

14.5.23 am

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Date: 14 May 2023

Preacher: Dr Antony Latham

[0 : 00] A good morning to everyone this morning at our service, and especially to any visitors that are here. You're very welcome. If you want to stay behind after the service, we have coffee and tea and biscuits and things just here, so please feel free to do that and join us for that.

I'm just going to quickly, you probably have seen all the intimations, but if you just run through them quickly. The evening service is 6pm, ladies' fellowship on Mondays 8pm, Little Fishes again on Tuesday 10-12, Road to Recovery meets on Tuesday at 7pm in the church.

We've got family music sessions for parents and toddlers who will be held in the church for the next six weeks on Wednesday mornings. Prayer meeting will be held in person and on Zoom on Wednesday at 7.30pm.

Mother and Toddlers Gaelic Group meets in the church again this Thursday in the morning. There'll be a Women for Mission meeting of the Joint Scalpia North Harris Church Group here in the church on Thursday 18th of May.

Friday clubs for young people as usual, Jam, Connect and Rooted. And the service is next Sunday at 11am and 6pm will be taken, God willing, by our minister David MacLeod.

[1 : 26] And you can see the cleaning rota there. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Lord, we thank you that you've gone before us.

You've brought an anchor right into the presence of God. And that we, when we put our trust in you, we're firmly attached to that anchor.

We are safe. We are secure. We don't have to have any worries because you've done that for us. And we ask that you help us, Lord. Each person here, some of whom may not have done that, put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Thank you. We're going to sing on that very subject. A well-known hymn. And it's Will Your Anchor Hold.

Mission Praise number 770. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold, their wings of strife, when the strong tides lift and the cables strain, will your anchor drift or firm remain?

[2 : 40] Let's sing this to God's praise. Let's sing this to God's praise. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life, when the clouds unfold, their wings of strife, when the storms' eyes lift and the cables strain, will your anchor drift or firm remain?

We are an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll, fast into the rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear, when the breakers roar and the reef is near, while the surges rage and the wild winds blow, shall the angry wave then your bark o'erflow.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll, fast into the rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

Will your anchor hold in the floods of death, when the waters cold chill your latest breath, on the rising tide you can never fail, while your anchor holds within the veil.

[4 : 43] We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll, fast into the rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

Will your eyes behold through the morning night, the city of gold and the harbor bright?

Will your anchor save by the heavenly shore, when the storms all pass forevermore?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll, fast into the rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

Great. We're going to read from Matthew chapter 17, verses 1 to 13.

[6 : 29] That's Matthew chapter 17, verses 1 to 13. Reading from verse 1.

And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them and his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light.

And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, Lord, it's good that we are here. If you wish, I'll make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.

He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, this is my beloved son with whom I'm well pleased.

Listen to him. When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, rise and have no fear.

[7 : 43] And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, tell no one the vision until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.

And the disciples asked him, then why did the scribes say that first Elijah must come? He answered, Elijah does come and he will restore all things.

But I tell you that Elijah has already come and they didn't recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.

Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist. This is the word of God.

We are going to sing in Gaelic now from Psalm 29. First three verses. I'll just read them out in English first of all. Give ye unto the Lord, ye sons, that of the mighty be, all strength and glory to the Lord.

[8 : 49] With cheerfulness give ye unto the Lord the glory give, that to his name is due, and in the beauty of holiness unto Jehovah bow.

The Lord's voice on the waters is the God of majesty, to thunder, and on multitudes of waters sitteth he. Let's sing this in Gaelic while remaining seated.

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Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang Sampang Shmm Sampang And after three days to rise again. And remember there at the end of that chapter.

Peter says he took him aside. Took Jesus aside. And he rebuked Jesus. And he said I don't want to like this talk of you dying and so on.

[17 : 30] This is not what we think of you. But Jesus sternly rebuked him. Saying get behind me Satan. You are a hindrance to me.

For you are not setting your mind on the things of God. But on the things of men. Of course he was speaking as if Satan was using Peter.

To dissuade him from going to the cross. And Jesus then says. If anyone would come after me. Let him deny himself. And take up his cross and follow me.

So that's six days after this. That we get the transfiguration. So often in the gospels we find that. What follows after. Is very related to the previous part.

The high mountain was likely Mount Hermon. Which is in modern day Syria. And the summit is often in snow. It rises to 9,232 feet.

[18 : 32] It's a pretty high mountain. And we read that Jesus' clothes became radiant. Intensely white. A whiteness that's written somewhere else.

That no one could achieve by bleaching clothes. Intensely white. This was a dazzling and awesome appearance. The word in Greek is stillbane.

For that type of dazzling white. And it can mean the glistening gleam of burnished bronze or gold. Or of the golden glare of sunlight.

What's without doubt. Is that Jesus was seen by the disciples. In an entirely different and supernatural light. He was transfigured. As the commentator Tom Wright writes. We see here. The veil of ordinariness. That normally prevents us. From seeing the inside of a situation. Is drawn back. And a further reality.

[19 : 33] Is disclosed. And clearly the disciples needed. This reality at this point in their journey. They needed a fuller picture. Of who Jesus is. Is this not the case for us as well.

And how easy it is for us. To merely see the ordinary Jesus. The man of history. A great figure of course. But somehow.

Nevertheless. An ordinary man. Do you and I take Jesus. Too much for granted. And fail to see. Or to know the transfigured Jesus.

Shining like the sun. Awesome. Magnificent. Even frightening. In his majesty. Apart from the time of the transfiguration.

We believe that Jesus. Didn't have any obvious physical characteristics. To differentiate him from other men. Nowhere in the Bible. Do we get a description of his appearance.

[20 : 33] We do. We do however get some idea. Of what he didn't look like. In Isaiah 53. Verse 2. Which writes about Jesus.

He had no beauty. Or majesty. To attract us to him. Nothing in his appearance. That we should desire him. The same word for beauty. There in Isaiah.

Is used of David. In 1 Samuel. 16.18. Where it is translated. Fine looking. Fine looking. Jesus wasn't fine looking. He had no outward appearance of royalty.

Or of particular beauty. He didn't seem to stand out in his appearance. Jesus. And Peter. In the previous chapter. Rebuked Jesus. For speaking about his death.

And resurrection. It is as if Peter. Only saw. Jesus. As a man. A great man. And a teacher. A wonderful leader. But not more.

[21 : 30] Peter was still learning. Who Jesus was. If he had understood fully. Who Jesus was. Then he would never have tried. To stop Jesus. Talking about his death.

Jesus was very stern. In his response to Peter. Now at the transfiguration. Peter. And the other two disciples. Have been given a completely new vision.

Of who Jesus. Actually is. None other than the son of God. The Messiah. Dazzling. In brilliant white. On the mountain. And the voice from the cloud.

We read in verse 5. From God the father. Says. This is my beloved son. With whom I well pleased. Listen to him.

That was confirmation. From God. That Jesus was indeed. The son. The Messiah. And so the transfiguration. And the voice. From the father. Must have completely transformed.

[22 : 26] Their idea. Of who Jesus was. Peter. And the others. Needed to understand. That their beloved master. Was no mere man. Though he was a man. He was God.

The son. And this is a challenge. For us. How do we view Jesus? How do I view Jesus? We attend church. We read the Bible.

We join with others. In worship. But are we. Truly understanding. Who Jesus is. Are we like Peter. In chapter 16. Viewing Jesus. As just a great man.

Have we really. Caught the vision. Of the transfigured. Son of God. God. So. For those. Disciples. But also for those who.

Perhaps here. Or elsewhere. Are. Have not put their trust. In Jesus. What does it say to them? For people who are not Christians. Yet. I know that before I became a Christian.

[23 : 24] I believed in a historical Jesus. A man who was very good. Very wise. Very selfless. A man who was very good. And a wonderful teacher. And I believed all these things.

But I didn't see him as the son of God. Who created the universe. And has all power in heaven and earth. I didn't have this understanding of the transfigured Christ.

Dazzling on the mount of transfiguration. I ignored the words from the father. On that day. This is my beloved son. With whom I well pleased. Listen to him.

The transfiguration is a removal of the veil. Which hides the true nature of Jesus. And I pray that anyone here who is seeing Jesus as merely a good and great man.

Will have their spiritual eyes opened. And come to worship him. As Lord. Put yourself on that mountain with Peter. And James and John.

[24 : 23] And see this Jesus. Who's shining. He's dazzling. In all his glory. And if you've experienced an inward transfiguration in your spirit.

You can only worship. And come to and obey the son of God. What about for the Christian. Who's already put their trust in him. How easy it is.

For us to slide back. Into the old way. And go through the motions of religion. How easy it is. For the Christian to lose sight. Of the majesty of the son of God.

How easy it is. For the Christian to forget the words from the cloud. This is my beloved son. Listen to him. And maybe you and I. Need to reestablish.

A sense of the transfiguration. In the presence of Jesus. Is he too small. In our view. Have we become too comfortable with him. Are we worshipping him.

[25 : 22] In awe of his majesty. There was something really frightening. About the transfiguration. Notice in verse 6. Says of the three disciples.

They fell on their faces. And were terrified. Are we living in godly fear. Of the Lord. Peter was never the same. After this. And we read in his letter.

Later on. That he wrote. In 1 Peter. Chapter. 1 Peter. 16 to 18. I think it's verse. I think it's chapter 3. But I'm not sure.

About this very experience. He wrote. For we did not follow. Cleverly devised myths. When we made known to you. The power. And coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But we were eyewitnesses. Of his majesty. For when he received honor. And glory from God the Father. And the voice. Was born to him. By the majestic glory.

[26 : 19] This is my beloved son. With whom I'm well pleased. We ourselves. Heard this very voice. Born from heaven. For we were with him.

On the holy mountain. Wonderful testimony. Of that very event. He'd been changed. By this experience. Just as we need to be. We read in the Bible.

Of various occasions. When others. Had the veil removed. As they witnessed. The majesty of God. In Isaiah chapter 6. We read. When the prophet saw the Lord.

Sitting on a throne. In the year. That King Uzziah died. I saw the Lord. Sitting upon a throne. High and lifted up. And the train of his robe.

Filled the temple. Above him. Stood the seraphim. Each had six wings. With two. He covered his face. And with two. He covered his feet. And with two.

[27 : 14] He flew. And one called to another. And said. Holy. Holy. Holy. Is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth. Is full of his glory. Holy. And the foundations.

Of the thresholds. Shook. At the voice of him. Who called. And the house. Was filled with smoke. And I said. Woe is me. For I'm lost. For I'm a man.

Of unclean lips. And I dwell. In the midst. Of a people. With unclean lips. For my eyes. Have seen the King. The Lord of hosts. Now we can go on.

About how his sins. Were dealt with. When a seraphim. Touched his mouth. With a. With a burning coal. But the key thing. For us. Here is the reaction. Isaiah had. When he saw the Lord.

Woe is me. For I'm lost. And being. In the unveiled. Presence of God. Overwhelmed him. God's holiness. Shattered him.

[28 : 09] He cried out. As someone lost. But of course. God in his grace. Then cleansed him. Of sin. As he does with us. That's transfiguration.

I believe the disciples. Had a similar experience. And then of course. There was John's vision. Of Jesus. In Revelation chapter 1. John the one who was. There at the transfiguration.

Just reading that. He saw this vision of Jesus. We read that. The hairs of his head. Were white. Like white wool. Like snow. His eyes were like.

A flame of fire. His feet were like. Burnished bronze. Refined in a furnace. And his voice. Was like the roar. Of many waters. In his right hand. He held seven stars.

From his mouth. Came a sharp. Two-edged sword. And his face. Was like the sun. Shining in full strength. When I saw him.

[29 : 04] I fell at his feet. As though dead. But he laid his right hand. On me. Saying fear not. For I am the first. And the last. And the living one.

You know. Sometimes like John. We need to fall. At the feet. Of Jesus. As though dead. Aware. Of our lack of holiness. And in his presence.

And then we can feel. His comforting hand on us. And saying. Fear not. Notice too. The words of Jesus. To those terrified. Three disciples. On the Mount of Transfiguration. After they'd fallen on their faces. In verse seven. And we read. But Jesus came. And touched them. Just like that vision. In Revelation. Saying rise. And have no fear. Now recently. I've been talking. To some of the youth groups. In the churches. About science. And Christianity. And how science. [30 : 03] In so many ways. Actually. Gives evidence. Of a creator. And. One of the. One of the. Pictures. That I've been showing. Is that of the Milky Way.

I think. You have a picture of that. First one. This is actually. A rather good photograph. You won't see it. Quite as good as this. But. Some of you. Will know. What's called. The Milky Way. It's. On a very dark. Clear night. If there's no moon. You see this incredible. Band. Of stars. It's like. A. Way. Milky. And what you're doing there. Is actually looking. Through. Our galaxy. We're looking through. Into the center. Of the Milky Way. Galaxy. So. Let's have another picture. This is a picture. Of what our galaxy. Actually looks like. It's. [30 : 57] Composed. Of. Billions. Of stars. Literally. Billions. But they reckon. About a hundred billion. Our sun. Is just one. Of the stars. In this galaxy. It's awesome.

Now. If you were to go. At the speed of light. At the speed of light. It's very. Very fast. It's one hundred and eighty six. Thousand. Miles. Per second. But. You can't go that speed. But if you did. And you went from one side. To the other. It would take you. A hundred thousand years. Can we have the next. We now have telescopes. Which. Show us. Further. Outside. And this is taken by. A very good telescope. It's. Literally. A fingernail sized. Patch of sky. And it's showing. Myriads. Of other. Galaxies. This is the universe. [31 : 56] That we live in. This is the universe. That was created. Through. Jesus. Because we read. In John chapter one. Everything.

Was created. Through him. That's Jesus. That. Is the Jesus. That we worship. So that's fine. Thank you. Next look. At what the. Transfiguration. Meant. For Jesus. Himself. Moving on. In our story. We read. In verse four. That Jesus. Was joined. By Elijah. And Moses. And they were talking together. In Luke's account. We read. And behold. Two men were talking with him. Moses and Elijah. Who appeared in glory. And spoke of his departure. Which he was about to accomplish. In Jerusalem. Now Moses. Represents the law of God. And Elijah represents the prophets. [32 : 53] And they were talking to Jesus. It's extraordinary. Isn't it? And they spoke of his departure. This is a wonderful glimpse.

We have here. Of these two great men of God. Speaking to Jesus. Our Messiah. And theirs. Why were they speaking of his departure? We're not sure. But surely. It was at least in part. A reassurance. To Jesus. He knew. He knew what was going to happen. He knew what it would entail. The suffering. The humiliation. The great anguish. As he took on the sins of the world. Your sins and mine. He had spoken six days earlier. Of this very thing. Chapter 16. The whole of history. Had been leading up to the cross. The cross had been planned. Before time. For our salvation. And now the time had come. [33 : 51] And the horror. Of what he was going to experience. Would have been overwhelming. To Jesus. We see this most clearly. In the garden of Gethsemane. Of course. Not just the physical torture.

But worse. For him. The separation. From God the father. As he bore our sins. Jesus knew exactly. What this meant. He spelled it out. To his disciples. On numerous occasions. It was horrific. Now he has this intimate conversation. With the two. Who represented the Old Testament. And the scriptures. Were all leading up. To this event. Remember how Jesus. Later. At the resurrection. Met with the two disciples. On the road to Emmaus. After he had risen from the dead.

They were walking along the road. They were full of uncertainty. They had heard some rumor. That he had been seen. They weren't sure. They were walking along the road. He expounded.
[34 : 45] All that was written about him. Remember what he said. To those doubting. Perplexed disciples. Luke 24. Oh foolish ones. And slow of heart. To believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary. That the Christ. Should suffer these things. And enter his glory. And beginning with Moses. And all the prophets. He interpreted to them.
In all the scriptures. The things concerning himself. I wish. It would have been nice to be there. Wouldn't it? And so here we have.

These two mighty men. Of the Old Testament scriptures. Speaking to him. About his departure. About what he was to suffer. Reassuring him. No doubt. That he was on the right path. And that at the end. Was resurrection. And glory. And remember that Jesus. Though God. Was a man. He had the emotions of a man.

[35 : 41] He was not immune to sadness. And great anguish at times. And the cross before him. Was his mission. But one that must have been. Of tremendous pain.

To even imagine. But we know from scripture. That he was tempted. Just as we are. He would have been tempted. To turn away from the cross. He could at any moment.

Avoid the cross. But he stayed the course. He set his face to it. He never gave up. In his quest. To bring salvation. To you. And to me. So let's see here.

The transfiguration. Our savior Jesus. Being reassured. As a man. He needed this. He never gave up. Then. And he went on ahead.

With the terrible consequences. Of the cross. And if you're a Christian. Then worship him. Afresh. In thankfulness. If you're not a Christian.

[36 : 36] Why would you not. Give up your unbelief. And come to such a savior. For salvation. The cross is for all those. Who put their trust in him. Lastly.

Let's look a bit. More. At how we know. This account is true. We find it in three gospels. Matthew. Mark. And Luke. We find it confirmed. By Peter.

In his letter. Which you've just read. We see certain details. That prove. Certainly give a lot of evidence. That it was a real event. Again. That little detail. That was.

Six days after Jesus spoke. About his death. Then there's the detail. About Peter's reaction. This is really interesting. Because Mark's account.

Was almost certainly taken. From. Directly from Peter himself. As Mark spoke to him. So like Peter. Impulsive. Bumbling. Not really knowing.

[37 : 32] What he's saying. And in verse four. He says. Peter said to Jesus. Lord. It's good that we're here. If you wish. I'll make three tents here. One for you.

One for Moses. And one for Elijah. And in Mark's account. We read. For he didn't know. What to say. For they were terrified. Now Mark wrote his gospel.

As I said. By getting the account. Directly from Peter. And so we have Peter here. Openly accepting. That he was just saying nonsense. You can totally understand why.

But he was terrified. It's so human. And so true. And Peter never wanted. To appear great. Or wise. He was happy. For the gospels.

To speak the truth. Which is a great reason. To trust them. And of course. The other great occasion. That speaks the truth. About Peter. Is when. He denied. Jesus.

[38 : 27] Three times. He was happy for that. To be there as well. And I often. When I speak to people. About Jesus. They say. Ah well.

Can you really trust. The gospels. You know. Written a long time ago. How do we know. They're true. You know. People can sort of have imagination. Make things up.

Look at it carefully. This is not something that's. Untrue. This is a real account. So the transfiguration. Lifts the veil. On who Jesus is.

Radiant. Glorious. Majestic. Awesome. We need to bow down afresh. In worship. And if you have not yet. Put your trust in him.

Then do so now. Why ever not? The transfiguration shows us. Too. That our fellow man.

[39 : 20] Jesus. Who is God the son. Needed to have reassurance. About his mission. He stayed the course. He suffered the cross. He rose from the dead. What a savior.

Let's pray. Lord. Lord. We thank you. For this account. Of the transfiguration. Lifting the veil.

On. The true reality. Of who Jesus is. We just pray. That everyone here. Everyone who looks at this online. Those we speak to.

Later. Will understand this. That we are not worshipping. Just a man. We are worshipping. The creator. Of the universe. Radiant. And glory.

And we just pray. Lord. That each of us. Will have a fresh. Experience of that today. To know you better. And to follow you better. To follow. The advice.

[40 : 17] From the father. From heaven. To obey him. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. So let's finish. Our worship.

In a hymn. That. Speaks about that glory. Well known hymn. Thine be the glory. Risen conquering son. Endless is the victory.

Thou or death. Hast won. Angels in bright raiment. Roll the stone away. Kept the folded grave clothes. Where. Thy body lay. Let's sing this. To God's praise.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[41 : 54] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. No more are we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life.

Life is not without thee, aid us in our strife. Make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love.

Bring us safe through Jordan, to thy home above. Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son.

Endless is the victory, thou or death hast won. Amen.

[43 : 58] And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.