

# 28.5.23 am

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Date: 28 May 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see some visitors with us as well this morning. You're especially welcome. If you're able to stay behind, at the end of the service there'll be tea and coffee and it would be good to get the chance to have fellowship together. The intimations, the notices have been on the screen before the service began. I'll just take a moment to read through them. Gaelic service tonight is at 6. We have a monthly Gaelic service and that'll be 6 o'clock and that's conducted by the Reverend Kenny Ferguson. So be encouraged to come out and worship God at that service.

English fellowship meeting at half past 7. Just confirming, Duncan, that's happening. Yeah, so half past 7, the English fellowship here. Informal fellowship praises and Duncan's leading tonight. I'm going to be over in Carloway this evening. So it's a time to come together in fellowship. Community lunch tomorrow in the church, 12 to 2. As usual, it's free of charge.

Donations are required if desired to crossroads Harris. Deacon's Court meets tomorrow at half past 6. Please note that if you're in the Deacon's Court. Ladies fellowship as usual on Monday.

Little Fishers and Road to Recovery Tuesday morning and Tuesday evening. No family music session this week. Prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past 7 in person and on Zoom. And then the mother and toddler Gaelic group meets in the church this Thursday 10 till 11.30.

Rooted meets as usual on Friday. And the services next Sunday, God willing, will be taken by myself. And those on church cleaning can see that there. It's lovely to hear the wee voice. And I can see what was happening here. There was a bit of volume until the snack pack came out. And once the snack pack came out, there was nothing but joy. So we're all sometimes tempted to wail if the snack pack would just come out. These, I think, are all the notices. So let's begin this time of worship now. We'll sing to God's praise. And we'll sing from Mission Praise 975.

[ 2 : 21 ] Mission Praise 975. The words on the screen. Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea, a great high priest, whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me.

We'll sing.

My name is written on his hands. My name is written on his heart. I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can let me then depart. No tongue can let me then depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair, and tells me of the guilt within. Upward I look and see him there, who may die into all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is crowned free. For God the just is satisfied. To look on him and pardon me. To look on him and pardon me.

the sinless Savior died, and to look on him and pardon me. Behold him there, the risen Lamb, my perfect spotless righteousness, the great unchangeable I am, the King of glory and of grace.

[ 4 : 49 ] One with himself I cannot die. My soul is purchased with his blood. My life is hidden with Christ on high.

With Christ my Savior and my God. With Christ my Savior and my God.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you on this, your day, for the encouragement of the gospel.

The words that we have sung, which take us back to these truths in your word, where we are caused to lift our eyes from ourself and from this world, to see Jesus and to see the reality of eternity.

[ 6 : 04 ] We thank you that you have made us in your image. Our hearts are restless until we find rest in you. We thank you that you have made us with that deep knowledge within us, that there is more to life in this world.

You have set eternity in the hearts of men and women, as your word says. And we thank you, Lord, that you have given us such clear teaching on what eternity looks like.

We recognize that there is much that we cannot understand. And I cannot see and ear cannot hear. We don't have minds that are capable of comprehending the wonder and the glory of all that you have prepared for those whom you love.

We know that, Lord, but we thank you that you have given us such clear and simple directions as to how we can get to that place which is called heaven.

We thank you that the smallest child, even in primary school, can understand the reality of gospel truth, that you are God and that you are holy and that we are sinners.

[ 7 : 24 ] And that sin keeps us at a distance from you. That is our problem. That is our predicament. But we thank you, Father, that you sent your son Jesus into this world to help us to be our saviour.

We thank you that Jesus lived that sinless life as our substitute. We thank you that Jesus went to the cross to pay the punishment for all the sin that stains our hearts and our lives.

And we thank you that Jesus finished that work of salvation. On the third day, he rose from the dead, showing that everything that was necessary to make it possible for us to be saved was finished.

It was done. And all we have to do is believe. So enable us, we pray, to be those who believe, who don't just hear your word, but who act upon it.

And enable us to be those who do not neglect such great salvation, but to take hold of Jesus, the saviour. Lord, we recognise that when we die, there is a heaven to gain and there is a hell to shun.

[ 8 : 38 ] We recognise that your word warns us that if we don't listen to you, if we refuse Jesus, there is not just nothing, but there is a place where we have to go to pay for our own sin.

And Jesus spoke of it more than anyone did. And Lord, we pray that you would help us to see the seriousness and the urgency of the gospel call.

Enable us here, each one of us, to respond, to confess our sin, to believe in Jesus, to be saved.

And Lord, we pray that you would help us, if we are those who are Christians, to go out from this place to tell others about the offer of salvation and the seriousness of refusing that offer.

We recognise that there are many people in us, in this community, who are all around us, who don't know the truth about the gospel, who don't understand who Jesus is, who have no awareness of what he has done for them.

And Lord, you have commissioned us to go out with this message. So give us courage and give us opportunity. Help us, we pray, to take every opportunity you give us to speak of the hope that we have in Christ and enable us, Lord, when we do, to speak with gentleness and to speak with respect and to speak with earnestness and love.

[ 10 : 05 ] So we pray for all those around us in this community and we ask, Lord, that you would help us to reach them and that you would move in the power of your spirit. We pray for this nation, as we do week by week, a nation that once was known for our love of the gospel.

Now we are known for the speed at which we have pushed the gospel away. And have mercy on us, we pray. Lord, as we see your word removed from the public square, as the children in schools hear less and less of the grace of Jesus, we ask that you would have mercy on us and, Lord, that you would turn us back to yourself.

We know that you are able to come in awakening and reviving power. And we ask, Lord, that you would do so, that we would see this nation once more looking to Jesus.

We pray for those that you have set an authority over us in the royal family and government and Westminster and Holyrood. We ask, Lord, that you would enable them to be humbled and to look to you, that we may have the opportunity to continue to worship you in peace in this land.

We pray for all nations, we pray for the spread of the gospel across this world. We pray for the places that we are connected with in particular. We think of Romania, we think of Malawi, we think of the DPRK, we think of different areas, Lord, where we have gone out as individuals, where we have looked into and been able to pray for.

[ 11 : 47 ] And we ask, Lord, that you would be working in these places, that as we see situations and people in our mind's eye, Lord, that you would be working, that you would be moving in these places.

We pray that you would help us in our need. We are always in need. We are conscious, especially of those who are grieving today. And as we thank you for Donald's life, as we gathered yesterday, we pray for his family.

We pray for the Morrison family, especially Mary. And we ask, Lord, for your comfort and for your strength to be given to them. And for all who are grieving like them. And for those who are sick, Lord, as they come to our mind's eye, we remember them, we pray for them, those who are at home, those who perhaps may be coming towards the end of life.

We ask, Lord, that you would minister to them and that you would help them. We think especially of Rachel McSween and Donald and Katrina as they care for her. And we ask, Lord, that she would know your continual presence, that she would know no fear, but that sense of the Lord, her shepherd with her, always.

So hear our prayers. Continue with us in this time of worship. Enable us to worship you in spirit and in truth, Lord, that our minds would be decluttered from all the cares of this world.

[13:12] And Lord, that you would minister to our hearts. And we pray all this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

There was a couple of intimations I forgot, actually. There's only one I can remember now. I had two and now one's gone. But we're thinking about having a holiday club this year.

Would you like to have a holiday club this year? Yes. Yes? Is that a definite yes? Well, for a holiday club to happen, we need to have some volunteers, helpers. So, if you're able to help in the last week, probably, of the holidays, whether we do five days or three days, we're not sure.

Come and speak to me or Mary at the end of the service and we can think about that. What did you say, Michael? Five days. Five days, not three. Seven days. Seven days.

Okay, well, we'll see where we can go with that. So, it would be good to have a holiday club again. Now, thinking about the holiday club, this last week, I was in Edinburgh and when I go to Edinburgh, I stay with a friend of mine called Ewan.

[14:38] I call him McGilverly and what do you call him? You call him Dustboy because he helps out in the holiday club and he stays in a nice place in Edinburgh.

It's not very posh but it's a nice area. It's all quite tidy around about the house. The garden's nice and there's quite clean cars there but there's one thing that stands out as a big mess in the place that Dustboy stays and I think I'm just going to stick it on the screen.

Look at that car. I've been looking at that car for about the last five years as I've been going to visit him and it hasn't moved an inch in five years.

And every time I go there there's more moss in it. There's more grass growing from the wheels. I'm expecting a tree trunk to be growing out of the windscreen in the future.

So I think there's a couple more animals. Look at the state of it. One more as well. It's rusting, flat tyres, it's messy and every time I go I look to see if this car has been moved.

[15:51] And every time I go it hasn't been moved. So everything else looks tidy. There's just one van that's looking really messy there. And I said to McGill when I was here, when I was there just a couple of days ago, I said, when's that van ever going to be moved?

And he said, he said, to be honest, he said, I don't even notice it anymore. So he walks past it every day and he doesn't even notice it anymore because he's just got so used to this ugly thing that's sitting outside his front door.

And boys and girls, you know, there can be there can be sins like that. And I was thinking about that. I was thinking about my heart and my life. And there can be sins like that.

We know what sin is. Sin is what affects our heart that keeps us back from God. But there are sins. There are some particular sins that we find hard to turn away from.

And I'm not going to ask you what you struggle with just like you're not going to ask me. But there are things in our lives and in our hearts and we just find it really hard. Some people, they've got a short temper and you can see them and they're starting to, they're okay and then they're starting to get a wee bit agitated and the next thing, bam!

[17:19] And their temper goes and they explode. And it's a it's a sin that they struggle with and they know it's there and they're trying to they're trying to not do it.

But it's just like it keeps on happening. And for others it might be might be laziness. And we think, well, I need to do this.

I need to I need to read my Bible because I love reading my Bible and I want to hear what God has to say to me and I want to I want to pray because I want to speak to God and then the phone goes ping!

You think, oh, I could maybe have another wee game of FIFA or Candy Crush or whatever it is you're playing and we know what to do but we think, oh, I just can't be bothered today and that's a sin that some of us struggle with and there's all kinds of different sins and we know they're there and God can see them but over the years if we don't ask God to root them out we just get used to them and I think all of us who are Christians if I was to go around and ask some of the older Christians in this room do you know what I'm talking about?

They would say, yeah, I know what you're talking about because there are sins that they just kind of they're in our lives and we just get used to them and yet God sees them and God keeps on saying and other people might see them as well and God keeps saying you know, you need to have that taken out.

[19:01] Now, what could Dust Boy do to get rid of that van? Michael? Okay, good entrepreneur.

He says he could wash it, fix the tires and then sell it. Well, maybe. I think it's been sitting there so long that not even John Struthers could get it going again.

But how could he get it? How could he get rid of it? Can't drive it away. He'd need to have a tow truck. He'd probably just need to phone the council, wouldn't he? I think and say, there's a van here. It's been here for the last five years. It's stuck. It doesn't belong to anybody in this place.

Somebody's just parked it up. Can you take it away, please? And I think that they would come along and they would just throw it away in the tow truck.

And it's as easy as that, really. Now, for us, when we become aware of sin in our hearts, how do we get rid of it?

[20:11] How do we get rid of it? Pray. What's what were you going to say? We just ask God to take it away, don't we?

So, when we're not Christians, that God has started to work in our lives and show us that we're sinners, that the prayer that takes us into the Christian life, the prayer where we start to become Christians is a prayer when we say, Lord Jesus, I see in my heart that a sin and I'm sorry for my sin and I know that on the cross you went to pay for sin so will you please take my sin away and so when we do that, our sins are paid for, they're taken away but as long as we're in this world we're not perfect.

So Christians who've been Christians for lots of years, we know we're not perfect and we keep on sinning and so every day we keep on having to come back to God and saying, you know my struggles, you know what the white vans in my life look like so please, will you help me to keep turning away from sin and will you wash my heart and will you make me clean?

And it's as simple as that. Jesus has paid for our sin but we have to keep on asking him, will you please take sin away and fill my heart more and more with you?

And so let's be encouraged to do that. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you that you love us and we thank you that you love us enough to tell us about our own hearts, your words like a mirror and you show us our hearts and we confess that we are all sinners.

[22:11] We pray that you would forgive us, that you'd wash us in the blood of Jesus. We pray for anybody who's never yet given their lives to you and we ask that even in these moments they might pray, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, take my sin away and be my Lord.

And for those of us who've been Christians maybe for a few years, if we're younger and maybe a lot of years if we're older, we confess, Lord, that there are things in our lives that we still struggle with. Some of us it's bad tempers and some of it's this laziness and some of it it's wanting the things that we don't need. You know what's going on in our hearts and Lord, as we see that and as other people might see that too, we pray that you would keep on washing our hearts clean, that you would keep on helping us to turn away from sin and Lord, that you would keep on filling us with the Holy Spirit, that we would build lives that are pleasing to you.

So hear our prayers and help us, we ask, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing a psalm where David, the psalmist, he asked God to take his sin away and in the psalm he starts off and he's feeling very low because when we see sin sometimes we think, oh, I wish I could be better and David, he's feeling low and he says, Lord, from the depths to you I cried my voice, Lord, do thou hear and to my supplications voice given attentive here.

He's saying, Lord, will you hear my prayer please? And then he says, who shall stand if you, O Lord, should mark iniquity? Who's got a sinless heart? Not me, he says, but yet with you the forgivenesses, he says, that feared, respected you, should be.

[ 24 : 04 ] And then he asks in the rest of the psalm that God would forgive him for his sin. So we sing this psalm and we ask God to forgive us for our sins as we sing. We'll stand to sing.

Lord, from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord, do thou hear and to my supplications voice given attention here.

Lord, who shall stand in the whole Lord should spark iniquity?  
but yet with thee for him blesses that the end mayest be.

I wait for God my soul doth wait my heart is in his word more than may that for Lord be watched my soul which are the Lord I say more than may that to watch the morning light to see let

[ 26 : 34 ] Israel open the door for with him men Iniquities In His church shall redeem Okay boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school let's be praying for them as they go.

And if we could turn in our Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 3 please.

1 Peter chapter 3 And we will read from verse 8 to verse 12 Just a short section.

This is God's word. Finally all of you live in harmony with one another. Be sympathetic. Love as brothers. Be compassionate and humble.

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. But with blessing. Because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.

[ 29 : 04 ] He must turn from evil and do good. He must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

We're going to sing now the verses. Some of the verses that Peter quotes from Psalm 34. And we sing from verse 12 to 15 as it's marked in the English.

It's slightly different in Gaelic. But I'll read just the two stanzas from verse 12 to verse 15. What man is he that life desires to see good would live long?

Thy lips refrain from speaking guile and from ill words thy tongue. Depart from ill. Do good seek peace? Pursue it earnestly. God's eyes are on the just.

[ 30 : 03 ] His ears are open to their cry. We'll sing two stanzas of Psalm 34 to God's praise. We sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic. Pursue it earnestly.

Pursue it earnestly. When the tea makes an ass sony are done. Please sing in 6 Ajax. We sing tour of clip at 1 Liaoota. And we sing music begin to sing in a bit of questa quality.

It's great to have a good life life. Amen. I ■■■■■ give to his wash in David Pursus.est in Isaiah 32-Raga. For the voice of Nikola Toru Krakow and cunning to learn things, Now I'm able to prayset to be that Dance itself ■■■■■.

I cœux deixat roughly in threelys Cultures when he sings into the style of colocarive. Thank you. Thank you.

[ 32 : 10 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Turn back please with me to the passage that we read in 1 Peter chapter 3.

[ 34 : 03 ] And as we go there, let's pray again. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this letter that was inspired by the Holy Spirit, that was penned by Peter, a disciple of Jesus, flawed in many ways and yet used mightily in the work of the gospel.

We ask, Lord, that you would open our ears and our hearts, that we may be ready to receive your word. And Lord, we pray, we pray, we pray, we pray, we pray, we pray, we pray, we pray for every other congregation that meets as we do.

And wherever the gospel is preached, wherever Christ crucified is preached, we pray, we pray for the congregations around us, different denominations, Lord.

Lord, bless them, we pray, bless them, we pray, and we pray for our children. And we pray for the Holy Spirit, we pray for our children. We pray for their servants, we pray for your servants. We think of Gordon, especially today over in North Euston. We ask that you would guide him and lead him and speak through him.

And we ask that you would guide them in that vacancy over there, that you would lead them to the man of your choosing. And we pray for Stuart as he ministers in Labour they just brought your

words.

[ 35 : 27 ] brother this morning as he opens your word that that Christ would be seen and heard and Lord that he would know your blessing as he preaches and for the congregations connected to us we thank you for those visiting with us today and we ask Lord that you would be blessing the congregations that they may attend in a different area that the name of Jesus would be lifted up and that many would be drawn to him in this day we pray that it wouldn't be just a normal day that that wouldn't be our expectation but we ask Lord that you would do a work in this place in the places that we pray for that there would be souls that are sleeping souls that are dead in transgression and sin that would be called to life by the gospel of Jesus just as Lazarus heard the the words come forth and the dead man was raised from the dead we pray that there would be souls that are dead that are brought to life as the name of Jesus is heard today and Lord we ask that you would quicken the hearts of your people we confess that like the church in Laodicea our hearts can be lukewarm at times we pray that you would awaken us that you would revive us that we would have hearts that are full of zeal for your glory so hear our prayers and help us we ask as we preach and as we listen and as we respond and we ask all this in Jesus name and for his sake amen well if you could turn to the passage we read in first Peter just to put it in context I think most of us would be fairly familiar with what we're reading this is a letter from Peter the disciple that we know and that we love it was stated around about

AD 65 30 plus years after Jesus died and rose and it's a letter that was addressed to churches and what we know now is Turkey and yet equally it's a letter that's addressed to us in Tarbert and as we think about Peter we see in our minds eye a disciple that we followed closely as we studied through Luke's gospel Peter is a man who knew Jesus who trusted Jesus who who followed Jesus and yet Peter has the humility as he writes and it comes through he's a man who knew what it was to fail to fall and to have Jesus pick him back up and set him back on course so Peter he's in this letter he's writing to Christians he's writing to those who have been chosen by God the Father who have been cleansed by God the Son who have been changed and who are being changed by God the Holy Spirit and in this short section that we're looking at today Peter he gives insight into the the Christian life he he allows us to see what the Christian life looks like when we flick through our channels these days we don't have to flick for long before we come on to a program that's dealing with some kind of so-called reality TV and reality TV if it works in trueness you know you have cameras that are set in different places and we're not seeing something that's rehearsed we're supposed to be seeing something that's that's real and it's uh it's warts and all I think often reality TV is a bit staged but this is not staged and in this section of Peter's letter it's a bit like Christian reality TV Peter is describing what the Christian life looks like in reality or what it should look like as we live out in in this world so for those of us who are Christians today you could say that this this letter and and this section in particular it's like a manual for us and what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus in the in the cut and thrust of this this world and for those who are not Christians this morning this letter is like an invitation to live a different life this letter is a an invitation uh to trust Jesus and to live a life where we are trusting Jesus where we are following Jesus a life that looks different to the life that perhaps some are living just now so where do we begin well the first point for this morning is uh we are to rejoice in grace and uh we will go to verse 8 uh to think that one through in verse 8 Peter says finally all of you live in harmony with one another be sympathetic love us brothers be compassionate and humble verse 8 verse 8 was was last week's focus uh Peter calls the Christians in in Turkey he calls the Christians in Tarbert uh to live in harmony to have one mind literally uh to show sympathy to to really feel for each other uh to love each other as brothers and sisters in God's family and to be compassionate and humble and and last week we we we focused on that verse we we thought through uh what that verse means for our lives and it's a it's a challenging verse and I felt the challenge of it and I know other people felt the challenge of uh that verse as well and I want to ask the question uh as we are now seven days on from it how's the week gone for those of us who are Christians how how is the how is the last week gone to what extent have we lived out verse 8 to what extent can we and can those who are close to us uh see that we are those who are in harmony with one another uh to what extent have we been sympathetic rather than critical to what extent uh how we loved each other as brothers and sisters and sisters in Christ how have we in our words in our actions even in our thoughts been compassionate and and humble you know as we look in the mirror of God's word and remember I have to look at this for longer than you have what do I see and what do you see in your life can we

go through where I say it and say tick tick tick tick tick perfect and if we can we're deluded because the reality is we uh we fail and even if we scan back over the last seven days I'm quite certain that we can think of conversations situations thoughts motivations that have not been verse eight so as we as we re-read this verse we probably feel something of the sting of it so what do we do we rejoice in grace that's what we do see Christian life begins on the day that we ask for forgiveness and we receive grace from Jesus that's what we're thinking with the children that that's when Christian life begins we should be able to think back to a day or a time where we're consciously said I know I'm a sinner Lord Jesus will you forgive me will you give to me grace grace and when we pray that from the sincerity of our hearts we receive grace forgiveness salvation but that's just the beginning because as we were saying with the children we fail in so many ways and so we need to keep coming back to Jesus day by day by day day by day for fresh supplies of grace and as we receive them we rejoice in them so as we reread verse 8 we don't despair this morning in who we are and how we fall short but we rejoice in the grace of Jesus as the hymn that we sang goes when Satan tempts me to despair and he could very easily use verse 8 to tempt us to despair when Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within upward I look and see him Jesus where all grace flows from we see him there who made an end of all my sin because the sinless saviour died my sinful soul is counted free for God the just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me and that's grace so if you're listening this morning and you're not a Christian but you're seeing your sin come to Jesus and tell him about your sin and receive his grace and for those who are in Christ as we feel how much we fall short of God's standard what do we do we come again to Jesus we don't run from him we don't give in to despair and withdraw we come again to Jesus we tell him about our sin and we receive and we rejoice day by day by day we rejoice in his amazing grace so that's where we begin this morning that's where we should begin every morning we rejoice in grace and secondly as we move from verse 8 we are given a charge here to repay evil with good so when we suffer evil when we feel the sting of evil we're to repay that not with evil but with good and you could say in verse 8

[ 47 : 21 ] Peter's talking to Christians about how we are to be within the church how we are to be towards each other and now going from verse 8 to verse 9 Peter he's talking to us about how we're to live in this world what we're to be like when we're outside when we're amongst those who are not Christians and who may actually be very hostile to the Christian message and the Christian person and so Peter says as God inspires him do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult but with blessing because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing one of the commentators a guy called Jonathan Cruz he said Christians are not yo-yos Christians are not yo-yos and you know how a yo-yo works you know you have the thing in your hand and you throw it down and it comes back and if you throw a yo-yo down with force it comes back at you at force and clocks you on the chin but if you throw it down gently it just comes back gently and Peter's saying here that's the way of the world

Cruz the commentator saying we're not yo-yos you know in this world if someone throws harsh words at you in a forceful way the world will respond with the same force and the sin within us wants to do that somebody insults us what do we want to do well I'll get you I'll get one back in there someone throws words forcefully at us our fallen nature is to want to throw words back at them with equal force and Peter knew all about that because he'd done it many times but as Jesus speaks through Peter he says don't be like that don't repay evil with evil but repay evil with good don't repay forceful words with forceful words but repay forceful words with gentle words there's a proverb about that a gentle word turns away anger we're to repay insult with blessing says Peter and this is a challenge no matter how far we are along the road as Christians no matter how much God may have worked in our lives over the years this is a challenge to try and live this one out in our homes when things get heated in the workplace when somebody really gets in our nerves on the football pitch when the temperature is rising this is a challenge Mark Twain said it ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me it's the parts that I do understand and Peter is saying to us you need to understand this is your mission this is our mission daily we are to ask the question how can I bless those who are evil to me and as we accept this mission as we live this out not only are we a blessing to those who actually want to curse us but we receive blessing repay evil with good that's the charge if we want an example of what this looks like in action we look to Jesus remember how he was insulted all through his life and ministry especially as he came near to the cross as the trial was underway as the charges were pressed do you remember the insults from

those on either side of a mission from the passersby from the religious authorities from the crowds as they cried out crucify him the insults remember how evil men drove cruel nails into his hands and his feet how did he respond well it wasn't with insults what he prayed was father forgive them we don't know what they're doing another example is the apostle

Paul Acts chapter 16 remember Paul and Silas they're locked in the Philippine jail they suffered evil they were suffering evil for Jesus sake as they were in this grim cell and the world would expect them having faced that and finding themselves in that condition the world would expect them to be bitter and miserable and complaining in this awful cell so what are they doing they're praising God and then when God opened the prison door with an earthquake did they did they face the jailer that locked them up and laugh at him and say that's you putting your place as they walked out the door no they didn't walk out the door they stayed and they ministered to him they blessed them that they led him to Jesus we're to repay evil with good and if we take this in and try and live this out this gives us a different perspective on suffering you know when we are insulted when we sometimes suffer evil treatment for Jesus sake our natural response is to want to withdraw and complain but Peter is teaching us here that the supernatural response to that is to ask the question how can I in this situation even though I'm stinging even though I'm hurting from your words even though I feel embarrassed because I've been isolated and shut out because I'm a Christian we're to ask the question how can I repay evil with good how can I be a blessing in this situation that's the supernatural response and that's what we're called to that's what God will help us with if we try sinclair ferguson said it's never easy being demeaned but there's great fun in being a Christian there's great fun in taking the world by surprise and seeking to be a blessing so let's be encouraged to try that this week when somebody fires a torpedo of words at us and our natural self says I'm going to fight fire with fire take a breath and let's pray and ask the

[ 55 : 13 ] Lord to show us and give us the strength to be a blessing rather to want to throw a punch repay evil with good second point the third point taking us into verse 10 is we are to relish life for whoever would love life and see good days says Peter and so he goes on and Peter in verse 10 and following he's quoting from from Psalm 34 and Psalm 34 is a psalm that's full of life and it's full of joy and that's exactly what these believers in all these different places in modern day Turkey that's what they needed to be topped up with because remember at the beginning of this letter Peter he writes to these believers and he describes them as those who are strangers in the world and they're scattered they're the dispersed it says in other versions they are believers who had been driven out of their homes they're believers who had been disowned by family and friends remember the commentators made the point that some of their families actually held funerals for them whilst they were alive because they said if you're going to follow this

Jesus you are dead to us so these Christians they knew what it was to suffer for Jesus sake and it was going to get worse and Peter understood the pain of that Peter knew all about the difficulties of being a Christian very soon after this letter was written Peter would be crucified upside down for believing in Jesus Peter knew what it was to be an alien and a stranger Peter knew and he reminded these believers that this world is not home heaven is home but in this section here Peter is reminding these believers that this world isn't just a miserable waiting room that we have to wait in until it's time for heaven we shouldn't look at the world that

God made with a kind of dark miserable lens it's God's world every day he's given us as a gift of life yeah I was in a waiting room on Thursday a big waiting room called Edinburgh Airport I'd been there since seven o'clock in the morning no sooner was I in the door of the airport when the thing came up and screamed that your flight's delayed and so it was delayed for one hour two hour three hours I think it was delayed for about four hours so I was sitting in this airport in this waiting room so what was I doing for these three four hours in the waiting room I wasn't doing much I was just sitting there impatiently thinking when on earth am I going to get out of this place and get home I've got things to do I've got people to see I want to get back home and that's the way we we view waiting rooms whether we're waiting for our tires to get changed or for a plane to take off and Peter is saying to these believers this world is not some miserable waiting room Peter doesn't want these Christians to be sitting about with long faces you know checking their watches waiting impatiently to go home so he reminds them this is God's world every day we're given us God's gift so he says love life and enjoy good days and there's a future dimension to this but there's also a present tense dimension to this if we are those if we are those who are headed for for heaven and we are going to be those who who love life and enjoy pure goodness in heaven something of that

should penetrate into this world we shouldn't be Christians who are miserable dragging our feet you know bringing bad moods everywhere we go to love life enjoy good days there should be joy there should be relish in our lives as we walk close with the Lord and if you want an example of this Jesus Jesus didn't spend 33 years in a spiritual retreat telling people that he couldn't wait to get out of this sinful broken world and Jesus would have felt much more of the horror of sin than we do because his conscience was not dysfunctional in the way that ours is he was perfect he was pure he was more sensitive to sin and brokenness than any of us ever will be and yet he didn't spend his time in this world miserable complaining and saying constantly I just want to get home we see Jesus and he lived a full abundant life he worked hard he laughed he cried he was a friend to many he went to dinner parties he mixed with all kinds of people people because he loved people he came to seek them he came to save them and our mission is to be like that we're to be in the world but not of the world our mission is to be in the community to be with people we're to work hard whatever it is [ 61 : 40 ] God has given us to do we're to work cheerfully we're to be out of the football we're to be out of the flank we're to be in the shop we're to be at the gym we're to be in the world but we're to be like Christ and that's the key we're to be like Christ and for those who are out in the middle of things in communities whether it's in the middle of a choir or in the middle of a football team or in a work environment surrounded by people there's great opportunity that's where Jesus wants us to be but it's such a tragedy if we find ourselves surrounded by people but we're not like Jesus so we're to be in the world we're to be loving life we're to be seeking to live good days but we're to be like

Christ you know there's two extremes that we've gone wrong in church history over the years sometimes we get a Christianity that focuses very much on being pure and holy and they withdraw into monasteries and spiritual retreats so there's a focus on holiness there's a great clarity on the truth of the gospel but there's nobody to tell because you never go near people and that's one extreme of church history and then there's been other times in church history where there's been great efforts and great endeavours in being in the world and being surrounded by people and having lots going on but we've lost sight of the message we've become dislodged from the bible we've drifted from Jesus and in both these situations we're ineffective calling us to be like Christ but in the world how can we be like Christ by being with him but by receiving and rejoicing in the grace that he gives us each day so relish life is the third point the fourth point is to repent continually in verses 10 and 11 Peter says that the Christian must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech he must turn from evil and so on he goes and this is not a new teaching but it's a needful reminder that we are to be repenting continually again repentance is not something that happens on the on the day that we become Christians then we leave repentance behind repentance is the thing that we are doing constantly in our Christian lives Martin Luther said when our Lord and Master Jesus

Christ said repent he intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance all of the Christian life is repentance turning from sin and trusting in the good news that Jesus saves sinners aren't merely a one-time inaugural experience but the daily substance of Christianity the gospel is for every day and every moment repentance is to be the Christian's continual posture and probably the area as Peter applies this probably the area where we are most conscious of our need to repent is the use of our tongues and Peter knew that and we know that today our tongues James tells us are like wild animals they're hard to tame our tongues if we're honest are drawn to evil that's why tabloids sell our tongues are prone to wander into gossip our tongues are quick to criticize rather than lift up others our tongues are quick to be deceitful our tongues are quick to say something that will get us off the hook and make ourselves look a bit better while somebody else gets trampled and that's what we're to repent of our tongues are not to be used for evil and for deceitful speech says Peter so what are our tongues to be used for well our tongues are to be used for truth if our tongues are not tools of evil and deceitful speech then it's very clear that our tongues should be used for truth for sharing the truth and who is the truth

Jesus is the truth Jesus said in John 14 6 I am the truth so the outworking of repentance in our lives and in our speech is not just keeping quiet and avoiding evil and deceitful speech repentance involves using our tongues to tell people about Jesus so Christians are we telling people about Jesus I get 25-30 minutes here once twice a week and if it's all down to me there's very limited opportunity but you're in the distillery you're in the school you're in the hospital you're in the shop you're at the football field

[ 67 : 57 ] Christians are all over house in all kinds of different work places and spaces with all kinds of relationships and we are called to tell people about Jesus not about church all that's going to do is stir up a conversation that goes bad tell people about Jesus and if we find this difficult take encouragement from the speech at the General Assembly this year Bob Ackroyd who's the moderator for the year he made a speech where the focus was exclusively evangelism telling people about Jesus and Bob said this many of us feel ill equipped for presenting the gospel we do not do it that well then he quotes the late Don

MacLeod Don MacLeod often quoted this aphorism if a thing is worth doing it is worth doing badly we don't wait until we can we can do the thing excellently that's the point that he's making if a thing is worth doing it's worth doing badly whether eloquent or not articulate or not passionate or not we proclaim the gospel even if we do it badly says Bob George Whitfield said other men may preach the gospel better than I but no man can preach a better gospel so to repent continually is to keep evil and deceit out of our mouths and keep Jesus and his gospel in our mouths the message says Bob of the gospel is to come you are welcome Jesus says come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest whatever care we have for the lost Jesus cares more whatever effort we make to reach the lost

Jesus does more whatever cost we experience in proclaiming the gospel Jesus incurs more much more our message says Bob is come I fear that many within our wider audience feel like the message is go as in go away we need to make every effort to warmly welcome people to the good news of Jesus Christ to assure them that the welcome mat is out and that's part of what is involved in repenting continually we turn away from evil and deceitful speech and we ask people to turn to Jesus and the final thing just a word is we are called to righteous living and it's really summing up everything that's gone before it but there's another dimension to it as well

Peter's calling us to holiness the old word that's kind of it's kind of become a negative word in the minds of some but there's nothing negative about it we are called to live holy lives to be like Jesus we're called to do good says Peter and to seek peace peace and to pursue it and these words are they're action words we are called to do good that takes intention that takes determination we're called to seek peace that means that we've got to go out and try and be peacemakers and we're to pursue it even if it seems to be hard to find keep on going this is what we're called to and this is not what saves us we're saved by grace

Ephesians 2 chapter 8 but we're saved for good works Ephesians 2 chapter 10 chapter 2 verse 10 or to put it another way we're saved by the redemption of Jesus what he did but we're saved for righteous living and I think probably the place where that comes through very clearly in terms of a hymn is when I survey the wondrous cross Isaac Watts takes us on that journey and he begins the hymn by saying when I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died my riches gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride and then he says in the hymn he talks about the love of Jesus the cost that Jesus incurred for us and the hymn finishes having seen the gospel having looked to the cross having trusted in the grace of Jesus the only appropriate response is for us to say love so amazing so divine it demands my soul it demands my life it demands my all and that's our mission to give it all to

[ 73 : 33 ] Jesus to seek to live righteous lives so no one gets to say my life is pointless no Christian ever gets to say if only Jesus gave me something to do if only he called me well he has called you he's called you and I to live for him at work at school at home we are to live lives that are righteous we are to live lives that reflect something of the character of Jesus so that so that people who never read the Bible and who know nothing of God's love for them may be able to see and hear and feel something of the love of Jesus for them even through us and Peter finishes up by saying remember the

Lord is watching the Lord is listening to us he's seeing what's going on in our lives he sees our behavior he hears our conversation he knows our motivation he scans our thoughts he is watching so keep on mission says Peter live in such a way as to please him verse 12 time's gone so let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your word we acknowledge the challenge of it we confess even as we have worked through the verses that we fall far short but we rejoice in your grace we are thankful for your grace and we pray for your help that we may live lives which are pleasing to you that we may be those who are repenting continually from sin the sin in thought word and deed and we pray that you would give us the opportunity and the courage to speak to people about Jesus we thank you for those who spoke to us we thank you for those who reached out to us and we pray

that you would help us if we are

Christians to reach out to those who are still lost and for anyone here who is not yet a Christian we pray that for those who see their sin Lord we pray that they would not let another day pass them by but that they would call out to Jesus seek forgiveness seek salvation and know the assurance of his amazing saving and sustaining grace grace we pray these things in Jesus name and for his sake amen we'll sing to conclude the hymn that we were quoting just a second ago when I survey the wondrous cross we'll stand to sing when I surveyed the wondrous cross on which on which the pledge of glory die my riches gain the skin

I curse the cross and pour contempt on all I pride for bid it Lord that I should go save in the death of Christ my God all love it is that shall be most I sacrifice then to his blood he promised his his hands his feet sorrow and love floating your death in his heart and sorrow meet heart hearts compose so rich our crowd where the whole realm of nature mine that when an all ain't far too small love so amazing so divine so divine demands my soul my life 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