

## 19.3.23 am

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Date: 19 March 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning. A warm welcome to those who are in the building and I think there's probably many more online today. There's a lot of colds and Covid's going about so it's good to see actual faces in front of me. I wasn't sure if there would be many but it's also good to have the link virtually to allow people to come to worship without the fear of passing on infections and illnesses. So it's good for us to come together and to worship God and a warm welcome. There's tea and there's coffee at the end for anybody who's able to stay. There's some visitors with us as well and it's good to see you. In particular it's also good to see some who've been away for a while and who are back at home and if you're able to stay behind and feel comfortable to do so please please do so. The intimations have been on the screen. I don't have a kind of updated version of these so I'm just going to skip through these as they come up on the screen. Evening service tonight at six and we'll continue going through the life of Abraham. Six till seven so be encouraged to come out to the service this evening. Gaelic psalm singing event in Scalpy Free Church tonight half past seven to half past eight as has been in the last couple of months I think so please be aware of that and encouraged to go there if you're able to. Ladies fellowship as usual on Mondays and

Thursdays little fishes on Tuesday 10 till 12 go to recovery and on Tuesday night in the church here at seven. Prayer meeting will be on in person and on zoom this week. I'm actually due to go away on Tuesday morning through till Friday. I've got meetings to go to in Edinburgh so the prayer meeting will be taken by Angus McAlly this week and he'll give an update on the ministry that they're involved with that present and there'll also be somebody from InterServe who will give an update on that also. Mothers and Toddlers Gaelic Group on Thursday and the clubs on Friday for the children jam connected and rooted as usual. Pray on for for these works. Next Sunday I'm due to be preaching and cross-bossed at the communion there and so the service in the morning will be taken by Dr. Latham and the evening service is a Gaelic service at six o'clock. The fellowship would usually be next Sunday after the Gaelic service but we had various fellowships last weekend with the communion and also David Lane who has been in the congregation quite a number of times in the past. David's involved in Blytheswood. He's involved with Tyndale Bible Translators. He is Margarita's brother-in-law

I think is the connection family-wise and so he's going to be present next Sunday not next Sunday but Sunday after so we're going to push the fellowship from next Sunday to the one after and David will speak about some of the ministries that he's involved with. I think we'll leave this one today. We've been in Romania in the past and we're talking about the possibility of going back out this year a team of them. In Romania they were asking if we could put together a team of people to go out and volunteer and to help with various things so you can have that in your mind and think about whether or not you could do that. It would be probably September of this year. I'm conscious there's not many people here today and so we'll maybe push that till next Sunday in the hope that we're back to a bit more of health normality so you think about that prayerfully and pray on for the work in Romania. The final intimation I was given was just passed to me this morning from Joyce who deals with safeguarding and she's written here on Wednesday 22nd March there will be a safeguarding training session at 7 30 p.m.

For anyone that has not yet completed the free church training this is the last training sessions before the 31st of March deadline. It's compulsory for all volunteers to have undertaken this training so please contact Joyce or Stuart Joyce or Gordon sorry for details so that's an intimation from Joyce. The final thing is just to intimate sadly most of you will likely have heard of the passing of Teresa Gillis. She passed away from Stockinish last week the tail end of last week. Her daughter Jane is out in Canada and so the funeral will not likely happen this week but probably the week after so we can pray for the family and I'll update you on funeral arrangements when they become clear.

But Teresa she passed away peacefully in Stornoway. She was not I don't know if she was ever in the actual church here. She was in the hall in the years before that but she struggled with her health for quite a number of years. But my memory was when I would visit her when her mind was clear. [ 5 : 24 ] She would always speak about having that sense of the Lord's presence in the home with her and that's my memory of her and the promise of God is that those who are trusting in him have the assurance of his presence with them eternally when they pass from time into eternity. So let's pray on for the family for Jane and the family in advance of the funeral. These I think are all the intimations.

So let's begin this service of worship and let's sing to God's praise. We'll sing from Psalm 84. Psalm 84 and we'll sing verses 1 to verse 10. Seems like a lot of verses but it's double verses and Cammie's presenting so we'll be through it very very quickly. So Psalm 84 and we sing from verses 1 to verse 10. How lovely is thy dwelling place O Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of thy grace how pleasant Lord they be my thirsty soul longs vehemently he fainth thy courts to see my very heart and flesh cry out the living God for thee. These down to the end of verse 10 we'll sing to God's praise.

How lovely is thy dwelling place O Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of thy grace how pleasant Lord they be my my thirsty soul longs vehemently he fainth thy courts to see my very heart and flesh cry out O living God for thee.

Behold the spot O findeth thou an house where in to rest. The swallow also for herself hath purchased at our nest.

In thine own altars where she saved her young once forth may reign. O thou almighty Lord of hosts who art my God and King.

[ 8 : 18 ] Blessed are they in thy house and dwell. They ever give thee praise.

Blessed is the man who slainst the heart in whose heart are thy ways.

Blessed are my hope. Plus this –divet compounds for her cling ofomes of thy roles. The Competitors who archaeological around earth has not loved and Rud■■■■ could fund our own friends. Near also the Redskins propor Bub sollten umphoto, the LA Let unwittingly go, still forward unto stand, Until in Zion they appear before the Lord at hand.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God, give ear.

See God our shield, look on the face of thine anointed dear.

[ 9 : 57 ] Let's draw near to God in prayer. We can be thankful for answered prayer as well. As I see Adam at the back there.

It's good to see Adam having come back from hospital, having received treatment, and we were very fearful of him having to go away to Glasgow and have treatment there, but it's not been necessary.

And so he's all braced up for a few weeks, and it's not very comfortable, but we'll pray for him and give thanks to God also for his hand of protection over him.

I think in the future, Adam, we're going to look forward to hearing your testimony of that evening and the Lord's bike angels and how they protected you. So let's draw near to God in prayer.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day, and we thank you for this place where we can come together in the name of Jesus and have that promise that you will meet with us.

[ 11 : 07 ] We are fewer in number today, but we thank you that we have that promise that where even two or three meet together in the name of Jesus, you will be with us and you will bless us.

So we praise you, Lord, for the opportunity that we have to enter into this place. We praise you also for the freedom that we have, many who are not in this place this morning, but in their own homes. We thank you that as the ones and the twos and the threes gather around your word, they and we do so knowing that you are not distant from us, but that you are near to us.

We thank you that you are the God who dwells with us. And we thank you for the blessing and for the way that we can echo the words of the psalmist and say how lovely is your dwelling place, how lovely it is for us to be in your presence and to know your peace and to know your presence and your hand over us at this time.

And Lord, we recognize that that's not a privilege that we should take for granted. We recognize that we are those who are sinners and every time we come before you, we must confess our sin.

[ 12 : 23 ] We confess that the good that we want to do, we even this week past again have left undone on many occasions in the evil that we don't want to do, that we resolve not to do.

Often, Lord, we have strayed back into it. We are guilty. We are sinners in nature and in practice. And our mind and our memories can be haunted by many of the things that make us cringe at what we have done and what we haven't done.

And yet we thank you that as we confess our sin, you are faithful and just and you will forgive us our sin. We thank you that there is plenteous redemption found in Jesus.

We thank you that there is power in the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all sin, to purify us from all unrighteousness. And we pray for that cleansing once more this morning.

We pray, Lord, that as we lay out before you all the sin that may weigh heavily upon us, we thank you that you promised to cleanse us.

[ 13 : 31 ] And so we pray for that cleansing. We pray for that assurance that we are clean in Jesus. We pray for that comfort that we are accepted in him, that we are made righteous in him.

And we thank you, Lord, that when we come in that way, repenting of sin, coming in faith to the Lord Jesus, we thank you that we have the promise that you do dwell with us, that you do draw near to us.

We thank you that the Lord Jesus, the word became flesh. He made his dwelling amongst us. He lived for us. He died for us and he rose from the dead for us so that we can dwell with you in time and that we can have the assurance that we will dwell with you eternally.

Our souls thirst for you, Lord. In the dry, parched land of this world, we confess that there are many broken cisterns, to use the old language, that we may go to and drink from.

And yet there's no satisfaction there. There's nothing that would quench our thirst, but we thank you that our thirst is quenched, our soul thirst is quenched when we come to Jesus and when we stay close to Jesus.

[ 14 : 55 ] So we thank you for these moments and these days, these times of relief when we are close to you. And we thank you for the promise that when we go from this world, there will be no more sin.

There will be no more of the tensions and the warfare that goes on within our inner being. But there will be perfect peace and there will be perfect contentment.

We will hunger no more. We will thirst no more. There will be no pain. There will be no sadness. There will be no sorrow. But only the blessing of being in your presence.

And Lord, we thank you for these promises. We pray for your comfort as we even meditate upon them. On this day, on Mother's Day, when many of us are thankful for the mothers that we have still with us in this world, we are conscious that there are others whose hearts are sore as they think of mothers who have gone on ahead of them into eternity.

And Lord, we thank you for the promise and the comfort that that brings that those who believe in Jesus are with the Lord Jesus. And so for hearts that are heavy today and for homes that feel that sense of loss and absence, we pray that you would fill them with your presence and your peace.

[ 16 : 23 ] And we thank you that you are the God who binds up the broken hearts. And we ask, Lord, that you would do that in the lives of those that we pray for this day.

We pray for those who are struggling at home just now, those who have colds, those who have COVID. And we thank you that the effects of that are not felt as severely as we felt them in the past. We thank you for those who worked on vaccines. We thank you for the protection that we have been given. And yet still there is a struggle. So for those who are feeling ill today, we pray for your special blessing to be upon them.

And for those who may be vulnerable going through treatment and struggling with their health, we pray for your strength and your protection to be over them at this time.

We thank you that you hear and you answer our prayers. And we thank you for Mr. Johnson, for Adam being with us this morning. We thank you for your protection over him.

[ 17 : 25 ] And we ask, Lord, that as he has to be patient over these weeks with the brace on his neck, Lord, we ask that his recovery would be full and it would be speedy.

And that in this difficult time that he would know your special presence with him. We are aware that very often it's in the times when things are difficult in our lives that we are most aware of your presence and most aware in our weakness of your strength.

And we pray that for Adam and for all those who struggle with different things at this time. We pray, Lord, for those who are battling with addictions, for a road to recovery.

And we ask, Lord, that you would give strength to them and that those who have these particular struggles would come to you, not just for strength for the hour, but that they would come to you in faith and that you would go, Lord, and live with them, that they would be born again and that they would be in Christ.

And for the young ones in the clubs that we've mentioned, we pray for them and we ask that every endeavor that is made to reach these young ones would be blessed and that they would come to know the Lord Jesus and trust the Lord Jesus in their early years.

[ 18 : 49 ] We pray for those, Lord, who are anxious, those who may be worried about the future, who may feel burdened and confused about the way ahead. And we thank you that as we acknowledge you, you've promised that you will direct our path.

And so we pray for all those who are at these junctures in life just now that are difficult and we ask that you would minister to them and guide them. We thank you for the blessing of the communion season last weekend and for the encouragement that we received as we gathered around your table and we pray on for your blessing as we have risen from the table.

We ask that you would help us to be your ambassadors in this world and we pray for those whom you may have been calling to come and to profess their faith over last weekend and who hesitated. We know that the devil will very quickly come in and try to beat them into despair. But we thank you that every day that you give us and not just the days that we gather around your table, but every day that you give us is an opportunity for us to profess openly that our faith is in Jesus.

And for any who have come to faith, give them that courage we pray to share that. And for those who are still hesitating and some distance from the Lord Jesus, we pray that you would draw them, that they would make their calling and election sure.

[ 20 : 17 ] So bless us, we pray. Be with those who are visiting with us today, bless them and the congregations that they may come from and those of our number who are visiting elsewhere, Lord, today we pray that you would give them refreshment and their time away.

So hear our prayers. Lead us and guide us in this hour of worship we ask. And we pray all this in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? The school must be pretty empty just now, isn't it? Lots of people with codes and COVID. Callum Price, here you come so I can see you. And Henry and John will come around in a little bit just so I can see you.

I wanted to show you something today, very, very short, simple children's talk today and I wanted to show you something and I wonder if you know what this is. Callum, you were first, you were first up. It's a passport. Do you know whose passport it is? Yeah? Not mine, no. Christy? Pardon?

[ 21 : 37 ] Not Lois, no. Callum? Not Anna, no. Christy? Not Mary, no. Lois?

It's Grace's passport. Will we get a close-up for the camera? No, we better not. Greatest Grace, so there she is. So there she is. Will I just show you so you can see?

How old do you think she was there? She's not valid in six. Aye. Six, but I don't know. How old were you, Grace? Don't know. It's not valid anymore.

We'll come to that, Henry. I wasn't going to bring that one in, but yeah, we can add that one on. So tell me, do you ever put your hand up if you've got a passport? Do you have a passport, yeah? Some of you have got passports and some of you don't have passports. What are passports for? Fraser? Getting on planes. Yeah?

[ 22 : 42 ] And what else can you use passports for? That's the answer. I was looking for that answer, yeah, but just, I'm just thinking, Jake? Well, like, it's just to prove, like, who you are. It's just to prove who you are. So if it's like ID, isn't it?

So if there was, if there was tea and cakes for the over 12s in North Harris Free Church and Florian was at the door and she was saying, I don't know about you, if you're on the list here, you could say, hi, hi, look, I'm over 12, there's my passport, it proves it.

Yeah? So it tells you, it tells you, it tells you, it gives you, it's ID, isn't it? When you say it's ID, what does it tell you about you?

It tells you when you were born. It tells you when you were born. And a picture to show that it's you. It's a picture, so it shows people that it's you so they can recognise you.

And is there anything else it tells us? It tells us where we were born. Or it tells us where we are citizens.

[ 23 : 49 ] Doesn't it? So this passport, it tells us, it tells us Grace's date of birth. And it tells us her full name, Grace Kate MacLeod.

and it tells us that she is a British citizen. So, the passport tells us who we are and it tells other people who we are and it tells us where we're from.

And, I was thinking, the Bible is quite a lot like a passport in some ways, isn't it? Because, what does the Bible tell us about who we are?

Henry, what does it say about who we are? Well, you don't automatically, you're not automatically a Christian. How do you become a Christian?

Henry? You've got to believe. Remember, Jesus said to Nicodemus that he needed to believe if he was going to be born again, if he was going to be a Christian.

[ 24 : 59 ] Christian. So, the Bible tells us how we can become Christians. It's through what Jesus did. He lived and he died and he rose to take away our sin and if we believe in him, we become Christians.

That's what we're called to do. But, what does the Bible tell us about who we are? it tells us, Jake? No, no. My hand. Does the Bible tell us who made us? Yeah? Who made us? Lois?

God made us. So, the Bible tells us that we came from God, that he's our creator and the Bible tells us that he made us so that we could be his friends, that we could be his children.

So, what is it that came in to this world that stopped us from being God's friends? What's the thing that came in that stopped us from being God's friends? Amen.

[ 26 : 09 ] Sin. And so, who did God send to take sin away so that we could be his friends again?

Fraser? Jesus. Jesus. And just like you were saying a second ago, everyone who believes in Jesus has their sin taken away and is brought back into being close with God.

There's something else about a passport that Fraser said. If you wanted to travel to America, you would need a passport, wouldn't you?

because before you go on the plane, they're in the airport and they're saying, I need to see your passport, so you have to stand there, you have to handle your passport. If you don't have a passport, or if you have a passport, Henry, that's invalid, because this one's out of date, Grace has got a new one, then can you get into America?

No, you just can't get in. And so, where's the best place ever? It's not America. Callum, heaven. Heaven is the best place ever. And how do we get to heaven? Do we need a passport? No. So what do we need? We need to trust.

[ 27 : 37 ] trust. We need to trust. We need to believe in God and Jesus. And this is where we are told how to believe in Jesus.

So, the passport, it tells us where we came from, but the Bible tells us where we really came from, because we really came from God.

He made us for himself. The passport gets us places, but the passport doesn't get us to the best place, because the best place that we can go to is heaven.

And the Bible tells us that if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he will take us to be with him forever in heaven. So, let's pray and let's ask the Lord to help us.

Lord God, we thank you for your word and we thank you that you've told us in your word who we are and what we're for and where you want us to be going.

[ 28 : 46 ] And we thank you that you've told us that we were created by you, that we didn't come from nowhere, but we came from you. You decided that you would make us.

And we thank you, Lord God, that you made us for yourself. You made us to be your children. And even when sin came into this world and spoiled that, even when sin came into this world and brought us away from you so that we're lost, we thank you, Father, that you sent your son Jesus into this world to take away our sin.

We thank you that he died on the cross to take our sin away. And the promise that we're given is that everybody who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will be saved.

And we thank you that in this world we feel a little bit of what it's like to be saved. We don't have to worry anymore because we know that you are with us. But we thank you that there's a place that you have prepared for those who are your children where there's no fear and there's no sadness and there's no sorrow.

There's nothing sore and there's nothing worrying. but it's a place of perfect peace and perfect joy. The best place ever. And we thank you that we don't have to buy a passport to get there.

[ 30 : 08 ] We don't have to stand in lines of queues for days and end and full out forms to get to heaven. We thank you that we just have to believe in the Lord Jesus and we are promised that he will give us a place there.

So for the boys and girls and for all of us we pray that we would trust you that we would believe and that we would know that we are your children in this world and that we are your children forever in heaven.

So hear our prayers and take away our sin and we ask all this in Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing about heaven actually. Mission Praise 1116 and it's a hymn that helps us to sort of picture in our minds this world this higher throne where Jesus sits and promises that all who believe in him will go.

There's a higher throne than all this world is known where faithful ones believe in people from every tongue from every place will one day come. And so we'll sing this hymn to God's praise.

Amen. Lord, we're faithful ones to every tongue will one day come.

[ 31 : 58 ] Before the sun will stand, may falters through the land believe in hearts when God is great.

Salvation come. hear heaven's voices sing.rus ■■■■■■ roar.

and sacrifice their gracious eyes O glory wish of power strength and honor to God and King who reigns on high forevermore And there we'll find our home our life before the throne we'll honor Him in perfect song where we belong He'll wipe each tears denied as thirst and hunger guide along He comes a shepherd King We'll reign with Him

Hear heaven's voices sing Their thunder sound that rings to emerald forth to summer sky Their pages rise O glory wisdom are since that's an honor to all King Your names are high forevermore Lord Lord King boys and girls if you head to Sunday school we can turn to 1 Peter chapter 2 as we pray for them as they go big smile shawnee my apologies the clock was 10 minutes slow and I didn't realize it was 1 Peter chapter 2 and we'll read from verse 1 therefore rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit hypocrisy envy slander of every kind like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation now that you have tasted that the Lord is good as you come to him the living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him you also like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ for in scripture it says see Leah stone and Zion a chosen and precious cornerstone and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame now to you who believe this stone is precious but to those who do not believe the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone and a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall they stumble because they disobey the message which is also what they were destined for but you are a chosen people a royal priesthood a holy nation a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light once you were not a people but now you are the people of

[ 36 : 09 ] God once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy dear friends I urge you as aliens and strangers in this world to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again to God's praise and we'll sing the last two verses of Psalm 84 Psalm 84 the last two stanzas of the of the Psalm Psalm 84 and the last two stanzas of the Psalm for God this Lord's a sun and shield he'll grace and glory give and will withhold no good to them from them that uprightly do live O thou that art the Lord of hosts that man is truly blessed who by assured confidence on thee alone doth rest we haven't got many

Gaelic singers today so please help out Callum and let's sing to God's praise we remain seated to sing in Gaelic that the men CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS  
CHOIR SINGS SONG PLAYS

SONG PLAYS By the way, in the vestibule, I meant to say in the intimations, there's about 40, I think, of these books that have been made available from open doors.

It's the world watch list, it's called, it's the top 50 countries where Christians are most persecuted in the world. And so if you could take one of these, if you'll pray for them, it gives an insight into how much it costs to be a Christian in some countries.

[ 41 : 01 ] And it's a challenge to see that as we come together in security here. Let's pray as we turn back to God's Word.

Heavenly Father, we do thank you that we're able to meet here today without the fear of the doors being burst open and being arrested and subject to violence and all kinds of difficulty.

We recognize that there are brothers and sisters that we've never met who risk everything to come to the place of worship. We, Lord, have no such fear in this place.

And we thank you for the freedom that we do have to worship. Help us not to take it for granted. Help us to use the freedom that we have to reach out to the people that you've put around us with the message of the gospel.

Help us as we open your Word now to have minds that are alert and illuminated. Holy Spirit, we pray that you would work in us, that you would minister to us.

[ 42 : 05 ] And, Lord, that we would hear the voice of Jesus and that we would come in faith. And we pray for all like us who meet in this way. We pray for the congregations, the denominations around us who gather together in the name of Jesus.

And we think of Farrakhan as he preaches in Leverborough today. We ask, Lord, that you would bless him, speak through him. And may he know your help as we pray that we would also know your help in this place.

So hear our prayers and guide us, we ask, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I think probably one of the biggest crisis points of our day is the crisis of the identity.

We are struggling and people are asking the question, we're struggling as a culture to answer the question, who am I? Now, who really am I?

And some would answer that question of who am I in terms of race and birthplace. They could pull out a passport and speak about their place of birth and their people.

[ 43 : 23 ] Many other people today would answer the question of who am I in terms of the whole mad world of gender and sexuality.

That's the definitive point for them on who their identity is. And still others, it's a question of work. You ask them, what do they do?

And they'll talk endlessly about their work. Their identity is defined in the job that they do. And all these things, they're factors within who we are, but they don't get to the core of who we truly are. So to really tread back on the same ground that we were in with the children, if we want to know who we truly are, if we want to find the key that unlocks our true identity, we find it in the Bible. The Bible tells us that we are made by God. He is our creator.

[ 44 : 40 ] That's where we came from. The Bible tells us that we were made for a relationship with God. As the psalmist said in Psalm 84, our soul thirsts for God.

We find our true identity in him. The well-worn quote from Augustine is, you have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.

And so Peter is writing this letter to believers who, they signed up to all that, they believed that. Peter is writing this letter to people who were in relationship with God.

And he reminds them, and he reminds us of what that means. Peter, in this letter, he's reminding us of who we truly are, if we are Christians.

And there's four pictures that he uses in this short section. The first thing he says is, we're like newborn babies. And the second thing he says is, we're like living stones.

[ 45 : 56 ] And the third thing he says is, we are a chosen people. And the final thing he says to us, as those who are believers in Jesus, he says, we are aliens and strangers in this world.

So that's her, that's her identity. And the first picture, if we take time just to step through these pictures and go through the text, Peter makes clear that we are like newborn babies, if we are Christians.

Look at verses 1 to 3. He says, Therefore rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind, like newborn babies, craves pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

So the illustration is one that's very clear, and it's one that's very familiar. Peter uses the picture of newborn babies to teach us who we are, if we are Christians.

And some people talk about the innocence of a child. Usually the people who talk about the innocence of a child are people who either don't have children or aren't spending much time with children.

[ 47 : 20 ] We know, if we have children or are with children, that they are not absolutely pure and innocent. From the very, very early days, the sinful nature, burst sight of a little acute bundle of life and temper tantrums and all kinds of things.

So we recognize that the newborn babe is not innocent. The seed of sin is still there. But there is a relative innocence when we think about children.

There's a relative innocence that we see in the child that we don't see in the more advanced person. And children are very straightforward. The newborn babe is very straightforward.

They don't deal in slander and malice and hypocrisy. Now that's not a feature of their lives because they haven't got that clever. They haven't got that kind of sinful, worldly wisdom about it.

The newborn baby just lives a simple, dependent life. That's their perspective. The newborn baby doesn't want a new iPhone.

[ 48 : 41 ] They don't want a new car. They don't want a big house. They don't care about fashionable clothes. They're not interested in having a cheeseburger and chips. All they want is milk.

And from birth they taste it. And they recognize that this milk, this stuff is good. And so they crave it. And they cry for it.

And they feed on it. And as they do, they grow up. And they grow strong. And Peter says we can learn from this very familiar picture of the baby.

Peter speaks, verse 2, about the newborn baby. We should note that. That immediately takes us to the question of new birth.

Remember in John chapter 3, one of the most famous verses in the Bible is found within a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus.

[ 49 : 46 ] Nicodemus was the kind of man who would be very comfortable sitting in a church pew. In fact, he'd be more comfortable than me standing at a platform and speaking and teaching.

He was a religious man. He was an academic man. He was a moral man. He was an intellectual man. But he wasn't born again.

His soul was still thirsty. And so he seeks out Jesus. And Jesus says to Nicodemus, Nicodemus, you've got all these plaudits going on in your life.

You've got all these credits. You've got letters after your name. You're recognized within the world of the church. But he says you need to be born again. You need to believe in me.

Nicodemus, you need to become like a newborn baby. And we all need to become like newborn babies.

[ 50 : 53 ] We all need to be born again. If we want to be saved. If we want to be Christians. If we want to have that place in heaven that we sang of.

So let me ask the very direct simple question and application. Have we been born again? Do you believe in Jesus?

Have you and I given our lives to Jesus? Have we prayed that very, very simple, sincere prayer of I am a sinner.

I confess my sin. I recognize, Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, that you are the Savior. You died for me.

Please take away the death, the sin that is within me and bring that new life.

Have we prayed that? Because that's what it means to be born again. Are we born again into the family of God?

[ 51 : 57 ] God. And going on from that, if we are born again, Peter teaches us that we should be living simple, straightforward, transparent lives.

You know, the Christian life is a very simple life. The Christian life is a life like the life of a newborn baby.

If we are Christians, we shouldn't be living double lives. We shouldn't be hypocrites where we are one thing on a Sunday for a few hours and we are something very different in our workplace for the rest of the week.

If we are Christians, we shouldn't be those who are slanderous, who are envious of what other people have and what we might want. We shouldn't be malicious in our engineering and in our movements and in our desires.

We shouldn't be those who are fueled by lots of desires for lots of things and ambitions and status in this world. You don't see any of that in a baby.

[ 53 : 08 ] No, you come to little fishes on a Tuesday morning and they're playing around in their simple way, the little ones, and they're getting on with each other most of the time and they might punch each other in the nose from time to time.

But there's no slander in little fishes. You don't see two or three babies in the corner saying, you see that one over there? You don't want to get involved in them. That doesn't happen.

There's no deceit in terms of trying to get one over at each other. There's no... these things aren't there in the little babies.

And when we think about the very little baby, the desire they have is just for one thing. They just... they just want milk.

That's why dads are so... often so frustrating to the babies. And as newborn Christian babies, we should desire one thing above all.

[ 54 : 17 ] And that's the milk of God's Word. That's how we grow up in salvation. That's how we grow strong.

You know, when I become weak in my Christian life, then I can guarantee it's because I'm not as much as I should be in God's Word.

And when I sit with people who are struggling in their Christian experience, then 99 out of 100 times, it's because they're not in God's Word.

Remember when Jesus went to the house of Mary and Martha in Luke 10? And the two sisters are in the house and Martha's buzzing around all over the place.

She's got the Hoover out, she's got the duster out, she's got pots, she's got pans, she's charging around trying to get the house perfect for Jesus, getting a meal just organized for Jesus and Mary isn't doing anything, she's just sitting at the feet of Jesus, she's just listening to him.

[ 55 : 31 ] And Martha objects to Jesus and she says, tell her she's not doing anything, she's not helping. And Jesus says, Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed or indeed only one.

Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her. See, Mary, like a newborn baby, she just wanted the milk of Jesus' words.

She just wanted to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus and Peter is saying to us in our identity as Christians, we are newborn babies, we are like newborn babies who have tasted and seen and known that the Lord is good.

That's the first picture. Peter says if we are Christians, our identity is such as that we are like newborn babies, we are born again into the family of God and the one strong, life-giving, crucial desire that we have is to be in his word.

It's very simple. It's very, very straightforward. But it's something that we very easily stray from so I make no apology for emphasizing it.

[ 57 : 03 ] We're like newborn babies. That's who we're to be. Simple, straightforward, open, transparent, dependent lives. The second picture that Peter gives us is we're to be, we're like living stones.

I was thinking back a few weeks and we had Mr. MacLeod, we had Duncan Norman with us a few weeks ago and he shared his testimony and part of his testimony was that he was obsessed with birds and he told us that in the Sir E. Scott staff room he was banned from talking about birds because he had this fixation, this obsession, this continual need to talk about birds.

It was the thing that just interested him and gripped him. And for other people we know they have different kind of obsessions. Some people it's their football team, it's all they talk about. Other people it's their work, there's different things.

And for Peter, I think I think Peter was kind of obsessed with stones and rocks. Remember Jesus in Matthew chapter 16 and verse 18 he gave Peter the name Rock.

He said this is going to be your nickname. This is what I'm going to call you. This is what you're going to be known as. We're going to call you Rocky. Peter would never have forgotten what Jesus said as he walked about and he saw these rocks and stones.

[ 58 : 42 ] It would have reminded him of that day. And Peter with the rest of the disciples and most people in that culture would have known their Old Testament well. Peter would have understood that Jesus was the true living rock.

He's the rock of our salvation. Think of Psalm 95. It speaks of the rock of our salvation being Jesus. Think about Psalm 40 being placed on the solid rock.

That's a prophecy that's pointing forward to Jesus. And so Peter in verses 4 and 5 he's teaching us that as we come to Jesus he is the living stone.

And as we come to him we have security, we have salvation, we are saved. And then as we stay with him, we become like him.

We, as we are connected by faith to the living stone, Peter says we become like living stones. Look at verses 4 and 5.

[ 59 : 51 ] As you come to him, says Peter, the living stone, rejected by men, but chosen by God and precious to him.

You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

And so again the teaching is very straightforward. Peter says the living stone, the one in whom there's life and salvation, salvation, that's Jesus. He says in you Christians, in modern day Turkey as he wrote to them, he says there's going to be life in you.

You're going to be like living stones as you come to him. And the word in the Greek there for come means to be intimate and to abide and to have this continual fellowship.

so he's saying to these believers, as you come and keep coming day by day to Jesus, the living stone, you'll become like him.

[ 61 : 05 ] People will see something of the life of Christ in you. So again I'm going to pause and I'm going to ask the very simple, direct, straightforward question, have you come to him?

have you come to Jesus? Are we living stones? There's life in him, there's salvation in him, but we won't get it unless we come to him.

Now what a tragedy if there is life, eternal life and salvation that's available to us and it's within reach where we're hearing the call through the Bible to receive it and yet we stay at a distance and we never come.

There's no life in the chairs. There's no life in the door. The chairs and coming through the door just takes us into an environment where we hear the voice of Jesus saying come to me.

see. So have you come to him? If you haven't come to him, will you come to him today and take your sin and ask him to cleanse it?

[ 62 : 36 ] Will you come to him and ask him to receive you to make you a living stone? And the church teaches Peter it's just a collection of living stones.

And if I was to ask the question maybe in here or certainly outside of here, what is the church? Most people would tell us it's rafters and it's stones and it's breeze blocks and it's carpets and they would describe a building.

And Peter is teaching us that the church is not a building that is made up of piled up dead stones. But the church is made up of living stones, people who have come to Jesus, people whose lives are full of Jesus.

Remember Peter in the opening verses of this letter, he writes to people in Pontus and Galatia and Cappadocia and Asia and Bithynia, the believers in these places.

There wasn't a church building in any of these places, not one. And you could flick through this magazine and in all likelihood in most of these places there will be no church building.

[ 64 : 01 ] But in every one of these places is the church because the church is the people. We are thankful this morning that we have a building that we can meet but the building is not the church.

You are the church. There's no life in the stones. the life of Christ is in you if you have come to him. So have you come to him? If you have come to Jesus, let me just give you that reassuring promise of verse 6. If you have come to Jesus, you are secure eternally.

If you have come to Jesus, you have everlasting life. You will never be put to shame. It's the promise of verse 6.

In the scripture it says, see, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. As we think of those who have gone ahead of us from time into eternity, when they're in Christ, we have absolute confidence that they are secure.

[ 65 : 30 ] They do not, they will not ever know shame. they are saved eternally. That's the promise for all who have simply come to Jesus.

Their salvation, our salvation, is built on him. He's the cornerstone, he's the capstone, and we are secure in him. But if he will not come to Jesus, if you will not believe in Jesus, if you continue to hear the message of the gospel, and either consciously push him away, or just walk out the door,

and think maybe another day, Jesus, then Peter tells us that Jesus will be the stone that causes us to stumble and fall into a lost eternity.

Now, to you who believe, says Peter, verse 7, this stone, Jesus, is precious. But to those who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, and a stone, verse 8, that causes people to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.

They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for. And so our eternal destiny, and I'm going to close with this today, our eternal destiny is determined on whether or not we will come to Jesus.

Eternity is dependent on what we do with Jesus. We can come to him, we can put the weight of our faith on him, and know that we are forever secure, or we can refuse to come to him, ignore him, push him away.

[ 68 : 14 ] And when time comes to an end, and we step into eternity, we will trip, we will stumble, we will fall over Christ into forever lostness.

See, everything about salvation depends on whether or not Jesus is precious to you, whether or not you are trusting, believing, loving, loving him.

He is the living stone. In him is life, in him is salvation, and you and I will become living stones if we trust him.

So will he be the rock that we stand on, or will he be the rock who crushes us? Will he be the rock on which we are secure, or will he be the rock that we stumble over?

That's the question. And today you have to answer it. And eternity will show how you've answered it.

[ 69 : 35 ] so we're like newborn babies, born again in Christ, feeding on his word.

We are living stones who trust in the living stone if we have come to him. And we'll leave it there today, so let's pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and we thank you for your servant Peter.

We thank you for the gospel message that we both see in his life and hear through his letters. We thank you for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that we see at work within him and we hear from him.

And we pray that you would help us as we hear to believe and to be saved. We ask Lord that our identity would be secure in Christ.

[ 70 : 44 ] We pray that we would be born again believers in him. We pray that we would be abiding in him day by day coming and feeding from the word of God.

We pray that we would be secure standing on the rock of our salvation. having been lifted out of the slimy pit of the mud and myra sin.

And we pray that we would be those who are living stones. Help us as we go out from this building today to remember that the church is not inside here. But the church leaves here on the way out the door today and scatters not all over Turkey but all over Tarbert.

So enable us who are in Christ to be ambassadors for Jesus and to live lives which are not double lives of hypocrisy not lives where we dabble in slander and malice and envy.

Help us we pray to be simple transparent dependent straightforward believers in Jesus. and we ask all this in Jesus' name and for his sake.

[ 71 : 57 ] Amen. We'll sing to conclude Mission Praise 473. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus and his righteousness.

Jesus' blood and righteousness. no merit is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

no merit of my own I claim, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other crown this sinking sun.  
earthly race. When weary in this earthly race, I rest on this unchanging race.

[ 73 : 18 ] In every wild and stormy gale, my anchor holds and will not fail.

On Christ the soil wrong I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

His love is gone, the land and blood, are mighty friends against the flood.

Wedeth me hope are swept away, he will uphold me on the day.

On Christ the soil I rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

[ 74 : 24 ] When the last trumpet's voice shall sound, all may I there within him be found, hold in his righteousness alone, faultless to stand before his throne, on Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sound.

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