

4.6.23 pm

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening. We're going to begin this time of worship. We're singing the hymn, 1,213 Emission Praise.

I'm told that you sang this at the last fellowship. It's great lyrics that connect with the passage we're in tonight. And Angus is going to play it through.

I don't know who's going to present it. Do you play it? Who presented it when I was away? Was it you, Stuart? Cammie, was it you? All right, Cammie, you're up.

You're up on this one. So Angus will play it through once and then we'll stand. And Cammie can give a lead on this one. Thanks. Okay.

Okay. Thank you.

[1 : 27] Church, your eyes, the future are all, in all of Christ our captain. For now we can say that they are strong, in the strength that God has given.

With shield of faith and belt of truth, we'll stand against the devil's lies. An army bold, whose battle cries love, which kept to those in darkness.

In peace. In peace.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I'm going to ask Finlay McSween now to come out and lead us in prayer in Gaelic, please. Thank you.

[4 : 21] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[6 : 59] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[9 : 29] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

There's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey.

[12 : 29]

Thank you.

Thank you.

And we'll read from verse 1 to verse 11.

And you'll see.

[16 : 29] of years and he was gathered to his people his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre in the field of Ephron son of Zoar the Hittite the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites there Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah after Abraham's death God blessed his son Isaac who then lived near Beer Sheva the high Roy amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we'll sing again now to God's praise we'll sing from Psalm 98 Psalm 98 I think we'll sing the whole of the psalm we'll sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he hath done his right hand and his holy arm and victory hath won the Lord God his salvation hath caused to be known his justice in the heathen sight he openly hath shown I will stand to sing we'll sing the whole psalm to

God's praise

O sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he hath done his right hand and his holy arm in victory hath been His right hand and His holy arm in victory hath won.

The Lord God, His salvation hath caused it to be known.

His justice in the heathen sight He openly hath shown.

He mindful of His grace and truth to His results hath been.

[18 : 48] And the salvation of our God all ends of the earth must see.

Let all the earth unto the Lord send forth a joyful noise.

Lift up your voice and add to Him sing praises and rejoice.

With harp and voice of sound unto Jehovah sing.

With trumpet, scornest, blandly sun before the Lord the King.

[20 : 03] Let's see John, all their foolishness for the world and dwellers there.

Let us love hands and let the hills together joy declare.

Before the Lord because He comes to judge the air comes He.

He'll judge the world with righteousness. His hope with equity.

Let's pray for a moment as we turn back to God's Word. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

[21 : 18] We thank you again for the word made flesh, your Son, Jesus our Savior. We thank you for your spirit.

We thank you that although we are conscious that Jesus will return to this world as judge. A day when every eye will see Him, and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.

we thank you that first Jesus came into this world to be our saviour and we thank you that salvation and grace is still available to us today and so Lord we pray that each one of us here would be trusting the Lord Jesus and obeying him walking with him and that happiness that he brings to our souls in time a happiness that is perfected in eternity Lord we pray for those who are not here as well some who never come into the doors of any church who have no sense of eternity no thought of their souls Lord we pray that you would awaken such souls such hearts that you would create a sense of need an awareness that this is not all there is but there is a need to be prepared for what comes after death Lord we pray for for those who seem far away from you who have no thought who are around us in the community we we bring them to you as we see them in our mind's eye and we can think of others as well who we would expect and look for week by week here and who often will make the decision not to come the cares of the world perhaps we don't know Lord what goes on in the lives and the hearts of people but we see many who seem so close to trusting the Lord Jesus who know so much who have an awareness of sin who see that Jesus is saviour who understand what he did on the cross who are aware that he is passing by even but who never cry out son of David have mercy on me and so as we think of of these people Lord and many of uh of whom we care so much about we pray Lord that you would work in their hearts and that there would be none who come close to the kingdom and yet are shut out we pray for them Lord we ask that you would cause them to to look to you to trust you we're conscious we can't do this ourselves my words can't change any life just the same as any of our words and in discussions and even in arguments that we may have to try and persuade we are so aware that our words have so little impact when they're just our words and so we pray Holy Spirit that you would work in these lives and take the word of God and press it into the minds and the hearts of all those that we pray for whilst there is still time before Jesus returns when the time is gone and it's too late we ask Lord that you would be working to seek and save souls so hear our prayers help us now as we study this section of your word guide us and lead us enable us to see and hear what you would have us see and hear this evening and we pray this in Jesus name Amen

Genesis chapter 25 we've come to this chapter this evening which my Bible is entitled the death of Abraham and we've been studying now for I didn't check how many months through the life of Abraham as he walked with the Lord and we've come now to the chapter where Abraham's life with God in this world comes to an end it's the the death of Abraham and in some ways you could say that this section the first the first 11 verses of Genesis 25 is the closest thing that we have to an obituary of Abraham and we know what an obituary is it's just a short paragraph it's a few words where there's there's a picture of a life and it's quite surprising in some ways what we what we read in this section what Moses who wrote this as God guided him chose to put in and also what he

chose to leave out so let's just look at this paragraph as we come to uh the end of our studies in in the life of Abraham the first thing we see here is another wife that's the first point Abraham he has another wife verse one Abraham took another wife whose name was Keturah now we're reading this in Genesis 25 which comes after Genesis 24 doesn't take a mathematician to work that one out but we make the assumption as we're reading that what happens in Genesis 25 happens after Genesis 24 but that's not always the way that things work in in the Bible things don't always follow in a chronological order and if we look at Genesis 25 and and see that Abraham takes another wife and then we we read that

Abraham has six more children in his very old age we might think this is a a surprising thing to read but the scholars are of the opinion that it's more likely that Abraham took this wife Keturah whilst Sarah was actually still alive and that might surprise us too there's different opinions on this but um having read the commentaries I think it seems most likely that Abraham took this wife um earlier than after the the death of of Sarah and that surprises us but in that culture that was the norm that was just what happened and and so it's it's likely this is what what Abraham did and we might say in response to that but if we look back to to Genesis um one and two didn't God say that his design uh was was one man and one woman just one wife and the answer is yes that is God's design but the reality is we don't always do what God says we should but we don't so what is Moses doing when he tells us in verse one that Abraham took another wife well he's simply he's not telling us this is a good thing he's not telling us this is an acceptable thing he's just telling us the truth this is a record of what happened and God does this right through his word he just tells us the truth about his his people he he doesn't just give us the highlights and photoshop out the the bad bits he he tells us the whole story so Abraham was a was a man of faith but even if the scholars theory on the wife Keturah is wrong we can glance back at past chapters and we can see that although Abraham was a man of faith he often got things wrong he often did the wrong thing it's just what happened and we can think about the disciples

[29 : 50] Peter James John Andrew Philip Bartholomew Thomas Matthew so on they were disciples of Jesus they were following Jesus but they often got things wrong and we've got the record of it and Paul was a missionary and he was full of zeal and he was full of courage and commitment to Jesus but sometimes he lacked patience Barnabas could tell us that story and David was a man of prayer the greatest songwriter that ever lived he was a man after God's own heart and yet he was guilty of adultery and murder so God tells us the truth about his people God saw Abraham's sin and he tells us the truth about it and God sees our sins and we might not have another wife hidden away in a cupboard somewhere that's not an acceptable thing in our culture thankfully but we might have more money than we need that's acceptable in our culture we might be very comfortable with gossip and speaking critically about people we might be full of pride and swagger and God sees it

Dale Ralph Davis says do we ever allow culture rather than the word of God to direct our practices then he answers yes though we may not though we may be blind to the fact and then he follows on by saying so we may need to go easy on throwing rocks at Abraham God saw Abraham's sin just like he sees our sin and yet he still loves us he forgives us as we repent and he uses us as he did Abraham even though we are far from perfect so the first thing we see here is Abraham he takes another wife and the second thing we're told here in this last section is that Abraham had another family from this wife she bore him Zimran Jokshan Midian

Midian Ishbak Shua and so on the names go I made a hash of them the first time I'm not going to read them the second time but we have another family in verses 2, 3 and 4 and what do we know about this family well we know that this family will be at odds with the family that came from Sarah and although we don't have time to do this and I haven't done the deep study to kind of get into this but if we were to fast forward to the time of the judges we can see a name that we recognize from this section the Midianites the Midianites who were descendants of Midian and the Midianites caused a whole lot of difficulty for the Israelites they were a threat to the Israelites so even taking one example of one name from that other family line we can see that there's a lot of difficulty and heartache that came through this family line and in one sense this family line should never have existed because God had promised

Abraham that he would bless the family of Abraham and Sarah and they had to wait a long time for that family to begin and they had to wait an even longer time to see that the family multiply they didn't see it but God's promise to Abraham was that blessing would come through the family that he

had with Sarah and not this one and yet we have this other family and that family can be traced back to Abraham's disobedience it's an illustration through all these names that Abraham on occasions failed to trust God and that had consequences and Abraham was learning that lesson all through his life he was forgiven as he sinned but the sin that Abraham committed the mistakes that he made they had consequences remember he lied twice in going into Egypt and that brought difficulty and it brought distress into his life and the life of those that he loved his sin had consequences and Abraham decided to have children with Hagar albeit Sarah was in on the plan but it was disobedient it was a failure to trust God's promises and Ishmael was born and from the get go they were told this is trouble and it was trouble and here through all these names we we can sense and we know that there's trouble ahead through this other family line and so we take the point as we look at Abraham's life we take the point here that just as he failed and fell and disobeyed we know that we do that too we look in the mirror and we see ourselves in Abraham and we're thankful for God's grace we're thankful for the fact that when we stray as he strayed there is grace there is forgiveness as we repent but we see in Abraham's life that as we stray as we wander there can be difficulty there can be consequences coming from our sins so the far better way to live is to live the way we sang trust and obey there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey

[36 : 28] Abraham through a failure to trust and obey he lost a lot of happiness there was a lot of trouble that came through this other family another wife another family third point that we note here is that there's an unusual will verse 5 Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac now we're all familiar with the whole idea of a will a last will and testament where the person who has died leaves behind their possessions and many close families get into difficulty after a will is read out if there is a feeling amongst the family that each person hasn't had their fair share and usually these days you know if there are children what's left is distributed fairly equally between the children but what we read here in verse 5 is that

Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac and we ask the question why is that God and the answer is because that's what God told them to do the blessings and the benefits that God promised were promised to those who belong to this family to this people and in some ways it's a surprising thing that God would determine to bring blessing through this small family because when we look at the former family the other family that I referred to a second ago there's all these different names it's a big family it's quite a strong unit you could say and it's just singular Isaac the small family the weak line in terms of the way it appears in this world and yet

God works through the weak line and not the multiplicity of people and that's so often the way God works he doesn't choose the strong he doesn't choose the ones that the world would describe as wise he chooses the weak things like us and Paul reminded the Corinthians of that and he writes to the Corinthians knowing that this letter would not just be read to them but it would refer to people like us and God says through Paul brothers and sisters this is 1 Corinthians 1 26 brothers and sisters think of what you were when you were called not many of you were wise by human standards not many were influential not many were of noble birth but God shows the foolish things of the world to shame the wise God shows the weak things of the world to shame the strong God shows the lowly things of the world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him it is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus who has become for us wisdom from God that is our righteousness holiness and redemption therefore as it is written let the one who boasts boast in the Lord and it is always humbling whether we are looking in Abraham's life or whether we are looking in on those that the apostle Paul was writing to it is always humbling to see how God works he uses the weak he uses the imperfect he uses the unlikely to bring blessing that was the way with Abraham and Isaac and if we follow that line all the way through the generations it takes us to

Jesus and what did people say about Jesus from Nazareth can anything good come from Nazareth they said that that town from nowhere that place of no significance can anything good come from there Nazareth Isaiah says in Isaiah 53 and verse 2 speaking prophetically about Jesus he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him nothing in his appearance that we should desire him Jesus physically speaking was not remarkable there were not photographers and paparazzi chasing after him for his film star looks there was nothing remarkable nothing of great beauty and majesty to attract us to him in his appearance and yet that's how

[41 : 47] God's chosen servant determined he would come to this world he looked like an unlikely savior in Genesis 25 teaches us that the blessing came to Isaac the blessing came through Isaac and for us the blessing of salvation the blessing of eternal life it comes through Jesus that descendant of Abraham and Isaac so we need to be in his family we need to be one of his people we need to be in him if we are to be blessed eternally an unusual will fourthly we read here of a forced separation verse 6 says while he was still living that's

Abraham he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east so we learn here that although Abraham although his other sons were cut out of the world they did receive gifts from Abraham whilst he was still alive and if we ask the question why the answer is simply because he loved them they were his children so how could he not love them he loved them but Abraham recognised that this family that these sons were different to Isaac and he could see that these sons this family would not be at peace with Isaac and so he sent them away he sent them away to the land of the east it says and in the biblical symbolism to go east is to go away from the presence of God when Abraham strayed into Egypt he was going away from God well he was going east and so these sons were sent away from the presence of God they were sent east and Abraham who was acting as God's agent he enforces this separation so there's a forced separation between God's people and those who are not God's people and Abraham here is pointing us to Jesus and he's previewing another day where there will be a separation and Jesus spoke of it in Matthew 25 maybe just turn there for a moment Matthew 25 if you've got Bible it's in verse 31 and we see and read there of a separation that Jesus speaks of

Jesus says when the son of man comes in his glory and all the angels with him he will sit on his glorious throne all the nations will be gathered before him and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats he will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left then the king will say to those on his right come you who are blessed by my father take your inheritance the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world for I was hungry and you gave me something to eat I was thirsty you gave me something to drink I was a stranger and you invited me in I needed clothes and you clothed me I was sick and you looked after me I was in prison and you came to visit me then the righteous will answer him Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink when did we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes to clothe you when did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you the king will reply truly

I tell you whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine you did for me then he will say to those on his left depart from me you who are cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels for I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat I was thirsty you gave me nothing to drink I was a stranger you did not invite me in I needed clothes you did not clothe me I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me they also will answer Lord when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick in prison and did not help you he will reply truly I tell you whatever you did not do for one of the least of these you did not do for me then they will go away to eternal punishment but the righteous to eternal life so there will be a separation this should be much more

[47 : 23] I think on our minds than it is because the people that we love who have no interest in spiritual things who are getting on with their lives who are preoccupied with making more money and getting more of this and more of that and whose minds are full of the cares of this world if we love them we will tell them there is a separation coming there is a day coming where those who are in God's family those who are trusting in Jesus will be separated eternally from those who are not so what's important for us today is that we is that we trust Jesus so that we spend eternity blessed with him rather than cursed apart from him there there's a forced separation the next point is that there's a promised gathering and right through the book of

Genesis right through the story of Abraham's life there's continual reminders that God is a promise keeping God we're told verse 7 Abraham altogether lived 175 years then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age an old man and full of years and he was gathered to his people so the old age the good old age the full of years that was promised we could go back to Genesis 15 15 and we hear God say this and now when we get to the end of Abraham's life we see that God has done this he's kept his promise doesn't mean that every one of God's people will live to a good old age many don't but for Abraham that was a particular promise and God kept it his sons verse 9

Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Mach Pella near Mamre in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites and there Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah and we thought about this two chapters ago or two Sundays ago I think it's another evidence that God keeps his promises the place where Sarah was buried and now the place where Abraham is being buried is the land that God promised to him and so we see even in the burial place of Abraham that God's promises they are beginning to come true but there's more to see here and now the

Abraham dies but Abraham dies but between him dying and being buried he's gathered to his people so what does that mean well it means heaven■ so there after the loneliness associated with death.

So there's this beautiful picture of Abraham being gathered to be with his people, who are the Lord's people.

[51 : 48] We can see in our mind's eye, Abraham and Sarah, together, again, as they're in the presence of God. So there's the contrast here.

There's the forced separation for those who are not God's people, and that's a separation that's eternal. Because hell is a place of loneliness. There's no friendship in hell.

It's everlasting loneliness. No community. But then there's the promised gathering for those who are God's people, and that's a great comfort for us, especially tonight.

It's a great comfort to know that if we die trusting in the Lord, we will go to be with him and with all his people, his people also being our people, to a place where there is never again separation.

The apostle Paul said, for I am convinced, in Romans 8, that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present or the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us.

[53 : 15] us. Not me, he says. Us, he says. Us. Separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

What a promise is given to those who are in Christ Jesus. a promised gathering, and finally, an unfinished story.

After Abraham's death, verse 11, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer, Lahai, Roy. This is where we finish. This is where we sign off as we come to the end of the life of Abraham in this world.

But the thing to notice as we finish is that God's work goes on. Yes, he used Abraham in a huge way. But the story doesn't end with Abraham.

We're, you know, we're only there. And God's story, God's work, it keeps on going.

[54 : 27] God's story was not finished. And today, in a sense, God's story is still not finished. The work of salvation is finished.

Jesus has done it. But God's story will continue until Jesus returns. And until then, we have the opportunity to be part of that story.

And we are part of that story as we trust him and as we obey him and as we walk with him through time until he gathers us to himself and to be with his people for eternity.

it's an unfinished story. Are you part of the story? Are you in Christ Jesus? Are you and I saved?

Are we part of God's people? Are we trusting him? Are we obeying him? Let's pray. Let's pray.

[55 : 48] Lord, we thank you for the life of Abraham. We thank you for all these lessons that we learn. We thank you for the honesty and the truth of every episode that we read in his life.

And we pray that you would work in our lives. we see Abraham in Genesis 12 living apart from you with no word of the Lord.

And then God breaks into his life and calls him to follow. And perhaps there's some here tonight who are hearing that call to follow. And we ask, Lord, that you would give them the strength, the resolve to follow, the faith to follow.

Some of us perhaps look at our lives and we are conscious of the times that we have failed and times that we have strayed. And we ask for forgiveness for these times.

And we thank you that you are the God that does forgive us as we repent. We thank you that you are the God who is able to use us despite our imperfections just as you used Abraham.

[57 : 00] And we thank you that as we follow the life of Abraham through the generations it takes us to Jesus. And we praise you that Jesus is the Savior.

He is the one through whom there is everlasting blessing. And we pray that we would be found this evening in Christ and secure. And for those who are outside of Christ that we see and we feel burdened for seek them Lord we pray save them Lord we pray help us to reach out to them and to seek to share with them with our words and with our lives the truth of the gospel and the wonder of your grace.

And we pray this in Jesus name and for his sake. Amen. Amen. We'll sing to finish hymn number 694. I think we're singing this one unaccompanied.

Do we know who is going to be presenting? Yeah? You know? So we'll stand to sing this hymn The Sands of Time Are Sinking. It's a hymn that points us to that place where we are gathered Emmanuel's land.

The Sands of Time Are Sinking The dawn of heaven breaks The summer morn I sigh for The fair sweet morn awaits Dark, dark hath been the midnight But day spring is at hand And glory, glory dwelleth In Emmanuel's land O Christ He is the fountain The deep sweet well of love

[59 : 16] The streams on earth I've tasted O'er thee I've drank above There to an ocean And glory And glory His mercy Doth expound And glory, glory Dwelleth In Emmanuel's land With mercy And with judgment By web of time He woe And may the Jews Of sorrow Were lusted By His love

Going that When we oke Where glory weathered in Emmanuel's land.

I wrestled on towards heaven. In storm and wind and tide.

Not like a weary traveler. That leaveth on its tide.

Amid the shades of evening. While saints like slinging sound.

[61 : 17] I hail the glory dawning. In Emmanuel's land.

Amen. 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.