

25.6.23 am

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Date: 25 June 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning, a warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see quite a lot of visitors with us this morning as well and you're especially welcome. And if you're able to stay behind at the end of the service, there's tea and there's coffee that will be served.

I think the notices have been on the screen and we've got a number of notices just to highlight. First is to say that the service this evening will be a Gaelic service. We have a monthly Gaelic service at six o'clock.

There's a Gaelic Sam in the service this morning, but there's an exclusively Gaelic service at six this evening. And then at half past seven, there is the monthly informal fellowship. So all are welcome to that.

The teacher tonight is Kenny Ferguson taking the Gaelic service. Tomorrow there's a community lunch. We have a monthly community lunch, 12 till 2. If you're able to come along to that, please do so.

And in the course of the week, as usual, ladies fellowship, little fishes, road to recovery and the prayer meeting all over Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, usual places and the usual time.

[1 : 08] The services next Sunday will be at 11 and six o'clock. And the service in the morning will be a family service.

So it's the end of school term. I think school finishes on Friday, boys and girls, does it? Thursday. I'm told it's not Friday, definitely. It's Thursday. It's Thursday. So we'll have a family service next Sunday.

The children will be given a gift of a book and they'll probably sing and take part in the service in some way. I'm sure they'll have a plan for that this morning. So that's 11 o'clock. We'll also have a baptism next Sunday morning.

All being well. Christian and Anthony Latham's grandson, Lachlan, will be baptized in the service. So we can be praying for that in the evening service, a usual service.

There may well be a testimony in it. I hope to have a testimony, but I haven't confirmed who will do that yet. So you can all sit as uncomfortably as you like today. The last couple of things is to say that there is hoping to be a holiday club.

[2 : 20] There will be a holiday club this year and also holiday Sunday school. So if you're able to help with the holiday Sunday school, I think there's a sheet down in the vestibule. Please put your name to that.

And if you're able to help the holiday club, maybe have a word with myself or somebody else to just give indication of that. You might have got an intimation here.

I've never had one like this before. And today you might not think it's necessary. But we've had three weeks of bright sunshine. And the notices here are just giving us a wee prompt.

If the sun blazes and the rain doesn't fall and you're walking past with your dog, please think about the flower pots and give them a wee water over the summer months.

And the last thing is just to welcome new members into the congregation. It's beginning to have Richard and Emma Killer and Hannah and Ellie with us over the last year, I guess.

[3 : 20] But they have formally come into membership over the last week. So just a warm welcome into the congregation. It's good to have you as it was great to see Kenny Kuna come back into membership and also to have Natalie come into membership last Sunday for the first time.

So a warm welcome and a warm welcome to everybody as we come together and to worship God. We'll do so by singing to his praise. We'll sing from Mission Praise number 51.

The words are on the screen, Mission Praise 51. And it's that well-known hymn, Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of My Heart. So we stand to sing to God's praise.

We'll stand just a moment to sing to God's praise. Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of My Heart. Give me
Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart.

God, O Lord of my heart.

[4 : 54] Thou my true word. Thou my true word. I am with Thee, Thou with me, Lord.

Thou my great Father, I Thine true Son. Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle, shield, sword for the fight. Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight.

Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my might power. Praise Thou may be heavenward, O power of my
power.

Church, I heed not your hands empty grace, Thou mine inheritance, Thou and always.

[6 : 11] Thou art Thou only first in my heart, I King of Heaven, I treasure Thou art.

I King of Heaven, now the victory won, May I reach Heaven's choice, O bright and star, As of my
own heart was ever before, Still be my patient, O ruler of all.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Amen. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your
day, and we thank you for the words of the hymn that we have sung that remind us of who you are
and what you have done for us and what you continue to do for us in your grace and in your
blessing.

We thank you that you are the God who is good, and we thank you that you are the God who has
revealed yourself to us. And as we look out in creation, day by day, wherever we are, but especially
in this part of your creation, we are reminded of your power and of your glory, of your majesty, of
your goodness to us.

We thank you, Lord, that what we see around us is great beauty. We thank you that what we
experience in the air that we breathe is full of life.

[8 : 15] We thank you for the freshness, for the beauty, for the wonder, for the sense of awe that
we have when we stand up on a clear night, and when we see the stars, and we remember that you
are the God who threw them into space.

And when we look at the ocean and see and feel the power of that ocean, you brought all of what
we see into being with a word.

And even as we think of Jesus on the lake in the storm, a word from Jesus was able to take the
power of the elements and bring them to a stillness.

So we thank you, Lord, for who you are. We worship you. We praise you for who you are. In your
majesty, in your glory, in your holiness, and in your grace and mercy towards us.

We recognize and we confess, Lord, that we are sinners. We sin in our thoughts and in our words
and in our deeds. Our sin, as the psalmist said, is ever before us.

[9 : 28] And we recognize that because you are a holy God, you cannot look upon us when we are
full of sin. But we thank you that you have not left us, Father, in a hopeless state, where we are
estranged from you.

We thank you, Father, that you sent your son, Jesus, into this world to seek and to save sinners.

We thank you that he is the way and the truth and the life.

We thank you that he is the one who has made it possible for our sin to be taken away from us. We
thank you for his cross and the blood at Calvary that was shed.

We thank you that, as we often sing, that there is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from
Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

And so we pray that you would cleanse us from our sin. As we think of it, Lord, as we, in the silence
of our own hearts, confess it, we pray that you would cleanse us, that you would purify us from all
unrighteousness, and that you would take us from being enemies of God, those who are separated
because of our sin, to being friends of God, to being the children of God, those who are adopted
into your family through the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, your Son, our
Saviour.

[10 : 57] We pray that in all we do in this service, that Christ would be lifted up, that as we sing, we
would be singing praise from our hearts to you, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We pray that as we read your word, that we may have that sense of expectation that you will speak
to us, and we pray that there would be a humility in our hearts, a softness of heart, that we may be
responsive and ready to listen and to believe.

We pray, Lord, that even as we pray in the silence of this place, that you would guide us and direct
us, that our prayers would be in accordance with your will and led by the promptings of the Holy

Spirit.

We pray that this would truly be an hour where we gather together in worship, where we are encouraged by being one with another in the name of Jesus, that we pray that we may experience the promise of Jesus, that where two or three gather together in his name, that he will be with us. So we ask, Lord, that we would know that and that we would have the encouragement of that. We pray for others, Lord, who meet as we do in different places, the congregations that are around us, Lord, whatever Christ crucified is preached.

[12:18] We ask, Lord, that you would be adding your blessing to your word, that you would be building your church. We thank you for the many visitors that are with us today. We don't know them personally, but you know each person.

You know the congregations, the fellowships that they may be connected to. And we pray your blessing upon each congregation that we are connected to through them this morning. Lord, we ask, Lord, that you would be moving in the power of the Holy Spirit in all these places, across this land and across all the lands that the name of Jesus would be lifted up and many would be drawn to him.

We pray for our young people. We think of the youth conference that's happening just now in Lendrick Muir and the teenagers who gather there. We pray for Gordon as he oversees that work and we pray for Andy Longway as he preaches.

We ask, Lord, that these young ones at this early and important stage in their lives, we pray that they would trust in the Lord Jesus, that they would acknowledge the Lord Jesus and, Lord, that you would direct their path, that you would enable them to walk with you and bring glory to your name through their lives.

And, Lord, we pray that you would be with all those who are making preparation for free church camps and SU camps and every other Christian camp that is being organised.

[13:46] We pray for the summer holidays, that it would be a time where many young people are not hindered but are brought to Jesus and who know the blessing of the Lord Jesus upon them.

We pray not just for the young. We pray for those in the mid-years and those who are coming to the twilight years of life as well. We ask, Lord, that you would be moving in the power of your Spirit and as we think of so many people that you have connected us with through this life, we pray that we would be salt and light, that we would be reaching out to them in the name of Jesus.

We pray for the tent mission that happened in Point over the last couple of weeks as the faith mission have headed away from that area now. We pray that the seed that was planted would come to life, that you would be working in that place.

And Lord, we pray that you would be at work in all of our lives, that you would help us to remember that we are ambassadors for Christ if we are Christians and that every conversation is an opportunity to reach out to someone, whether in conversation or in prayer, for Jesus' sake.

We ask now, Lord, that you would continue with us. We pray for those in particular need this morning. We continue to remember those who are grieving and we ask, Lord, that you would comfort them, that you would come alongside them and grant them to know your compassion, your hand upon them.

[15:21] We pray for those who are sick, some who are at home, some who are at hospital perhaps, and we ask, Lord, that your hand of healing would be upon them and where there is no healing in this world, we pray for your grace and for your peace to be given to them.

We pray on for those who struggle with addictions and who wrestle with the desires of this world, the fleshly desires that all of us wrestle with, and we pray for your strength to be given to all those, especially those who are locked into particular addictions, Lord, break into their lives, we pray.

And we pray now that you would continue with us, that you would take away our sin and that you would help us as we've sang to have the Lord Jesus as our vision.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come out, please? Just for the visitors, the boys and girls usually come down for just now and then they go through to Sunday school after the next singing.

And there's a creche just through there. I see very little ones. I can't hear them. They're very welcome to be in the congregation for the whole time, but if at any point you want to vote, then there is an escape route out the side door there.

[16:45] So, how are you all today? Pardon? Very good. Good, good. As well, the rain is bad. Pardon? The rain is bad.

The rain is bad. Well, yeah. Yeah. The flare pots don't agree, but most of us, we like the sunshine, but I think there is sunshine coming this afternoon.

Anyway, it's quite good that you said that, Michael, because it's connected to my children's talk.

And we did. We didn't rehearse this. But I was thinking about last weekend.

And last weekend on Saturday, was it Saturday? I think it was Saturday. Do you remember what we did? We had a barbecue. And what was out in front? Bouncy Castle.

So, I think there is a couple of pictures coming on the screen on the Bouncy Castle. So, this is what happened. For those who weren't there, the weather was amazing in Harris the last few weeks.

[17 : 45] It was bright sunshine. It was beautiful. And so, a Bouncy Castle was organised. We were having a barbecue outside and everything was going great. And then the sky started to get a bit dark.

And I thought, oh, this could go badly wrong. And the burgers were getting cooked. Kuna was working furiously fast to try and get them all out. And we were all fed just in time.

And then there was a, I think there might have been a crash and the skies opened. And the rain came down and they were charging through with soggy rolls and wet sausages and all kinds of things. and the Bouncy Castle like the front.

And I thought, I thought, in my mind, once it starts raining, what a disaster. No one will go on the Bouncy Castle. Is that what happened?

What actually happened? Johnny? Everyone went on the Bouncy Castle. Before, there were some people on the Bouncy Castle.

[18 : 53] But then once it started to rain and they got slippery, everyone, I was trying to fight the elders off the Bouncy Castle. Everyone wanted to be sliding down the Bouncy Castle.

So there's Finlay in mid-flight there. That's very athletic there, Finlay. And Lois and Emily, I think, were in the last one. Absolutely soggy. So what I thought, I thought, once the sun stopped shining and once the rain came down, everybody would stop.

There'd be no more bouncing. But actually, what happened was, once it got a bit dark and rainy, you did a whole lot more bouncing than you did beforehand. And what that made me think of, it made me think of how God often works.

Because sometimes in our minds, we think that God is working good things in our lives when everything is going well. So when everything's calm, and we're not stressed out, and we're not, do you ever get worried?

Give your hand up if you ever get worried. I think we all get worried about things, don't we? And sometimes when we're worried about things, we start to think, is God really with us?

[20 : 09] Because this is going wrong, and that's going wrong, and I wonder where God is. But actually, when things sometimes are going wrong in our lives, and when we're a bit worried, and when we're maybe a bit stressed out, and we're sitting in our beds at half past eleven thinking, I have to be up in six hours' time, and I can't sleep.

You know, sometimes, at these times, God is really, really close to us. And sometimes, not when life is sunny, you could say, but when things start to rain, and things start to go wrong, sometimes it's that time that God is closest, and he's doing the most.

Think about people like Joseph. You know the story of Joseph, don't you? Remember all the things that happened in his life that were really difficult for him, and yet was God with him when he was in prison?

Yeah. Was God with him when he was getting accused of things he didn't do? Yeah. And God worked through Joseph in an amazing way, or think about Daniel.

When everything started going wrong, and a law came out where it said, Daniel, you can't pray anymore, and this is the end of you being a believer in God.

[21 : 38] A lot of people would have said, oh no, now nothing's going to happen. But actually God was working through Daniel even more powerfully in the hard time than he was when things were calmer.

And remember Shadrach and Meshach and Abednego? Remember what they did? Join, join.

Yeah, you remember the name.

Do you remember what happened to them? The huge furnace. Remember that?

And when that would have been happening, they would have been thinking, this is awful, I wonder where God is. And remember, three of them were thrown into the furnace, but how many people

could be seen inside him?

Four. Four. Because who was with them? God was with them. So sometimes what I want you to remember today is sometimes when it seems as if life gets a bit dark and rainy, we start to wonder, where is God?

[22 : 44] Is he with me? Is he able to do anything in my life? Remember, remember the bouncy castle. Remember all the activity in the bouncy castle when it was wet.

Well, God is active and he is with us. And sometimes he is doing amazing things even though we don't know it, when things are difficult in our lives. So let's keep on trusting him and let's ask him to be working in our lives just now.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are good and we thank you that you are with us and we thank you that you are always working. When life is calm and when things are going well, we thank you that you are working in our lives and when life gets a bit dark and when we get anxious and when we're worried about different things and when things start going wrong, we thank you that you're still working.

Sometimes you're working in an even more amazing way when things are tough and when things are easy. So help us, we pray, to trust you and we pray that you would be working in all of our lives. We pray for the young ones here, we thank you for them. Help them all to trust in the Lord Jesus, to have their sins forgiven and to be walking close with you and help them when sometimes they're worried like the big ones, the adults get worried as well.

[24 : 02] Help them to be trusting in you and we ask Lord that you would use them in school and at home and in different places to point other people to how good you are and how active you are in our lives.

So hear us and help us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing Mission Praise 1008, The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

And in the chorus it says, I will trust in you alone. Amen. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

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

His goodness restores my soul. And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

[25 : 18] For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

He has my ways in righteousness and he anoints my head with oil.

and my love is overflows with joy. I feast on his beauty lies.

And I will trust in you alone. And I trust in you alone.

For your endless mercy follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

[26 : 20] And though I walk the darkest path, I will not fear the evil one.

For you are with me and you're wrought and star. comfort I need to know.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

For your endless mercy follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

home. Okay, boys and girls, if you head through to Sunday school, and remember to pray for them as they go.

[27 : 18] you don't have to go.

Some of them much prefer the sermon. if we could turn please to 1st Peter chapter 4.

1st Peter chapter 4. And we'll read from verse 1. We've been going through this letter for a while now.

And we've reached chapter 4. It's entitled in the NIV Living for God. Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do, living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry.

[28 : 53] They think it's strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you, but they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.

The end of all things is near, therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

Above all, love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

[30 : 01] To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

We're going to sing again now to God's praise. We'll sing the first two stanzas of Psalm 40 in Gaelic. Psalm 40 and the first two verses.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty clay and on a rock he set my feet establishing my way.

These two verses we sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic. saying to thank you. Thank you.

[31 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

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

[34 : 11] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I must wait with expectation on you speaking into our lives.

We thank you that you have made it possible for us to be lifted from the mud and the mire, from the mighty pit of our own sin and hopelessness.

We thank you for Jesus, who is the rock of our salvation. And we pray now that as we take a few minutes and as we listen to this letter that was written by Peter, the disciple that we love, inspired by the Holy Spirit, we pray that you would speak into our lives, that you would guide us, that you would direct us, that you would correct us, rebuke us, encourage us.

Grant to us, Lord, the grace that we need to keep on keeping on if we are in Christ. And for anyone who is not yet in Christ, for anyone who has not yet given our lives to Jesus, we pray that even in these moments, we may not harden our hearts, but that there would be a readiness to respond in faith to Christ and to receive the grace that he so freely offers.

So hear us, help us, hear, Lord, and we pray for the children next door as we hear them. We ask, Lord, that you would minister into their lives and that they would hear the simple, profound gospel message in these moments as they gather together.

[35 : 47] So hear us and guide us and lead us, we pray. May the Holy Spirit himself be our teacher. And we pray this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Amen. I wonder how many calls you and I have responded to in the last week.

Every morning for most of us, there's an alarm call that it gets us up and going for the day. The phone, the landline, it rings still from time to time.

And we're to respond to that, we're to answer it when we get that call and we hear it coming through. The door in Harris, there's a few people who still knock a door.

Most of us just walk in. But when the door is knocked or when the doorbell goes, we respond to that one. There's the endless pings of our phones where we're called to attend to a whole ocean's worth of meaningless trivia, usually.

[36 : 58] There's the call of the child to respond, to the parent to respond, to give them the attention that they want, that they need. There's the call of the parent to the child to come and help with the dishes or clean your room or whatever it is.

Life is full of calls. There's the calling to work. We saw the building that went on fire in the course of the week. And some of us even in the congregation would have got a bleep round about our waist and had to respond to that call.

So life is full of calls and we know that we have to respond to them. And I wonder if we expect a call from God when we open his word.

I think that's a question that changes the way that we approach coming and sitting in this church or any other church.

Do we expect that God is going to call us personally through his word? Remember in the Old Testament, in 1 Samuel 3, Samuel and Eli, that story where God was calling this child.

[38 : 30] But both the child and Samuel, it took them a while to actually have that realization that God was speaking.

And we can be like that. One of the reasons that we fall asleep in church week by week, one of the reasons that we're reluctant to open our Bibles in the morning is because we don't have that sense of expectation that God is going to call us.

But that's the reality. God calls us. He addresses us. He speaks to us through his word in various ways.

And in this letter that the Holy Spirit has inspired, that Peter has written, God is speaking to us. So let's ask and pray that we will be responsive, that we'll have that sense of expectation that God is going to speak into our lives.

The first call that we can note in these verses is that we have a call to arms. We have a call to arms. Look at verse 1.

[39 : 45] Peter writes, Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also. And we're familiar with this kind of terminology.

Peter is using military terminology when he says arm yourselves. It's not something that's hard for us to understand. We can think back just a few weeks, a few months, maybe a year, to when Ukraine came under attack.

And they were called to arm themselves. And the surrounding nations that were perhaps a bit stronger than them around them were called to assist them as they were to arm themselves.

And Peter's making clear to us that if we are Christians, we are in a battle. And so we're to arm ourselves.

Paul makes the same observation in Ephesians chapter 6. Paul says, So through Peter and through Paul, two different letters, two different books, there is that call to arms.

[41 : 32] And Peter knows what it's like to be in the cut and thrust of spiritual warfare. Peter knew what it was to fall in battle. Peter had been on the front line with Jesus.

Peter had war wounds, you could say, spiritually speaking, to prove that he knew what it was to be in that spiritual battle. Satan had desired to sift Peter.

Jesus told him that. In Luke 22, remember these words, Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.

And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. And so now, 30 years after Jesus said that to Peter, the encouraging thing is to note that Peter is still in the fight.

And almost 2,000 years after this letter was written, Peter is still strengthening his brothers and sisters through the words that we're studying.

[42 : 54] So there's a call to arms here. And I want to just ask you the question as I ask myself the question, are you still in the fight?

Peter, all these years later, after having fallen and after having failed multiple times, he's still in the fight. So are you still in the fight?

You know, it's very easy just to give up. It's very easy just to go to sleep. It's very easy to shift down a few gears. But Peter is encouraging us to keep on keeping on.

Peter is encouraging us to get up, to stand firm, and to resist Satan, to call to arms. Jesus suffered in his body, said Peter.

And Peter witnessed that. Peter can remember the opposition from the religious leaders and the suffering that brought. Peter can think back to the crowds that turned so ferociously on Jesus and the suffering that was connected to that.

[44 : 03] Peter can remember the resistance, even from family and from fellow disciples. Jesus suffered in his body for our sake.

We can read about the temptations to yield to Satan as Jesus was driven out to the desert. We can think about the conversation where Peter was used by Satan to tempt Jesus to bypass the cross.

We can think about the wrestle in the Garden of Gethsemane as Jesus looked into the cup that our sins were poured into. And yet Jesus was determined to keep on keeping on to the end, to the cross.

Christ suffered in his body, said Peter. And our calling is to, not to the same degree, but certainly our calling is to follow Jesus, to be like her, to be in the battle, to resist Satan, to struggle in this

world for Jesus' sake.

So this is a call to arms. The second call that we can hear in this passage is the call to have the attitude of Christ.

[45 : 40] We see that in verses 1 and 2. Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude. Because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. So there's a call here to have the attitude of Christ.

And the attitude that we have determines the way that we'll live. Or to put it another way, the way that we think will determine the way that we act.

And Peter is saying here, have the same mind as Jesus, think in the same way as Jesus. And that's where everything begins. And that's where the battle begins, really.

And that's where it's fought most ferociously. It's in the mind. See, what we fill our mind with is so crucially important. And what we evict, what we don't allow to live in our thoughts is so important.

[46 : 53] Imagine you come into your house one day. To take a bit of a daft example. Imagine you come into your house one day and there on the carpet in front of you was a baby snake.

A baby cobra. Just that long. Very small, but you recognise that this is a deadly snake.

Something that can do life-threatening damage to you. If you saw that, what would you do? Well, I think most sensible people. If you were Brendan Latham, you'd probably invite the whole of Tarbert round and have a kind of party where we look at the wonders of this wonderful creature.

But for most of us who are not qualified in these things, if we saw a baby cobra on our carpet, just something small, we'd want to get rid of the thing while we still can. Because if you leave it until it grows and it's a metre long, it moves too fast for us to catch.

Its grip is too strong for us to be able to resist. Its bite is too deadly for us to even think about tackling it. And so, at the stage that we still can, when it's just at the small stage, we remove the thing, we evict it.

[48 : 10] And that's the way we're to think about sin. And that's the first thing that we can say about the mind, the attitude of Christ.

Peter highlights here in verse 1 that Jesus was, in his life, in his experience, as Jesus was watched by Peter, Jesus was constantly, continually done with sin.

We never see Jesus dabble with sin. In the way that some of us might have dabbled with sin in the last week. Just we sins.

They taste good. We like them. They give us some pleasure that we dabble with. We never see Jesus dabble with sin. He never entertains sin.

He never treats it lightly. He never jokes about it in the way that we hear sin being joked about week by week. Jesus was steadfastly, continually, seriously, done with sin.

[49 : 18] Think again about the temptation in the desert in Luke 4. We see Satan throwing everything at Jesus.

But Jesus did not give sin an inch. Every response to Satan's temptations was an expression of being done with sin.

resolved not to sin. Resolved not to sin. And that's what we're called to have as an attitude.

That same resolve, that same uncompromising, serious determination determination to put sin to death.

To be done with sin. Now, does that mean that we can be sinless? Well, no, it doesn't. Although, some have tried to argue that over the years.

[50 : 22] I read a story about Spurgeon, the Baptist preacher, this week. And he, he once met a man who was convinced that he, not Spurgeon, but this man himself, he told Spurgeon that he was sinless.

He had been a sinner in the past, but of late, he was, he was now living sinlessly. He no longer had that struggle. He was, he was done with sin in that, in that final sense.

And Spurgeon, listened to this man. He, his irritation levels were growing as he listened to this man talking about how sinless he was. So he said to the man, come round and have dinner with me today.

So the man came round to Spurgeon's house and they had dinner and everything was going well. Conversation was flowing. The atmosphere was good. And suddenly, Spurgeon reached for his glass of water and he threw it in the face of the man.

And the man was shocked. And then as the shock just died down, he was furious. And he exploded. And there was a tirade of words that should never have been said that spilled out of this man's, this man's voice.

[51 : 37] His face was beat with rage and Spurgeon just sat quietly. Half a grin on his face until the man had run out of steam and he'd calmed down.

And then Spurgeon said quietly, Ah, you see, the old man of sin within you is not dead. He'd simply fainted and could be revived by a cup of cold water.

See, in this world, we'll never be sinless. But Peter is teaching us day by day in our minds and our attitudes, we are to be determined, resolved to be done with sin.

as Jesus was. So maybe there's a sin that you have or that I have and it's like the baby cobra.

And we look at it and it's, oh, it's not that harmful, we say. It's not that big. It's not that out of control. I can manage this. Peter is saying to us, no, you can't. God, the Holy Spirit, is saying to us through his word, no, you can't.

[52 : 46] You need to be done with sin. Uncompromising in our determination to put it to death. Jesus was done with sin, highlights Peter, in terms of the attitude of Christ.

And the second thing that we see in the attitude of Jesus is that Jesus was determined to do the will of God. It's in verse 2. We have that line there that as a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

That's part of having the attitude of Christ. So the thoughts and the desires that distract us, the things that take us off track, the things that we know and recognize in our lives that take us off the path of God's will.

Jesus put these things to death every day. Every moment. So what takes you off the will of God? What takes you and I off the track of being on God's will? Well, I think we could probably say for many of us, it's busyness.

[54 : 02] Our work. We're busy. And that busyness takes us off the track of God's will. Think about Jesus.

Was he not busy in the carpenter's workshop? Or we can say, well, we can be distracted by the temptations of this world, the things that we see with our eyes, the things that we want to touch and taste.

These temptations, they take us off the track of God's will. Well, Hebrews 4.15 tells us that Jesus was tempted in every way just as we are.

Or we can be distracted by people. the reality of a busy family home. And all the fury and the busyness of family life.

That can be a huge distraction. The expectation of friends, the pull of the crowd. Jesus experienced all of that. See, Jesus knows all about our struggles and our distractions, that Jesus wasn't living to have his this-worldly desires fulfilled.

[55 : 24] Jesus was living hour by hour determinedly for the will of God. So every day in the carpenter's workshop, at the family dinner table, at a wedding feast, Jesus was willing to follow God's will.

He was determined to follow God's will. God's will. He was willing to follow God's will. He was willing to follow God's will. He was willing to follow God's will. Every morning as Jesus woke in this world, he approached it as a new day, another day to be lived for the will of God.

God's will. And that's the way we're to think. We're to be determined to be done with sin and we're to be determined as Christians to live for the will of God.

God's will. God's will. When we work, we're working for the will of God. As we eat, as we drink, it's for the glory, it's for the will of God.

As we rest, we're resting in order to do the will of God. as we pick up our phones, as we wrestle with human desires in our earthy lives, we're to ask the question as we pick up the phone, as we flick through a channel, as we walk this way or that way, is this going to help me or hinder me in doing the will of God?

[57 : 10] That's what it means to have the attitude of Christ. So we're called to arms, we're called to be in the struggle, to be in the cut and thrust of that spiritual warfare.

We're called to have the attitude of Christ. The third thing is we're called to assess how we live.

Peter, very bluntly in verse 3, says, For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do, living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable, idolatry.

So Peter there, he's giving us a verse by which we can assess our own lives. And the reality is there are people who are assessing how we live constantly. you know, if we are Christians, we are constantly being watched. And when people see the way that we live on Friday night and Saturday being inconsistent with what we profess to be on a Sunday, it's damaging.

it's damaging. And so Peter is saying, let's look into our own lives.

[58 : 46] Let's not look at the lives of the people next to us. But he's saying to us as the Lord's people, as Christians, let's look into our own lives and let's make an assessment of how we live.

And Peter, he asks us some very practical, very direct questions. And I suppose the overarching question he asks is, are you letting your senses and your passions rule in your life?

Or is Christ ruling? So what kind of senses and passions might we be struggling with that could be doing damage?

Spiritually? It could be greed. You know, where we eat what we don't need? It's one of my wrestles. You can see that from my shirt. We eat what we don't need because it feels good, tastes nice, it gives comfort. It could be a greed that is evident in us buying what we don't need.

[60 : 03] It just gives us that buzz when eBay says, yeah, you've got it. It could be lust. It takes us into relationships we shouldn't be in.

Or maybe it spoils the relationships that we already are in. takes us into websites we should be nowhere near. Maybe that's the rest of them.

It could be drink. Peter asks us the very direct question on this verse, do you get drunk? Do you host drinking parties?

It's the terminology of the ESV? Or do you go to these drinking parties that are hosted? That's a damaging recipe.

And all it really is wrapped up in the term idolatry. Because these are all things that we put above God and it does the damage.

[61 : 19] in our walk with God and in our witness. And so Peter's asking us the question here, do you have idols? Could be our work.

Everything else has to give way to it. Could be money. Could even be our children. And they come first above God, above everything.

So Peter is asking searching questions of you and I. And Peter is saying, if this is what your life looks like, if it's dominated by greed and lust and drink and idols and debauchery and drunkenness and idolatry, he says, you're living like pagans.

Christians. Not Christians. So that's what I see in my life as I hold up the mirror of God's word and I make a self assessment.

I don't know about your life. All I know is about my life. So if I hold up the mirror of God's word and this is what I see, what next?

[62 : 47] If what we're hearing through these verses is you're living like pagans, where do we go with that? Well, there's two ways we can go.

One is, it might be that we are pagans. We can't discount that possibility. It may be as we look in the mirror of God's word and we come under conviction that we are pagans and we never actually came to Jesus.

We just got a wee bit of religion in our lives and if that's the case, what do we do? We repent. And we tell Jesus about every sinful, guilty stain that we see in our lives and we ask for forgiveness and we come to him and we receive forgiveness.

We receive grace and we're saved maybe for the first time. Because before that it's just been religion. Or it might be that as we look in the mirror of God's word we realise that we have wandered out of that close walk with God.

And we've allowed sin and Satan to get hold. hold. And if that's the case then the medicine really is the same medicine. We repent. Sometimes it's very hard to tell the difference between a backsteading Christian and somebody who's not a Christian.

[64 : 22] And I wouldn't recommend that we spend a lot of time trying to analyse and calculate whether we are one or the other. The reality is the medicine is the same.

We repent. We tell the Lord about the sin that we see. We ask for his forgiveness. We look to the cross.

we come to him. Or we come back to him. So this is a cutting verse that calls us to assess how we live.

Peter's very Peter-like. He says to us, enough. Enough of the pagan living. You've spent enough time dabbling in sin.

You've spent enough time living for yourself. You've spent enough time indulging the flesh. It's time for us now to live for the will of God.

[65 : 34] To live for the glory of Jesus. God is very honest with us.

God is very honest with us. He tells us about the need to arm ourselves because there is a spiritual battle. It's not all meadows and soft music.

God is a call to have the attitude of Christ, to be done with sin, to be determined to do God's will. There's a call to assess how we live.

There's a call to holiness. There's a call to face abuse because when we fully surrender to Jesus, when we determine to live for the will of God, there will be resistance.

Take one example. Take the example of the drinking parties that the ESEV talks about. If we are people who suddenly, because we've heard God speak to us, we suddenly stop hosting drinking parties or we stop going to drinking parties, some people will not like that.

[66 : 56] And some people will have a go at us for that. The same people that phone up and tell about you behind your back for doing this, that and the next thing, if you stop doing these things, they'll be the first to go at you.

They think it's strange, says Peter, verse 4, that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation and they heap abuse on you. And that's what you have to expect if we're Christians.

We don't seek abuse, but if we're going to fully surrender to Jesus, if we're going to be determined to holy living, there will be abuse. we just have to accept it.

These believers in Turkey were about to face the most violent abuse that Christians had ever known. They would be thrown to the lions, they would be hung, they would be set on fire, they would be used as street lights on the streets of Rome, not Rome, but Jerusalem.

And Peter is saying, this is part of our calling. Jesus suffered abuse. The disciples back then suffered abuse, and if we follow Jesus, we have to be realistic about the fact that we have experienced some measure of abuse.

[68 : 20] So for those who are preparing to leave home, students, and go to university, if you don't give your amen to LGBTQ dogma, you'll be called strange.

Some people will abuse you with their words if you determine that marriage is between a man and a woman, singularly. If you hold fast to the teaching of Genesis that says God created male and female, expect abuse.

abuse. If you care about people enough to pray for them and tell them about Jesus and encourage them to come to church, you may well find that abuse will be heaped on you.

And Jesus isn't putting that in the small print. Through Peter, he's telling us up front, this is part of what it means to follow me. there is a call to face abuse.

And the final thing here is there's a call to accept Jesus. It's been a challenging message, I know that.

[69 : 39] And there's nothing in the small print. We're getting a gritty, real impression of what it looks like to be a Christian. It's a glorious life.

It's a life of great joy and peace and purpose, but it's not for the faint-hearted. It's a battle. It's a day-by-day, hour-by-hour battle.

And yet, the last thing that we see in this section as we go up to verse 6 is that there's a call to accept Jesus. Today, while you still can, there's a verse in Isaiah 55 which we often quote, and it says that the word of God will not return void, it won't return empty.

But our observation is that there are many times when the Bible is read, there's many services that I've attended and taken part in where the Bible, the gospel is preached.

And as far as I can see, there's been no impact. people leave the church unsaved, talking about work and the weather and football and everything else.

[71 : 13] So, what effect does the word of God have on these people that seem to be absolutely unaffected by what's read?

Well, Peter answers that question in verses 5 and 6. He says, they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

For this reason, the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. So, what does that mean as we finish? well, it means that when God's word is read and preached, it never does nothing.

It always does one of two things. And for those who believe, it saves them. God's need to believe, we see our sin, and we see Jesus, and we see our need of Jesus, and we call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and we're saved, through the word of God, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

[72 : 40] But for those who don't believe, the word of God that was read and preached, it becomes the standard through which they will be judged.

Those who turn from Jesus, week by week, and those who turn on his people, it may look in the present tense as if nothing happens to them, but Peter reminds us, they will have to give an account.

They will have to stand before God, and face his judgment. And Peter says in verse 6, there are many who are now dead.

They were once alive, they once heard the gospel, they are now dead. They had many opportunities to accept Christ, but they rejected him, and they will be judged for every time that they refused him.

That's a serious, that's a solemn word. Those who are now dead will be judged for every opportunity that they wasted, every time they walked out the door of a church, saying, not today.

[74 : 15] That will become the basis, that will become the standard that they are judged on. Now, today we are still alive, and today the gospel is still being preached.

gospel, well, it's the good news about Jesus, that he lived the perfect, sinless life that we cannot live, and that he died the sinner's death that you and I deserve to die, and he rose from the dead, and he calls us to repent, and he calls us to turn from sin, and to believe in him, and be saved.

That's the gospel. You've now heard it. So what will you do with it? If you do nothing, then this message will be added to the portfolio of evidence that will be held against you for judgment.

And what Peter is telling us is don't leave it to them. Don't push the gospel away.

Don't resist Jesus again, and again, and again, until you have to face him as judge. Rather, accept Jesus today.

[75 : 59] Believe in him, and be saved. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, and we thank you for the clarity of it. for those of us who are Christians, we feel the challenge of it.

We confess, Lord, that we often fall far beyond our standards, never mind your standard. And we pray for forgiveness.

Help us, we pray, to be in the fight, not acquiescing, but resisting the enemy. we pray. We pray that you would help us to have that attitude of Christ, that day by day we would determine to be done with sin, to put the old man of sin to death, and to live for your glory.

Help us, Lord, we pray, not to be those who are bad witnesses, that help us, we pray, to live lives that will point other people to Jesus.

[77 : 24] And we know that we can't do that perfectly or even very well. We help us in some measure to have something of the fragrance of Christ about us to be salty, to be light.

And give us determination, we pray, and when the going gets tough, when there is the temptation to compromise, help us to stand firm, to hold fast to your word, to reach out with the gospel message.

We pray for everyone here, Lord, as we hear the gospel message once more, we have that privilege that many countries in the world don't have. We have heard that Jesus lived and died and rose to save us from our sins and calls us to accept him, to receive that grace, to be saved.

Enable each one of us, we pray, to accept Christ, not to resist him, not to put this message off, but to embrace him as saviour. And we pray that none of us would have to face that day of judgment outside of Jesus, where we are judged on the opportunities that we spurn.

So help us, Lord, we pray. Holy Spirit, take your word, plant it in our lives and our hearts and help us to respond in a way that will bring salvation to our souls and glory to your name.

[78 : 57] We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude the words on the screen. We have sung this before, we don't know very well, so Angus will play it through once, the verse and the chorus, and then we'll stand to sing.

If you know it, sing out, please, and let's sing to God's praise. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Why? When I go lost, when I am free I know His grace, through His will, His grace The Lord is our salvation Through His life, the Lord I call Strong to save me, who He is wrong I know that it is His name, the Lord I call

[82 : 42] The Lord is my salvation And now 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