we don't look for it that would be crazy to look for it but if we're going to follow Jesus closely we will suffer and when we suffer let's try to stay out of that pit of self-pity that we so easily slide into and rather when we suffer let's ask that God will help us to grow spiritually and that

God would glorify himself even through our sufferings when I think about some of the brightest Christians that I know I think about some of the Christians who have suffered the hardest things in their lives and yet who are still saying God is good and God is faithful yes we're suffering presently but we're shielded constantly and we are secure eternally the final point which we're not going to go into is we are saved mysteriously and we can sing about that rather than study it tis mystery all the immortal dies who can explore this strange design and yet this design is the design through which God determined to save us so we sing of the mysterious and yet the clear message of salvation that Jesus died so that if we believe in him we are saved so let's sing our final hymn and can it be that I should gain an interest in the saviour's blood honouring the that I should gain an interest in the

Savior's blood.

Dying for me who causes pain, for me who hid to death pursued.

A raising love that God gave me, God of my poder strife for me, God's been so gladdened, for my lot of truth died for me.

[73 : 56] To dismiss the whole immortal dice Who can explore His strange design In vain the virtual set of trite To serve the depths of the divine Dispersing all that ever God's own That angel finds in quiet, O Lord Dispersing all that ever Lord That angel finds in quiet, O Lord He left His Father's throne above So free, so infinite His grace

Emptied Himself of all but love And beg for Adam's helpless race Dispersing all in men's country For all my God, He found out me Dispersing all in handsome three For all my God, He found out me Lord, my Jesus, spirit, faith I'm straddling, sin, and nature's night Thine I defuse the great pain I know the dungeon, the infinite night

I changed my love, my heart was free I know the ghost went forth and followed me I changed my love, my heart was free I know the ghost went forth and followed me Oh, God, the nation, now my dread Jesus, I'm calling him in this time God, I will live, my living head And hold in righteousness divine O, Thy approach, eternal throne And lay the ground through Christ my own O, Thy approach, eternal throne

And lay the ground through Christ my own 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