

9.7.23 am

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see quite a number of visitors with us 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 coffee served in here, so it would be good to get the chance to have fellowship together.

The notices have been on the screen beforehand. I'll just take a second to flick through them. The evening service tonight will be at six, and I'll lead that service. I'll say a very short word. I promise I will.

And then there'll be a testimony from Dan Marig, as we know him. So be encouraged to come out this evening and to hear Dan share of how he came to know the Lord and how the Lord has walked with him through the years.

Ladies' Fellowship tomorrow. Little Fish is on Tuesday and Road to Recovery on Tuesday evening. Prayer meeting on Wednesday in person and on Zoom.

And the services on Sunday, 11 and 6 as usual. I and us as a family, we head away on holiday tomorrow morning, hopefully.

[1 : 11] And during the time that I'm on holiday, Pat, I'll say Pat and Wilf, I don't know why. Wilf will be taking the services, although Pat, I imagine, will have an input.

But Wilf and Pat will be in the manse for the three weeks. And Wilf will be taking the services Sunday and Wednesday. So you can pray for them as they prepare to come over.

They'll be over on Tuesday and over for the three weeks. If there's any pastoral issues, then you can speak to Wilf or any of the elders. If you're needing to see a minister specifically, then Ian McCritchie is on standby.

So if you speak to one of the elders, they can put you in touch with him. And the last thing is just to say that we're hoping to have a holiday club 7th to 9th of August.

And we're still looking for some helpers for the holiday club to make that possible. So if you're able to help, please give your name to either Duncan or David Cameron just in the next three weeks.

[2 : 14] And we'll, when we get back, see how many people we have on the list. And hopefully we can proceed with that ministry. And these, I think, are all the notices.

So let's begin this time of worship now. And we'll sing to God's praise. We sing from Mission Praise 522. And the words are on the screen.

We sing about the deep, deep love of Jesus. So the deep, deep love of Jesus. Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free.

O'er the deep, deep love of Jesus.

Vast, unmeasured, unblest, free. Rolling as the mighty ocean.

[3 : 27] In His fullness over me. Underneath me, all around me.

Is the garden of my life. Leading onward, leading homeward.

To my glorious rest of all. Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus.

Spread His grace from shore to shore. How He loveth, ever loveth.

Change and never, nevermore. How He watcheth for His love once.

[4 : 46] Thou, the deep, deep love of Jesus.

Love of Jesus. Love of every love of the best. Tis thine ocean, vast of blessing.

Tis my heaven, sweet of rest. For the deep, deep love of Jesus. For the deep, deep love of Jesus.

Tis the heaven of heaven to me. And it lifts me up to glory.

For it lifts me up to thee. Let's unite our hearts in prayer together.

[6 : 21] Let's pray. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day.

And we thank you for the wonder of these gospel truths that we're able to sing together. We thank you for the love of Jesus. We thank you for the love of Jesus. We thank you for the love of Jesus. We thank you for your great love for us.

We thank you for that love that has been shown to us in so many different ways. As we look around us in this world, the beauty of this environment that we are in.

It speaks to us of your glory and your majesty, of your creative power. But also of your love towards us that you would allow us to enjoy such a beautiful place to be in.

We thank you, Lord, for your word and for these truths that we're able to sing of. Our truths where your love is made very clear to us.

[7 : 28] We thank you that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. That whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

We thank you for the vastness of the love that you have for us that we see as we go to the cross week by week. As we are taken once again to Calvary where we see our sin being paid for.

And your forgiveness, your grace being offered to us. We thank you, Lord, for the wonder of love that we see in Jesus, your Son, our Savior.

This is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. And as we look to Jesus, as we do each week as we gather, we thank you that in all his actions, his reactions and the way that he ministered to people in this world, we see the gentleness and the grace and the pure love that flows from the heart of God.

And we thank you that such was the love of Christ that he laid down his life. So that we can be forgiven. So that we can enjoy rest in this world.

[8 : 58] And rest beyond this world, which is full and eternal when we are in him. So we ask, Lord, that you would give to us faith. That we would be enabled to see these truths with our eyes.

That we would feel something of the touch of your spirit on our hearts. And Lord, that we would believe and be saved.

We pray, Lord, that as we take a short while this morning to be still and to be in your presence, we ask that you would minister to us. That none of us in this room would be questioning whether or not you love us.

And we ask that each one of us would hear the call of Jesus to come and find rest and forgiveness and life in him. We pray for the young ones.

We thank you, Lord, for them. We thank you that they've got a few weeks to enjoy holidays. And we ask that you would keep them safe on this holidays. And we ask, Lord, that they would take time to read their Bibles and to pray.

[10 : 08] And Lord, that some of them would even come to know you for the first time on this holidays. We pray for those who are not with us today. Some who are already at camps. Some who are heading to camps.

And we ask, Lord, that as they take time away from home for a week that they would be safe, that they would have fun. And Lord, that they would hear the message of Jesus in a way that's simple, in a way that they can understand.

And we ask that they would believe, that they would begin to follow Jesus in their early years. We pray for the holiday club as we've spoken of that. We ask that there would be enough of us who are able to give of our time and our gifts to be able to allow that to go ahead.

And we ask that the children would come, as they have done each year. And that they would again hear something of the message of the Gospel through the words that are spoken.

And Lord, that they would experience something of your grace and your care through the way that they're treated. We pray for those who are struggling today. We think of those who are sick.

[11 : 22] We think especially of those who are in hospital. And we think in particular of Nanny, having had a turn on Wednesday of this week past. We ask, Lord, that as she is in hospital, that you would give to her that sense of your presence.

We thank you that you are the God who is with us wherever we are. And we pray that she and all those who are absent from us here today, but who would desire to be present, would know your blessing upon them and your ministry to them.

We pray for those who are at home. And again, who would love to be with your people, but who are struggling with infirmity and old age and illness.

And as we see them in our mind's eye, we pray for them. And we ask, Lord, that they would feel part of the congregation as they watch at a distance.

Lord, that you would draw near to them and that they would know your blessing. We pray for those who are struggling with addictions, those who are weighed down with anxieties.

[12:26] You know our hearts, Lord. You know our struggles. You know that all of us are struggling with something. All of us are sinners. And so we constantly need your forgiveness.

We constantly need your grace and your strength. And we pray for that for ourselves and for others also. We pray for our country, this nation that once was known for our love of your word, and now is known for our turning away from your word.

Lord, have mercy upon us, we pray. Draw us back to yourself. And we pray for those that you've allowed to be in authority over us. Lord, as we bring them to your throne, we pray that they would bow before your throne.

That they would seek wisdom that comes only from you. And Lord, that we as a nation would repent and return to a close walk with you. And across the world, as we see of wars and rumors of wars, as we see so much suffering and so much brokenness, we ask, Lord, that there are those who are in desperate circumstances, that you would minister to them.

We thank you that through our prayers, we can reach to some degree these places, these people that we have never met and perhaps never will. But we ask, Lord, that as we pray for them, that you would minister to them.

[13:51] And that you would put your people around them. That they would know your touch on their lives. We thank you that although we see so much brokenness in this world, we have the promise that one day soon Jesus will return.

There will be the end of all things as we know them. And there will be that promise of the new heavens and the new earth, where there's no sickness and sadness, no war, no brokenness, no divisions, no factions, no sin, no Satan.

But you are at the center and there is unbroken blessing. So come, Lord Jesus, we pray and make us ready for that day.

And we pray all these things in Jesus name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? There's a holiday Sunday school today.

I don't know if there's visitors here who might not be sure what's happening. But there's a holiday Sunday school. So the primary school kids will go through to the Sunday school after this hymn.

There's a creche just through there.

[15:05] So if anybody needs to go there, then you're welcome. But there is an age limit on it. If you're over the age of 12, you're not going through to the creche. I'm seeing Olivia pointing, so I want to go through that door.

But I don't want to see any of the grey heads pointing either. How are you today? Good. Good. Are you enjoying your holidays? Yes. Any plans for the holidays? What are you going to do?

Going away? Are you going to stay here? Stay here. Unless there's any surprises. Unless there's any surprises. He's looking over, hopefully.

Henry. He's going to go to France. He's going to go to France, but there's all that mayhem over there. I think you could probably sort it out, Henry. Oh, yeah. Well, that's fun.

But that's a shame. We'll pray for France. Yeah, but instead of going to France, I might be going to go to France. Excellent. It's out there now. Good stuff.

[16:07] Good stuff. Anything else? Anyone else going away? Any news? No? Lois is off to Keswick. Yeah. Emily, you are too. I might be heading to the other side of the world.

Where? The other side of the world. The other side of the world. Barbus. Barbus. Oh, right. Yeah. Yeah. I'm always counting Michael for a comedy moment.

Okay. I've got something to show you today. If I can find it. And do you know what this is? Medal. Medal. It's a medalist for yesterday's half marathon. I told you to make a children's talk about that.

You told me to make a children's talk about this, yeah? Yeah. So, it's a medal for the half marathon, which was on yesterday.

And there was about 200 people who ran it. Some people ran it really fast. Most people ran it a fair bit faster than me. Mags probably should hate me to point it out, but she might be in the room.

[17:12] She did it faster than me. I think everyone almost did it faster than me. But everybody who finished got the same medal. And it was a good day, but it was hard.

Because the sun was really hot yesterday. And the wind was hard. And when we were coming to the end, you start away over at Barb, as you know, and you run into Tarborough. And when we were coming to the end, Angus and I were running together. And we were at the wall just outside the church. And we were puffed out. And we were struggling. And it was hard work. And so, you know one thing I was thankful for? And all of us who were running were thankful for it on the day. We were thankful for encouragement. Because there were some people who were standing at the side and they were saying, Come on, keep going. They had different parts and they had glasses of water. It was a wee girl, I don't know who she was, who gave me two squashes.

[18 : 15] Gave me a wee bit of sugar to keep me going on the Lusk and Tar hill. Christy, is Christy here today? No? No, none of them here today. Christy, at one point, drove past and shouted out the window of the car, Come on David, keep going, keep going.

I think she thought it was about to stop. And Stuart was on his bike and he was giving us the offer of fruit juice. Marian and James were sitting on the wall shouting things that I couldn't hear. I think they were encouragement. And Michael was with them as well. But do you know what Michael did? That gave Angus and I probably more encouragement than any of the other encouragement we got.

Nothing. No, it's not. He didn't do nothing. He did. Do you know what he did? Well, he shouted at first. And then he got off the wall and he started to jog along with us.

He jogged along the road and I think he went almost all the way down Pier Road. And he kept talking to us with his hat on and his big smile. And he was encouraging us to keep on going.

[19 : 25] So Michael, especially, helped Angus and me, I think, over the line. And so, thank you, Michael, for the encouragement. Now, the Christian life, we're told in the Bible by Paul, it's a lot like a race.

It's like running a race. And it's not like running a quick dash that lasts for just a few seconds. It's like running a half marathon or a full marathon or many marathons.

And sometimes it's hard work. Just like the long half marathon was hard work. Sometimes it's hard work to be a Christian. Sometimes it's hard work to keep on going, to keep on going in the race.

Now, here's a question for you. Are you listening? Why do we come to church? Emily?

To listen to God. To listen to God, yeah, that's one good answer. Keep going. To walk with God. So we can listen to him in the Bible.

[20 : 39] To find out more about God, yeah. So we come to God to listen. Come to church to listen to what God has to say.

Where do we hear what God has to say? Bible. We come to church to walk with God because he said that he wants us to walk with him. And that means that we read the Bible and we come to church and we pray.

Why else do we come to church? There's more reasons. You think? I'll open it out. Why do we come to church?

To worship God. To listen to him. To speak to him. Henry? To read the Bible, yeah. To encourage each other. To encourage each other.

So, when you're in church, maybe what you should be doing and I should be doing is looking for people who looked a bit like Angus and me yesterday.

[21 : 44] When we were running along at the end, I was sweating all the way down my front and all the way down my back. My face was beetroot. I was puffing and looking for a breath.

I was tired. I was a bit wobbly. I needed encouragement. I needed encouragement. And, you know, even in this room, there will definitely be people this morning who are feeling a bit tired.

You might be feeling a bit low. You might be finding it hard to keep on keeping on. And so, let's look out for each other.

Let's encourage each other. Let's encourage each other. Let's encourage each other to keep on keeping on. To keep on running the race.

To keep on following Jesus. Hebrews 10, 25. We'll finish with this. God says to us in this verse. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.

[22 : 52] And all the more as you see the day approaching. What day do you think we're talking about there? It's the day when Jesus comes back.

What day is that going to be? We don't know. But until that day, we keep on keeping on and we keep on encouraging each other. So, let's pray.

Lord God, we thank you for today and we thank you for us being able to meet together in this way. We know that there's lots of people around the world who are Christians who aren't able to meet together in this kind of way because it's too dangerous.

It's against the law. And we pray for them. That you would help them and that you would encourage them. And that you would give them the strength to keep on going. We thank you that we are here and we're in a safe place.

We don't have to worry about the police coming in and stopping us. We don't have to worry about getting into trouble for being here. We thank you that we have the freedom to meet together in this way.

[23 : 59] And we ask, Lord, that you would help us to worship you. And that our minds wouldn't be all over the place thinking about other things. But help us to be listening for your voice.

Help us to be speaking to you in prayer. Help us to be walking with you. And we ask, Lord, that you would help us not to rush out the door at the end as fast as we can.

But to just hang around for a wee while. And to try to speak to each other. And to try to encourage each other. You know, Lord, the people who might feel a bit low.

You know, the people that might feel a bit tired or a bit anxious. They might feel a bit wobbly. And we ask, Lord, that you would help them and that you would help us to help them.

As we speak to them. And as we seek to encourage them. As maybe they also will encourage us. So be near to us today. Bless the boys and girls. Help them to have a great holiday.

[24 : 57] And to know that you are close to them. And we pray for those who are going away. That you would keep them safe. We pray for France. As Henry was speaking about France. We ask, Lord, that you would stop all the chaos that's happening over there.

And that you would bring peace where there's trouble. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now. And we're going to sing Mission Praise 673.

There is a Redeemer. Jesus, God's own Son. Precious Lamb of God, Messiah. O Lord, that you are. There is a Redeemer. Jesus, God's own Son.

Precious Lamb of God, Messiah. O Holy One. Thank you, Lord. Jesus, God's own Son. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. And we pray for you. Thank you, Lord. We pray for the Lord. We pray for you.

[26 : 03] O my Father, forgive us your Son, and we bring your Spirit's will, the work on earth is done.

Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names, precious Lamb of God, Messiah, O for stills name.

I thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son, and we bring your Spirit's will, the work on earth is done.

When I stand in glory, I will see His face, and then I'll serve my King forever in the holy place.

Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son, and we bring your Spirit's will, the work on earth is done.

[27 : 51] Okay, boys and girls, if you want to head through to Sunday School now, please. Amen. And if we could turn in our Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 4.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. 1 Peter chapter 4.

Just a short reading this morning. We'll read from verse 7 to verse 11 of the chapter. This is God's Word.

Amen. 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.

[29 : 23] If anyone speaks, 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.

To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. Amen. And may God add his blessing to his word.

We're going to sing again now to God's praise. And we will sing this time from Psalm 32 and the first two verses of the Psalm in Gaelic.

Psalm 32, the first two verses in Gaelic. I'll read them in English. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not to sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile nor fraud is found therein. These two verses we sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic.

[30 : 28] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

Thank you. Thank you.

[32 : 42] I could have noticed more I could have noticed more I could have noticed more I could have noticed more

I could have noticed more if you could turn back please now to the passage that we read in 1st Peter and just as we go there let's again pray Lord God we thank you for your word we thank you that as the children were saying we are able to hear you speak to us through the words that we have read.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit who has inspired these words to be read who moved the hand of the Apostle Peter as he wrote this letter to these Christians in Turkey all these years ago.

And we thank you that that letter is still a letter that is relevant to us here today. We thank you that that was always part of the plan that the letter would be preserved and passed on and used to teach and encourage and instruct and correct and rebuke even us here in this place today.

So we ask that you would help us. We pray Holy Spirit that you would be our teacher. that you would open our eyes and block our ears. That you would open our eyes and block our ears. Stir our hearts and minister to us in such a way as to bring those who are outside of Christ into Christ.

[35 : 38] And those who are in Christ we pray that you would make us more like Jesus. So hear our prayers. Help us as we come to you. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. It's week one of the summer holidays for the young ones.

And the kids, I think you can sort of see even in their faces this morning, they're loving it. The stage of the summer holidays is a great time.

They're out playing football. They're out doing whatever it is that they're doing. Playing with their friends. Enjoying every day. It's week one of the holidays. Where are their homework packs? Who knows? Who cares? There might be homework due at some point. There might be exams sometime in the future. But it's weeks away. So it just doesn't cross their minds.

[36 : 39] It doesn't cross their radar. They have no sense of that. And so what might be due sometime in the future doesn't affect today. Six weeks away.

And you can remember summer holidays, that seemed like an eternity away. But if we fast forward six weeks in time, and if we think about how the kids will be then, they'll be starting to think a wee bit about school.

You know, they'll be thinking, does that uniform still fit me? Am I happy with these trainers that my mother bought me from Arx and Spencer's? I don't think so. Do I need a new school bag?

Am I needing a uniform? Was there projects that were due? To try to remember back to the teachers that were cruelly passing documents out at the end of term.

Was I supposed to be revising for a test? See, week six, you're thinking differently. When the end of the holidays is near, you start to think about what's next.

[37 : 49] And Peter begins this section that we read this morning by saying, the end of all things, verse seven, the end of all things is near.

So what does Peter mean when he's talking about the end of all things? Well, Peter is thinking about the end of time. He's writing about the return of Jesus.

And Peter was there in Acts chapter one. We've got the record of it. He and the other disciples, they were there when they saw Jesus ascend into heaven.

But Jesus promised to return. And with the return of Jesus comes the end of all things as we know them.

And Peter, in this short section that we read, he's telling us that we need to be ready for the end of all things. And he's teaching us about how we can be ready for the end of all things.

[38 : 58] So there's four points, four lessons that Peter gives us as we are to be prepared, as we're to be ready for the end of all things. The first thing is we're to pray.

We're to be given to prayer. The second thing is, he's writing to Christians. Remember, he's writing to a church fellowship, or those who are scattered across into various small church fellowships across what we now know as Turkey.

So he says to them, pray, give yourselves to prayer. He says to them, love each other and love each other deeply. And the third thing he says is be hospitable.

Open your homes, open your lives to each other. And the last thing he says is minister to each other. So that's the kind of structure for our thoughts as we go through these few verses.

So the first thing is we are taught here, as we see the end of all things in view, in the future, we are taught to pray.

[40 : 03] Verse 7, I think one of the greatest motivations for us to pray is the end of all things.

The prospect of meeting Jesus. That moves us, that drives us to pray. When we have eternity in our minds, when we have a sense of the fact that there's more than this world, we're moved to pray.

Conversely, when our minds and our lives are just full of this world, and full of just the here and now, our prayer life starts to deteriorate. So if we have at the forefront of our minds that Jesus is coming back, or that Jesus will perhaps one day soon call us home, as we think about that meeting with Jesus, we are moved to pray.

And Peter is making that connection. He says the end is near. The end is approaching, literally. So you can pray. And you know, that's where the Christian life begins.

It begins with a prayer. We can't be saved. We can't become Christians. Unless we pray. And when God starts to work in our lives, the Holy Spirit, He starts to show us the fact that we are sinners.

[41 : 50] If you know that you're a sinner this morning, God is at work in your life. But then as we see our sin, and as we start to have concern about the sin that's in us, we start to look for a Savior.

And the Holy Spirit, He spotlights Jesus. He opens our eyes that we would see Jesus, the wonder of Jesus, the glory of Jesus, the work of Jesus. All of a sudden we start to understand why Jesus came, what the cross is about.

And God is working in our lives when we're seeing these things. When we see our sin, when we start to see that Jesus is the Savior, God is at work in our lives. He is calling us to Himself.

He is calling us to become Christians. But we can't become Christians until we pray. You can be sitting here this morning and know that you're a sinner and understand that Jesus came to seek and save sinners and understand that He went to the cross to pay the wages of sin and understand that on the third day He rose from the dead.

You can understand that salvation is offered to all. You can have that intellectual understanding and be sitting in these chairs this morning and be outside of Christ because you've never prayed and asked Jesus to forgive you.

[43 : 28] So the Christian life begins on the day that we call upon the name of the Lord. We pray.

And it doesn't need to be a big long prayer. It can be the prayer that we read in Luke chapter 18 and verse 38. Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

Jesus said that man who prayed that prayer is justified, he's forgiven, he's saved, he's a Christian.

Or it could be the prayer of the thief on the cross who at the very end of his life recognizes that he's a sinner, that Jesus is the Savior, and he simply says to Jesus, remember me.

Jesus says today, you're going to be with me in paradise. So how can we be saved? We can be saved by calling on the name of the Lord.

And how do we call upon the name of the Lord? We pray. So can I ask you that very blunt, Peter-like question?

[44 : 42] Have you prayed? Have you prayed? Have you asked Jesus to have mercy on your soul? To take your sin away?

To give you salvation? Have you said to Jesus, will you remember me? The end of my life. Will you give me heaven?

Will you will you take me away from hell? Will you save me? And if you haven't prayed, you haven't asked for that, do it now.

You don't have to wait another minute. You don't have to leave the room. You don't have to leave your chair. You can just pray. The end of all things is near.

We don't know how near it is for any of us. But if we are to be prepared to meet with Jesus, if we are to be saved, if eternity is to be bliss for us and not torment, we need to pray.

[46 : 05] So have you prayed? And then to those who are Christians, are you and I still praying? Because there can be seasons in our lives as Christians and our prayer life all but dries up.

and our souls start to wither. So are we praying? You know, it's the easiest thing to do and yet it's also the hardest thing to do.

I mean, how many times have you and I sat down to pray and the phone buzzes or the landline rings or the door opens and somebody walks in or the dog goes crazy or the kids start fighting? These things are not coincidences. These are the challenges that the enemy sends into our lives to get us off our knees. It's easy to pray but it's hard to pray.

How many times have we had every intention all through Wednesday to come to the prayer meeting? But every possible thing that could go wrong on Wednesday does go wrong.

[47 : 15] And we find that once more we've missed it. See, Peter knows how difficult it is to pray and so he gives us a couple of tips. He says, be clear-minded, verse 7.

Literally what he's saying there is be watchful. Where do you think Peter first learned that lesson? Well, it was Gethsemane.

Matthew 26, 41 as Jesus is coming very, very close to the cross. Jesus takes Peter into Gethsemane and he says, watch and pray so that you may not enter into temptation.

Did Peter pass that test? Did he take the lesson? No, he didn't. Peter didn't watch. He closed his eyes. He didn't pray.

He slept. And very soon Peter fell not just asleep but he fell into sin. So Peter, when he says to us, be clear-minded, be watchful, he's sharing with us a lesson.

[48 : 36] Don't worry, we like to hear Lachlan. So when Peter, he shares this lesson with us, be clear-minded, be watchful, he's sharing with us a lesson that he learned the hard way.

And then he says, be self-controlled, literally be sober, be serious about prayer. And that's a, that's a, a convicting word perhaps for, for many of us because, for many of us, we're, we're serious about lots of things.

you know, we're serious about the, the things that we eat in our diet. We're serious about how much exercise we get. We're, we're serious about doing our work well.

We're serious about spending time with our, our families. We're serious about the way we look. But are we serious about prayer? Or do we prioritize prayer?

Do we structure our lives and our days in order that we can be sure that we have time to pray? Peter says, you need to be serious about prayer.

[49 : 57] And again, he's learned this lesson the hard way. Be clear-minded, he says, be watchful, be self-controlled so that you can pray.

he's saying this because it's as we pray that we are made ready for the end of all things. When we meet with Jesus as hopefully the Savior that we have cried out to and the Lord that we have walked with and talked to.

So the first thing Peter says is pray. The second thing he says is love each other. Now, if we think about even within our own family contexts, if a parent goes out and leaves two or three teenagers in the house, then the way the conversation usually goes as they head out for the evening is, be back soon, if there's any hassle, just phone, now behave.

no fighting, no falling out, no trouble. And if the parent comes back a couple hours later and finds that there's a barney going on, there's a big fight and everyone's at each other's throats, they're far from happy.

Now, here's a question. If the end of all things was to come for us today, if today was the day that we were called to stand before God our Father, how would he find us in relation to our brothers and sisters?

[51 : 48] Are we at peace with each other? Are we loving each other? Peter tells us that if we're to be ready for the end of all things, we're to love each other.

Above all, he says in verse 8, love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins. So, this instruction, it's not an optional thing, it's a priority thing.

This is an above all issue, not an if you get time to look at it, ish. We're to love each other. And it's not this kind of sentimental, slushy love of convenience that kind of comes and goes, that we're not all that serious about.

This is deep love. This is fervent love as it has it in the King James version. It's a determined love. It's hard working love.

It's costly, sacrificial love. It's God's love. The word that's used in the Greek is that word *agape*, which is God's love. It's the kind of love that covers over a multitude of sins.

[53 : 14] It's the love that David spoke of when he wrote Psalm 32. At verse 1, it says, blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

It's God's love that makes that possible. And that's the love that we're called to love each other with. And note, you know, when David and when Peter write these words about the love that covers over a multitude of sins, they're not talking about a cover-up.

love. Because as we think about Peter's life, we know all about the fact that Peter denied Jesus three times. We have the whole sorry story.

And as we think about David, who's giving thanks for God's love in Psalm 32, we know all about David's adultery. We know all about his murder. God did not sweep these sins under the carpet. But there wasn't a cover-up. These sins were not hidden from us. They were very clearly told to us in the Bible.

[54 : 31] But Peter and David, they confessed their sin openly. And very publicly, I was thinking about that as I was preparing.

The confession of sin on the part of Peter and David is such a public thing. We have the whole document. We have the whole story.

We have the whole prayer. But these sins, as gruesome as they were, and as public as the confession is, they're forgiven.

forgiven. That's the blessing. They are covered by the blood of Jesus. They're not covered up, but they're covered over.

They're not hidden from us. They're shown to us, and then we are told that in spite of everything that happened, they're forgiven. covered by the blood of Jesus.

[55 : 46] We so often sing that hymn, there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

Not some of them, not just the low-level sins, not just the secret sins, but the big public disgraceful, shocking sins covered.

All the guilty stains are gone. Now, why would God do this? That's the question. Why would God forgive me for all the dark stains in my heart?

Why would God forgive us for all the disgraceful things that we cringe when we think back on? And the answer is love.

It's the only answer. You can keep going back and back and back, but we will eventually get to the answer, love. It's God's love for us.

[57 : 03] It's the deep, deep love love of Jesus for us. And Peter is saying to us in this short section, if this is the love that we have been shown, then this is the love that we are to share.

If this is the love that you and I have received from God, that love that covers over the multitude of our sins, then this is the love that we are called to give to each other.

How unlike Jesus we are when we dig up old sins and we throw them at each other, as we do, especially in marriages, things that are long since confessed, forgiven.

In the heat of the moment, we dig them back up and we throw them. How unlike Jesus that is. How painful it must be for Jesus to see us to refuse, for Jesus to see us refuse to love each other, because we are fixating on the sins that he's forgiven, that he's paid for at the cross.

Proverbs 10, 12 says, hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses. So if we are to be ready to, if we are to be ready for the end of all things, we need to love each other.

[58 : 56] With that deep, fervent, earnest, forgiving, God-given love. One commentator says, love covers a multitude of sins, means that we don't go around looking for faults in others, and that we do go around seeking to think the best of others, and we don't spend our time lingering over the past flaws of others, we always stand ready to forgive one another.

After all, he says, the end is near, and we are going to live with our brothers and sisters for eternity. That's a thought, isn't it?

If we're Christians, we are going to live with each other for eternity. eternity, so we need to start living with each other in time.

We're going to love each other eternally, so we need to start loving each other presently. Pray, says Peter, love each other.

Thirdly, be hospitable. verse 9, offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

[60 : 25] And this in many ways is like the practical expression, it's the practical follow-on from the exhortation to love each other. Because we can express our love for each other as we show hospitality.

hospitality. We can express our love for each other as we open our homes and our lives to each other. Now let's stop for a second and think back to Turkey in AD 63.

Let's think back to the day that this letter was first read and taken in. This letter was read to small gatherings of Christians who were beginning to feel the first bite of persecution.

There were no church buildings. So if church was going to happen, homes had to be opened. And because persecution was just beginning to bite, if you opened your home, if people recognized that your home was a house church, there was the risk of hassle and all kinds of danger.

And yet Peter says to them, be hospitable. Open your homes for worship.

[61 : 44] It was a word to Turkey in AD 63. It's still a word for Christians in Tarbert in AD 2023. The instruction that we are given here is to open our homes and our lives.

That's not an instruction that's been withdrawn. We're to do it. We're to offer hospitality. So when did you last ask someone for a meal with the intention of sharing the gospel?

That's hospitality. When did we last have a few people around the house one evening for a fellowship where we pray together and we read the word and we maybe sing a few songs?

That's hospitality. Hospitality is a way that we can express love for each other. And Peter says do it. I think if we went back 20 years in time, 20, 30 years in time, this was happening all the time right here. and there was huge spiritual vitality as homes were filled with people who were coming together for fellowship.

[63 : 14] I don't know to what extent it's happening today but Peter is saying to us, God is saying to us through Peter, do it. Offer hospitality.

And then he follows it up by saying, and do it without grumbling. It's almost like he's read our minds before we've had the chance to process it.

He says don't roll your eyes when you extend an invitation. No murmuring on the day that these people are coming around as the wife and husband say, whose wise idea was this to invite all these visitors around?

Who's going to prepare all of, who's going to do all this? No murmuring. the word in the Greek, if I can remember rightly, is the word gongousmos, which kind of sounds the way, it sounds like what it means, no gongousmos.

No gongousmos. Offer hospitality. And Peter is saying to us also, don't just ask the people that you like the best.

[64 : 26] Be wide open with your hospitality. The word for hospitable here is actually literally translated as loving strangers. So God is saying to us through Peter, show love to strangers.

Show love, show hospitality to the people that you don't actually know all that well. And the people that you might not actually be all that much drawn to. It's kind of awkward, isn't it?

It's very biting, the application of this, as we think about it. We're to love each other. That's a big kind of conceptual thing, and we take that on board and say, well, it's hard, but we'll try.

And he says, offer hospitality, open up your homes. And we think, well, okay, this is very practical, it's very uncomfortable. But if we need motivation, we just need to look to Jesus.

Who does he eat with? And who does he sit with? It's the stranger, and it's the outcast, mess, and it's the messy people, and it's the complicated people that we find him sitting with and sharing meals with.

[65 : 48] And that's what we were in our fallen state. We were strangers, strangers to grace and to God, as we sing. We were enemies of God.

And yet Jesus left the comfort of glory to come to this broken, messy world. to reach out to broken sinners like us, so that if we believe in him, the door to the Father's house could be opened, and we could receive eternal hospitality.

This is how God treated us. So this is how we're to treat each other, says Peter. Show hospitality.

And as we do so, those who are outside of Christ are reached. There are many people who will not come into this building, but they will come into your house.

Those who are outside of Christ are reached. Those who are Christians are encouraged. encouraged. We all need encouragement. And God is glorified, and we are made ready for the end of all things.

[67 : 14] Pray, love each other, be hospitable, and finally, very briefly, minister to each other. Verses 10 and 11. And there's two things that we can say in relation to these verses.

how are we to minister to each other? We're to speak, and we're to serve. Each one, verse 10, 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.

To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. And so, Peter, he finishes this short section, and we're just about done, by saying minister to each other.

And remember, this is a letter not to a theological college, not to a class of training ministers, this is a letter to normal Christians. He says, minister to each other, that's how it's put in the King James version.

[68 : 34] So how do we minister to each other? We speak. We speak to each other. It's very obvious, but maybe it's a word that's more relevant today than it ever has been, because we'd far rather be on these things than speak to each other.

Even in our homes, you get three people in the same room, all on different couches, none of them are speaking to each other. So our faces are all on screens.

And God is saying to us, through Peter, speak to each other. And the emphasis in verse 11 is on speaking the word of God to each other. You know, we speak all kinds of things into each other's lives.

We're quick to give advice. We like to tell stories. We laugh together. We share news. All these things are good things. But Peter is encouraging us to speak more spiritually.

Speak about the Lord. Speak the Bible to each other. To bring more of God's word into our conversations.

[69 : 44] Paul says something very similar in Colossians 4, 6. He says, let your conversation be always full of grace. seasoned with salt.

That's the flavor that our conversation should have. It should have something of the grace of Jesus in it. That's how we can minister to each other.

We speak to each other. God's word. And finally, we serve each other. What does that mean? I don't know what it means for you.

It could mean many things depending on our gifts. And notice that in verse 10 it says that everyone should use whatever gift he has received.

It means everyone's got a gift. Nobody can sit here and say, well, you know, he got double gifts, I got none. Everyone's got a gift. And so we're to use our gifts to serve the Lord and to serve each other.

[70 : 51] It might be helping in the garden. That's a gift. Might be taking out the bin. Might be trying to figure out what day on earth you're supposed to be taking out the bin.

Might be making a meal, sending a text, writing a letter, making a visit. It can be something small, even a cup of cold water water. We're told. It's a means through which we can serve other people for Jesus' sake.

Whatever it is, I don't know what it is in your life, but when what we do is done out of thankfulness, recognizing that God has given us the strength to do this, and not looking for praise for ourselves, but looking for praise for Jesus, when we serve, using whatever the gift is, God is glorified.

He sees it, he uses it, and we experience a measure of blessing. the end of all things is near.

It's nearer than it ever has been. So pray, says Peter, love each other, be hospitable, minister to each other, and as we live this way, as we give ourselves to these things, we are made ready for the end of all things.

[72 : 32] We'll pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that you would give us a greater sense of eternity.

Help us to see clearly that this is not all there is, but this life is just like a mist. This is no continuing city.

We are passing through here, and then there is eternity where we either go to be with the Lord and all his people in heaven, or we go to that place where we are separated from God, and in isolation and in torment in hell.

It's very stark, and yet it's very stark because it's so important. And so we pray that each one of us would be ready for that day when we are called to stand before you.

We ask that there would be no person here who would refuse to call on the name of the Lord. for that every one of us would call upon Jesus, that we would seek mercy, that we would be saved.

[73 : 49] And as those who are saved, we pray that we wouldn't waste our lives, but that we would use our lives in a way that glorifies you, as we love each other, and as we share our lives and our gifts and our homes, and as we serve you and each other in the things that we say and in the things that we do.

Help us to follow you, help us to serve you, help us as the catechism sends to glorify you in order that we may enjoy you today and forever. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. We'll sing to finish Mission Praise 1209. My Heart is Filled with Thankfulness to Him who bore my pain.

My heart is filled with thankfulness to Him who bore my pain. Who plumped the depths of my disgrace and gave me life again.

Who crushed my curse of sinfulness and clothed me with His light and wrote His law of righteousness with power upon my heart.

[75 : 28] My heart is filled with thankfulness to Him who was beside. Who does my weaknesses with strength and crossed His fears to cry.

Whose every promise is enough for every step is one of my heart.

I take and crowning me with grace. My heart is filled with thankfulness to Him who reigns upon whose wisdom is my perfect peace, whose every thought is love.

For every day I have on earth is given by the King. So I will give my life, my all to love and follow Him.

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 forever more. Amen.