

22.10.23 am

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 October 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] And the services are taken myself in the morning in the English service. It's a Gaelic service in the evening and we look forward to having the Revint Dolan with us again.

Cleaning rota, you've got the details there. And shoebox appeal continues and you have the details there on the screen. Shoebox item has been donated, need to be at the church for Friday 27th of October as this is when the boxes will be packed.

And you've got the details of it there. These I think are all intimations. I was going to ask the question just about the kids' clubs. I'm looking. Stuart I know is preaching elsewhere this morning. Joyce is around I think, is she? Do we have? Pardon? So Rooted starts on Friday Jammin' Connect. Start on Friday as well.

So Rooted Jammin' Connect starts on Friday. So please boys and girls note that and tell your friends about that. And I think perhaps YF might be starting next Sunday.

[1 : 06] So a week tonight and a week today in the evening the Youth Fellowship will begin. And there'll be details about that next Sunday. So these I think are all the notices.

We'll begin this time of worship now. We'll sing to God's praise. We'll sing Mission Praise 1072. In Christ alone our hope is found.

My hope is found. He is my light, my strength, my song.

This corner storm, this solid crowd. Fight through the fears and strides and storm.

What times don't have, what days don't meet. When fears are still, my silence cease.

[2 : 14] My comfort, my comfort, my comfort, my comfort, my own in all. Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, you too are gone flesh.

Fullness of God in hell, let's pray. Let's give the love and righteousness. Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Since Christ has lost its grip on me. For I am His and He is mine.

[3 : 59] Bought with the precious blood of Christ. No guilt in life.

No guilt in life. No fear in death. This is the power of Christ in me. From life's life.

From life's worst time. From life's worst time. To final breath. Jesus Christ in me. Jesus Christ in me.

No guilt in death.

Let her clap me from his hand Till he returns or calls me home Here the power of Christ I stand Let's unite our hearts in prayer, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day and we thank you for your word. We thank you for the gospel message that we have sang in that hymn.

[5 : 24] And we would proclaim with the hymn writer that in Christ alone our hope is found. And we thank you, Lord, for the hope that is sure and certain that we enjoy because of Jesus.

Our son, our saviour. We thank you, Lord, that the work that he came from heaven to earth to do is a work that is finished, that's completed.

We thank you that as we open the gospels and as we read the eyewitness accounts of the life of Jesus, we see the character of God. We see the visible image of the invisible God in his words and in his actions and his reactions.

We thank you for the love, for the compassion, for the power, for the humility, for the authority, for the grace of Jesus. As we follow him through all the different aspects of ministry that we see in the gospels, we thank you that he lived a life that we would love to be able to live, but we cannot live.

We are sinners and he was the sinless, spotless lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world. And we thank you that Jesus went to the cross to do that work.

[6 : 54] We thank you that he who knew no sin became sin so that we who are sinners could be forgiven and could be made righteous. And we thank you, Lord, that as we believe in him, we are forgiven.

As we confess our sins, we have the assurance that we are purified from all unrighteousness. We thank you that as Jesus died, he cried out that it is finished.

And everything that was necessary for us to be saved was finished by him. And all we have to do is look in faith to that cross to bring our sin to Calvary and to trust that he will take it from us.

And so, Lord, we do that even now. We ask, Lord, that as we think back over the days and the weeks and the years, and as we are conscious of the sins that grieved you, we would confess them, Lord.

We wouldn't hide them. We wouldn't hold them back. We thank you that we can confess our sin and tell you about our guilt, knowing that you will cleanse us in the blood of Jesus.

[8 : 06] So cleanse us, we pray, and grant to us the assurance of eternal life. We thank you that we turn this morning to read a letter, to read a book that helps us to know that we have eternal life.

And we thank you that we have that if we are believing in Jesus. So grant faith this morning to all who are present and all who may be watching at a distance, that we wouldn't just be hearers of the word, but that we would be given faith to take hold of the word, that we wouldn't just be aware that there are promises in the Bible.

We pray that we would take these promises and that we would claim them for ourselves as we look to you. And we pray that you would fill our hearts with the joy of your salvation.

We thank you for the resurrection. We sang of it in the hymn that we began with. We are reminded of it each Lord's day when we meet. This is the first day of the week, the day when Jesus rose from the dead.

And we thank you that we have the promise, the assurance, that all who believe in Jesus also will rise. The dead in Christ shall rise first. And we thank you for the comfort that that is for so many who grieve, even those present with us, as many think of those who have gone on ahead of them from time into eternity.

[9 : 27] We praise you, Lord, that when faith is in Jesus, there is the promise of resurrection life. There is the promise of heaven. And we ask, Lord, that you would comfort all who grieve and that you would grant hope and faith to those who are still strangers to Christ.

We pray, Lord, for a world that needs to know the truth that there is hope found in Christ alone. We see brokenness all around us.

We think of the Middle East today as we continue to see such warfare and bloodshed and hate and difficulty. We pray, Lord, for that place.

We feel helpless, so distant from it. We feel dismayed and disturbed by all that we see. But we thank you that we can bring that situation and these people to you in prayer.

And we ask, Lord, that you would be at work where violence is most acute, Lord, that you would be at work, that you would restrain the hand of those who would seek to maximize death.

[10 : 36] We pray that you would bring peace, which seems impossible, but nothing for you, Lord, is impossible. And we pray for your people. We read of your people in the Old Testament, Israel.

And, Lord, we know that today the vast majority of that country, their eyes are closed to the beauty of Jesus. We ask that the scales would fall from their eyes and that there would be a turning of your people back to you, Lord, that they would believe in Jesus.

And we know, Lord, that we pray what your word prophesies. And so we ask, Lord, that your will would be done. And we pray, Lord, for Ukraine. We pray for Russia, these conflicts that we hear little about now.

We pray for your persecuted people across the different parts of the world. We pray, Lord, that you would protect them, that you would encourage them, that you would meet with them, Lord, as we pray that you would meet with us as we seek to gather together and worship.

We ask, Lord, that you would be with those who are struggling today with illness. We continue to remember those who are in hospital. We think of Nanny, we think of Nurse Margaret.

[11 : 49] We ask, Lord, that you would be near to both of them, that your hand of healing would be upon them. We pray on for Mary Latham. And we ask, Lord, that you would help her as she receives treatment and that the infections that she struggled with would be pushed back.

We pray on for Shona. We thank you, Lord, for your hand upon her and the amazing measure of recovery that we see in her so far. Bless our Lord, we pray. Pray for those who are housebound and have been for many years now who watch week by week faithfully.

And we ask that you would bless them in their homes. We thank you that you are able to minister to us wherever we are. We pray for those who are anxious, those who may have struggles and worries and who feel that like they want to fret.

each night as they go to bed, we think of the psalm that says, fret not, but put your faith in the Lord. And we pray that you would help all who are anxious to bring their anxieties to the God who cares for us.

And we ask now, Lord, that you would move in the power of your Spirit. We pray that those who are still outside of Christ, even who may be sitting in the building this morning, we ask, Lord, that you would touch hearts, that you would open eyes, that you would unblock ears, and that you would transform hearts.

[13:12] Seek and save the lost, we pray. Convict and convert, we ask. Draw many more people here and across this land into your kingdom.

And glorify your name, we pray. And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, there's not many of you here today, but do you want to come forward?

Amen. Looking at it this morning, it looks as if this is the cheap seats and there's expensive seats over here and no one's sitting over here.

How are you all today? Good. Good, good. Have you had a good holiday? I don't know if it's cheap. Yeah. Well, yeah, actually, because I went to the mod.

You went to the... First place. You went to the mod, Michael slapped his hand on the shoulder and you got first place, he says. Good job. Yeah, that... Was that a holiday? Well...

[14:15] Yeah, it was... It was good. Except for the time you had to wake up at four and six. Except for the time that you had to wake up at four o'clock in the morning to come home. Well, I'm kind of going to talk to you a wee bit about that.

Have you all... The rest of you all had a good holiday? Yeah. Yeah? Good stuff. Jane didn't get much of a holiday either. But, um... Good job, those who were at the mod. Now, can you tell me... What's that? Pass it around. Have you look. So?

You see it? Know where it is? Yeah? It's a fairy tipper. Yeah? Every time I go away on holiday, every time when I'm trying to come back, there's delays, there's disruptions.

It's almost impossible. I'm starting to get a complex. I'm wondering if I'm not supposed to be coming back or something. Because every time I try and come back, there's weather or there's ferries disruption and I'm supposed to be coming back on Friday.

[15:30] The ferries were put off and then I made my plans to come back on Saturday and the weather forecast was getting bad and then they were talking about the roads getting blocked. But I went on the bus and the bus took me through.

We got through massive deep. Some of the roads looked like rivers when we were driving along. They were so bad. But anyway, the bus driver with his big wheels, he steward through all these massive big puddles and he got us to the ferry terminal and I got to the...

I got to the Cal Mac office and I was looking and I'd booked my ferry ticket and it said in the phone that I had my confirmation of booking and it said at the bottom, this is not your ticket, please note your ticket is attached at the bottom of the email.

And I went to the bottom of the email, nothing. So I spoke to somebody and I said, it's just new systems in Cal Mac. It's just...

I think it's just... I think it's just that you don't get the actual ticket anymore. It's just the email. The email will be fine. And I said, that's fine. So I carried on and I was in the ticket office in Ullipo waiting for the ferry to come and there was a guy that I recognised.

[16:50] I won't tell you who he was and I said, by the way, I'm on the ferry. I'm booked onto the ferry and I've got this email here and see the email there that says confirmation of booking. It says something about a ticket.

I don't see a ticket. Is that fine? And he says, I think it's fine. Don't need to worry. It's fine. But I was sitting there and I was thinking, I'm not sure about this.

There wasn't Logan Air because that was all booked up. You couldn't get up there either. So I was sitting there and I was thinking, I'm not sure. So eventually, when the queue went down about, I

went off downstairs.

I was at the waiting area and I went to the ticket office and I said, book this ticket and I've got the email here. Do I just need to do that and show you the email? Oh no, I need your ticket. You need to download the ticket. I said, but it doesn't give me an option for downloading a ticket. It must do. I said, well it definitely doesn't. It says it's attached but there's nothing attached. It is attached.

[17:59] I said, well here's the phone. You show it to me. So I handed over my phone and he looked puzzled and he said, you know what? It's actually not a ticket here. You've paid for it. It's confirmed but there's no ticket.

And so, what they had to do is go back into their system and they had to make a ticket. And so that was the ticket and that was what I had to use to get scanned so I could get onto the boat so that I could get home over a very rough sea.

Now, the thing that I wanted to tell you about this morning was just was just being sure.

You know, I wanted, I was looking at an email and I was thinking, I think I'm going to be able to get on here. There's a, there's an email that says something about getting on but I want to be sure that I'll get on at that ferry.

I don't want to be sitting in the other pool for the next 24 hours. I want to be sure that I'm going to get on the ferry so I can get over to the promised land. Now, here's a question for you.

[19:15] Can you be sure that you'll get to heaven? I couldn't be, I couldn't be 100% sure yesterday that I could get over to Harris.

I needed my ticket and even then the sea was so rough I was thinking I hoped I was going to be able to get in. But can you be sure that you're going to get to heaven?

What do you think? Very quiet over there too. Ask the expensive side. Yeah, ask them.

Can you be sure? It's a simple question. Yeah, I don't know. Yes. Bible. The Bible's your ticket. The Bible's your ticket?

Jesus is your ticket. Can you be sure? What do you think? Right.

[20:15] I'm going to tell you. There was a disciple called John. He was a cousin of Jesus. And he wrote a letter called 1 John.

First letter. And he wrote in this letter the reason that he was writing. And this is what he said. Are you listening? He said in 1 John 5.13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

Who's the Son of God? Jesus. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

So God has seen to us through John that you can know not just hope not just think but absolutely certainly know that you have everlasting life that you have a place in heaven.

And how can you know? By believing in the name of the Son of God by believing in Jesus.

[21:36] So the question this morning is do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe that Jesus came from heaven as a real man?

Do you believe that he went to the cross to die for your sin? Do you believe that he rose from the dead? And have you asked him to take your sin away and be your saviour and be your Lord?

Because if you have if you believe in him if you've trusted your life to him you and I can know absolutely certainly know that we have life eternal life never ending life and we can know that when we die or if Jesus was to come back today we can know that we're going to be in heaven with him and that we won't be in hell apart from him.

So John wants us to know God wants us to know that we have eternal life. And that's not just for you that's for everybody. Do you know do you know that you have eternal life?

Do you know that you have a place in heaven? Do you know that you have your sins forgiven? God wants us to know not dither not wonder but know and we can know as we believe in Jesus.

[23:18] So let's pray. Heavenly Father we thank you for how good you are to us. We thank you that you sent your son your only son into the world to live and die and rise so that we can know that we have eternal life if we believe in him.

We ask Lord that you would give every one of us faith that we truly would believe. Help us to see clearly who Jesus is that he is God the son that he is the God man who came to be our substitute to live for us and die for us and rise so that we can have never ending life if we're trusting in him.

We pray that none of us would leave this building today wondering whether or not we're Christians wondering whether or not we have eternal life. We pray that we would be those who have confessed our sin believed in Jesus and who know that we are safe forever and we ask these things in Jesus name Amen.

We're going to sing now a hymn that talks about that there is a green hill far away without a city wall and the last verse of the hymn I think says there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin he Jesus only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

We'll sing to God's praise. hymn I think so is a green hill far away without a city wall where the dear Lord was crucified who died to save us all He may not know He may not know He cannot tell what things He had to bear but he believed what was for us

[25 : 45] He had that suffered He died that we might He died that we might be far again He died to make us good but we might go at last to Him saved by His precious blood there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin He only could He could and walk the gate of heaven and let us live O dearly, dearly

I see love that we must of him too, and trust in his redeeming blood, and try his works to do.

As the boys and girls go to Sunday school, remember to pray for them. And if you could turn now in your Bibles please to 1 John chapter 1.

1 John chapter 1. And we'll read from verse 1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have touched, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the word of life.

The life appeared, we have seen it and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us.

[28 : 38] And our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete. This is the message we have heard and heard from him and declare to you.

God is light, in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his word has no place in our lives. My little children, my dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.

But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.

[29 : 54] Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing again now to God's praise. We're going to sing two stanzas from Psalm 51.

Psalm 51, and we sing, it's verses 9 to 12 as it's marked in the English. Two stanzas in Gaelic.

All mine iniquities blot out, create thy face hide from my sin. Create a clean heart. Lord, renew a right spirit me within. Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away.

Restore me thy salvation's joy. With thy free spirit me stay. These two stanzas of Psalm 51 to God's praise. We sing in Gaelic. We remain seated to sing in Gaelic.

Am I, my fat father's church? Am I, my fat father's son.

[31 : 04] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS God
bless you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. If you could turn back with me, please, to 1 John chapter 1.

[34 : 34] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And let's ask God for help as we do so.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the promise of Jesus that we're even two or three of us meet together in his name.

We have the promise that you are with us. And so we pray that we would know that, that we would believe that, that we would sense your presence. Lord, that you would take your word and that you

would press it into our hearts, into our souls.

And Lord, that you would speak, that you would speak with a voice that wakes the dead. Make us hear and give us hearts that are responsive.

Hearts that will take hold of the truth of your word. Hearts that will trust in the Lord Jesus. Hearts that will be tuned to praise you and to worship.

[35 : 37] So help us, Lord, we pray. Pray for the young ones. Those who are present today, Lord, that you would bless them as they hear your word broken down simply for them.

We ask, Lord, that they would believe. And what we heard them say would truly be from their hearts. And Lord, that they would walk with you all the days of their lives. We pray for the many today who are absent as well.

Some who are in different places. And we ask that you would bless them where they are. Some who may be traveling back home. We ask that you would give them safety as they travel. Some who perhaps just have taken a day and are sitting at home doing something else.

And we ask, Lord, that you would reach them. We pray that you would draw also those who may drift. We are prone to wander. And for any who may be wandering, whether present or absent, we ask, Lord, that you would touch the heart.

That you would draw back. That you would bring to completion the work that you have begun. So hear our prayers and help us as we open your word. And we ask it in Jesus' name.

[36 : 41] Amen. Amen. If you're wanting to get into a building, you need a key or a code.

I was doing a little bit of work a few days ago in our old flat in Inverness. But I discovered when I was working out in the garden and I wanted to get into the building to check the inside that I had forgotten the key.

I had no access to the building. I needed the key to be able to access. And that's the way it is with most buildings. They're not left open. They're locked. And you need a particular specific key or a code that gives access to the building.

And when we come to certain books of the Bible, especially these kind of pastoral letters, there's usually a verse that's like the key.

And it's a verse that highlights the purpose. It expounds the reason behind the writing. It unlocks the truth, perhaps in a sentence.

[37 : 53] That the writer is wanting to share and expand on. Now, the writer of this letter, as I said to the children, is John.

And when we ask who is John, we know that John was a disciple of Jesus. We've just finished looking at 1 Peter. Peter was a disciple of Jesus. John also was a disciple of Jesus.

John was also in the family of Jesus. He was a cousin of Jesus. And he was one of Jesus' closest companions. He was referred to in John 13, 23 as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

He was one of the inner three that we see so close to Jesus in his ministry. So John is the writer. There's no real debate about that.

But why was he writing? What was the reason for this letter being written? Well, John tells us in various points in the letter, but particularly at the end of the letter, he tells us his reason for writing.

[38 : 59] And the key verse is verse 13 of chapter 5. He kind of gathers it all up at the end of the letter. And he says in 1 John 5 verse 13, I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

So that you may know that you have eternal life. Now back at the time of writing, which the scholars think was around about AD 85 to 95, that's the kind of range of time when the letter was written.

At that point in time, there was a lot of people who were writing and who were teaching a lot of, well, nonsense. And there was one group in particular, they were known as the Gnostics.

G-N-O-S-T-I-C-S. And they claimed to have a higher knowledge. And they claimed to know secret things about God. And without going into the details of it all, the effect of the teaching of the Gnostics was to take people away from God's word and to encourage people to, using the words of one of the commentators, throw off all moral restraints.

So this was the dominant teaching, the Gnostics. And they were teaching this higher knowledge that they knew and that you didn't know. So you had to come to them. And what they were essentially doing was setting aside the word of God.

[40 : 43] And they were saying to the people, you can just live the way you want to live. Just do whatever feels nice to you. Throw off all moral restraints.

That's AD 85, AD 90, round about then. That's the way it was back then. And when we think about the way it was back then, I think we could agree that it's pretty much the way it is just now. Almost 2,000 years have passed. But we're still living in that kind of a culture. We don't call people Gnostics now. But there are many people, there are many teachings that would seek to take us away from God's word, to close the word, to set the word aside, to say that the word is now outdated and it doesn't fit in with our new way of thinking.

And there are many schools of thought that would encourage us to go down a road where we forget about biblical morality and we just do what feels right to us. So whatever it is you want to do, however you want to express yourself in the realm of sexuality, gender, whatever line of morality, just do what feels right to you.

That was the teaching back then. That is the teaching still today. And John writes this letter to correct that kind of faulty, defective teaching.

[42 : 13] He writes to Christians in AD 85. He writes to Christians in AD 2023. He writes to Christians who were living in a confusing world.

He writes to Christians who are still living in what feels like an increasingly confusing world. And he writes so that we will have assurance.

He writes so that we will believe in the name of the Son of God. And he writes so that we will know that we have eternal life.

Do you know this morning? Serious personal question. Direct question.

Do you know? Not think. But do you know that you have eternal life? Do you have assurance that you are saved?

[43 : 24] That if you were to be called from the scene of time into eternity before the day is out, that you are safe? John wants us to have that assurance.

God, as he uses this letter of John, he wants Christians to have assurance and to have joy. To know that if we die tonight, we're going to heaven.

Not to hell. And surely we want to know this. I mean, if we're not feeling well, if you think about time, this world, and our physical state, if we're not feeling well, physically, we go to the doctor because we want to know if there's a problem.

So we can get some treatment and get well. When it comes to finances, something else that troubles us, we want to know how much money we've got in the bank.

We want to know that we have something in a pension pot so we check our statements, we check our balances so that we have some kind of assurance, some knowledge of where we stand.

[44 : 49] Even simple things like before we eat our chicken. We want to know that it's not pink on the inside. It's cooked all the way through so that we don't get food poisoning.

We want to know these things. So when it comes to eternal things, surely we want to know that we have life, that we have heaven, that we have salvation.

Well, John writes so that we can know that we have eternal life. And essentially, he asks us three questions in this chapter and into the first couple of verses of the next chapter.

Three questions, I'll just go through them in the time that we have. Question number one is, do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe in Jesus? John is one of these writers who has, his writings are very simple at one level.

Very direct and simple. And yet, there's whole layers of wisdom and truth. We could spend ten years going through this letter. I'm hoping to do it in five weeks. First question is, do you believe in Jesus?

[46 : 06] The second question he asks is, do you try to obey Jesus? And the last question he asks is, do you confess your sins? So first of all, do you believe in Jesus?

It's one of these Sunday school questions, but it's the question that he begins with. He starts with a focus on Christ, that which was from the beginning, verse one, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched.

This we proclaim concerning the word of life. The life appeared. We have seen it and testified to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us and our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ.

So John begins this letter not by thinking about himself or talking about himself, John starts this letter with a focus on God.

[47 : 21] He takes the spotlight and he shines it on Jesus and that makes sense because eternal life, the thing that John wants us to know that we have, eternal life comes only from Jesus.

Now people in 1895, they didn't like how narrow that claim was, that eternal life comes only from Jesus and still today people don't like how narrow that claim is.

Eternal life comes only in and through Jesus. People don't like hearing that today in the general public square, but it's true.

It's true. If you and I want to know that we have eternal life, we need to believe in Jesus.

It's not a case of we need to just have faith in something or someone. It's not a case of us having some kind of a religious conviction. No, it's very narrow.

[48 : 34] We have to believe in Jesus. You know, you can be very religious. You can be somebody who does lots of good works. You can be a guru of another faith group. But if you don't believe in Jesus, there's no eternal life.

Jesus said as much in John 14 and verse 6. He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Or we could think about John chapter 10 and verse 9. Jesus says, I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.

See, the way to eternal life is narrow. The road to death is broad. The road to destruction is a big, broad highway. But the road to eternal life is narrow.

The way is narrow. And John is making clear that the only way that we can know that we have eternal life is through believing in Jesus.

[49 : 47] So John asks us, do you believe in Jesus? Not what are you doing?

Not tell me about your religion. Not let's have a spiritual discussion. He comes straight out and he says, do you believe in Jesus?

So what do we need to believe, John? What do we need to believe about Jesus? Well, there's two things. We need to believe that Jesus is God and we need to believe that Jesus is man.

And John teaches us both these things in the opening verses. He teaches us that Jesus is God, that he was, verse one, from the beginning. that he is eternal.

John is teaching us that before, before he appeared on earth, Jesus existed in eternity.

[50 : 54] Before time began, verse two, Jesus was with the Father. John is making clear that before anything that we know, before time, Jesus was there.

Father, Son, Holy Spirit, eternal. Jesus is God. That's the truth that John is pressing.

He's not a philosopher, he's not a teacher, he's not a healer, he's not another in a line of religious gurus, he's not a prophet. He is God.

He is the eternal God. And yet, he is man. He's a real human being. And John, remember, who spent all this time with Jesus, who knew him in the family context and who knew him in ministry, who was part of that inner circle, John describes Jesus as that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched, verse 1.

John is saying, Jesus is not some ghostly, mystical, spiritual presence. He was a real person. He is a real person.

[52 : 21] And what he says in verse 1, he repeats it again in verses 2 and 3, he emphasizes that they have seen Jesus, that they have heard Jesus speak, that they touched him, they shook his hand, they hugged him, they worked alongside him.

There was that physicality that they knew in Christ. Christ. So John is teaching us that if we want to know eternal life, we need to believe in Jesus, that he is God, the eternal God, who has always been there.

Before the incarnation, he was there. and yet he is man, real flesh and blood. We need to believe that if we are going to have eternal life.

And John is simply repeating what Jesus taught. John 3.16, the most famous verse in the Bible, says, For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life.

It's about believing in Jesus. Or think about Paul and Silas in a Philippian jail. The jailer is in a panic because the doors of the prison have been blasted open.

[54 : 10] He thinks his life is over. And yet Paul and Silas are standing before him. They're telling him not to harm himself. And so the man in that situation, he says, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And Paul says to him, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. So John's first question to us is, do you believe in Jesus?

there is no possibility of us having eternal life. There is no possibility of us having hope beyond death if we don't believe in Jesus, that he is the God man, the one who stepped from eternity into time on a mission to save us.

So do you believe in Jesus? Question number one. Question number two is, do you try to obey Jesus? Verse four, John writes, we write this to make our, it can also be translated as your joy complete.

We write this to make our joy complete. we write this to make your joy complete. Now, John is here talking about joy, experiential joy.

[55 : 38] Where do we find joy? Well, we find joy in Jesus. Sometimes we sing a hymn here, it's not in our hymn book sadly, but it goes like this, now none but Christ can satisfy, there's no other name for me, there's love, there's life, there's lasting joy, Lord Jesus found in thee.

So the source of joy, John is telling us, the source of joy is Jesus. The sole supplier of eternal joy is Jesus.

So for anybody here today who's not yet a Christian, and you're looking for joy, maybe in more money or more stock or popularity, or some measure of success in this world, John writes and he saves us a lot of time by telling us that joy is found only in Jesus.

It's not found in money, it's not found in fame, it's not found in success, it's found only in Jesus. I was listening to an interview with the pop star Ed Sheeran, which means nothing to most of us, but it'll mean something to somebody.

And he's one of these guys who's at the top of his game in terms of music. He's one of the probably richest, most successful musicians of the last 10 years. And he was being interviewed over in America and they were asking him about his life and about his success.

[57 : 13] And one of the things he said was, everybody thinks that I'm going to be happy because I've got all this money and I've got all this success and I've got all this stuff.

He says, but the truth is, I'm not happy. I'm not satisfied. I don't have any sense of joy. And he couldn't figure out why.

And John is writing to Ed Sheeran. He's writing to us and he's telling us that joy is found only in Jesus. But here's the problem.

John is writing to Christians and not all Christians look joyful. Some of us don't have the most joyful resting faces.

My wife points that out to me often. I tell her the joy is deep down. It doesn't always have to bubble up to the face, but there's joy there. But the truth is, some believers don't have joy.

[58 : 22] I'd be surprised if there isn't at least somebody in here today who has no sense of joy and yet is a Christian. Sometimes we can lose our joy.

So how does that happen? Well, it happens usually through the darkness of disobedience. John writes in verse 5 and he says, this is the message we have heard from him, Jesus, and declare to you, God is light.

In him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship, verse 6, with him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

truth. And remember, John is writing to Christians. And sometimes as Christians, we don't live by the truth.

Sometimes as Christians, we live a lie. Sometimes as Christians, we can keep up appearances, we can keep some measure of stability, some measure of happiness in our faces, but deep down, there's darkness.

[59 : 48] Sometimes as Christians, we are people who belong to God, we are genuine disciples of Jesus, and yet we walk back into the darkness. We go back to doing some of the things that we used to do before we were Christians.

things that we know are wrong. And it's a miserable place to be. It's a sad experience to be a Christian who has drifted back into the darkness.

David writes about it in Psalm 32. He talks about an inner groaning.

He talks about a heaviness, a spiritual exhaustion. And what was it that caused that? It was disobedience. He had stopped trying to obey God.

you know the story. He sees, he lusts, he pursues, and within no time he's deep into a whole spiral of sin, adultery, murder.

[61 : 11] and as he has drifted from the light into the darkness, he's dying inside. He writes this psalm that's just so bleak and so full of spiritual pain because of the disobedience in his life.

And they reckon for about a year, David was in that position. And then in Psalm 51, David confesses his sin, he repents, and he cries out to God, restore to me the joy of your salvation. And God hears his prayer. And God answers his prayer. And he's forgiven his sin. And the joy and the assurance of salvation and eternal life are restored to him.

And he goes from isolation as he hides away in his own, in a state of morose misery, to fellowship, fellowship with God and fellowship with God's people.

He goes from a verse 6 experience of walking in the darkness to a verse 7 experience of being in the light and experiencing the joy of close fellowship with God and fellowship with God's people as he repents, as he confesses his sin.

[62 : 50] joy is restored. And that's what John is encouraging us to here. He's encouraging us to strive with everything that we have to live a life of obedience, to be constantly repenting when we sin, constantly confessing.

It's John teaching here that we can be perfect, that we can always live in the light. It's John teaching here that we can live lives so we never drift into darkness, but we can stay in the middle lane of bright, sinless perfection.

Well, no, he's not teaching that, as we'll see as the chapter goes on. Some people have tried to teach that. Spurgeon was once at a conference.

And there was a preacher who was preaching alongside him at this conference, and he was preaching what they termed perfectionism. And essentially what this man was saying was that we can live sinless lives.

And this man was saying, as he preached, that he was now living a sinless life. He had been saved from past sins, but he was now walking with the Lord in such a way that he wasn't sinning anymore.

[64 : 12] And Spurgeon listened, he disagreed, but he didn't make a kind of public scene on that day. He disagreed quietly. Following morning, so the story goes, Spurgeon was heading to breakfast, and the preacher that he disagreed with was just a little bit ahead of him.

And the preacher had a tray, and he had on his tray a pot of tea and plates and cups, and his breakfast all spread out. He was on his way from the buffet to the table to enjoy his breakfast. Spurgeon came up behind him a little bit too close, shunted him with his shoulder. And the sinlessly perfect man, his breakfast went crashing all around his heels, stained his trousers, and landed on the floor.

And what Spurgeon said in his story was that the man's response was far from sinless perfection. And Spurgeon gently pointed it out to him. And John is not teaching that we can be perfect, but he is encouraging us to strive to obey Jesus.

Because there is joy and there is assurance as we do so. as we strive to obey Jesus.

[65 : 38] We know joy. And we know the assurance of eternal life. when we drift back into darkness, when we just yield to temptation, it doesn't mean we're not Christians.

We have no joy. We have no real sense of assurance because we're living a lie. So John is not teaching that we can live perfect lives.

He's encouraging us to strive to obey Jesus. And yet acknowledging that for as long as we're in this world, we won't manage perfectly. We'll continue to sin.

And so the encouragement, verse 7, is the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from all sin. And that takes us to our final question very briefly.

Do you believe in Jesus? Question 1, that he is God, that he is man. Do you strive, do you try to obey Jesus as a Christian? Do you try to walk in the light?

[66 : 54] And the final thing is, do you confess your sins? Because we know that none of us can live a sinless life. Verse 8, it says, if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Now there are some people, I doubt there's anyone in the room this morning but it's possible. There are some people who will claim not to be sinners. I meet them every week.

There are people who will point at others and they'll agree that other people are sinners but not me, they say. I try to live a good moral life, I give to charity, I'm a member of the Kirk, don't tell me I'm a

sinner.

I remember preaching one day in a place, I won't tell you what it was, it wasn't here, it was in a past ministry and as I finished the sermon I had hardly finished giving the benediction and a woman who was sitting in the congregation with a face that told me a story that she wasn't happy, she roared at me as soon as the sermon was finished, I was maybe two or three weeks into ministry and she rushed at me and she said, listen laddie, stop all this black and white preaching, we're not used to it here, we don't want it here, if I was to believe what you preach, then even I would be a sinner. She didn't believe she was a sinner, she claimed to be without sin and John says the truth was not in her, she wouldn't let the truth in, pride was keeping the truth of God's word out, verse 10, if we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. [68 : 44] And that's where she was at. But never mind her, what about you? Do you see that you're a sinner? Because if you see that you're a sinner, that's a good thing.

The Holy Spirit is at work. He's the one who shows you and I that we are sinners. And if God the Holy Spirit shows us that we are sinners, if he is showing us today the bad news about us, it's so that he can make us ready for the good news about Jesus and what Jesus can do for us. So what can Jesus do for us? Verse 9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Now just take that in for a minute. Take that in, in terms of the good news that we are being given here.

The good news is that you and I can be forgiven. And not from some, but from all unrighteousness. [70 : 12] Not from just the small sins, but from the big public, dirty, disgraceful sins. The things that cause us to cringe still today.

The things that haunt us in the night. God is saying to us through John that if we confess our sins, then every one of them, every trace of unrighteousness will be gone.

If we confess. to have you confessed, are you and I confessing?

Because that's the key. This is only for those who will confess. Now for those who think this is too good to be true, let's just ask the question as we finish, how does all this work?

John answers and says to us, it's all to do with the faithfulness and the justice of God. It's not so much about how you and I feel. It's not about us, it's about God.

[71 : 25] It's about the faithfulness and the justice of God. And where does that take us to? It takes us to the cross. And what happened on the cross? Well, Paul tells us, 2 Corinthians 5.21, God made him who had no sin, that's Jesus, to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

So on the cross, the great exchange took place. Our sin, our impurity, if we've confessed it, was taken into Jesus and it's paid for by Jesus if we believe in him.

So if we are confessing our sins, if we are believing in Jesus, the punishment for our sins has been taken by Jesus, and if Jesus has already taken the punishment for our sins, it would be unfaithful and it would be unjust for God to require that to be paid for again.

But God is not unfaithful and God is not unjust. He is faithful, he is just, he is good, he is kind, he is loving and he wants us to know that if we have confessed our sin, if we have believed in Jesus, we are forgiven and we can know that we have eternal life.

my dear children, he finishes with, I write this to you so that you will not sin, but if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

[73 : 14] He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. And John has just seen it to us again, so that we won't miss it.

It's the same message, just a slightly different angle. John is showing us that the wrath of God, the right anger of God that was caused by our sin has been taken from us.

Because on the cross, Jesus took it for us in our place. We sang it. Till on the cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied for every sin on him was laid.

and that's the promise. Why would you not confess your sin? When John is telling us that if we confess our sin, they're gone.

They're taken away. We are purified. We are saved. saved. And we can know that we have eternal life.

[74 : 33] Do you believe in Jesus? The God man? Are we striving to obey him as Christians who walk in the light and don't regress into the darkness?

And are we confessing our sin day by day? knowing the assurance of forgiveness and the joy that comes with that as we walk with the Lord Jesus?

We'll sing about that as we close. We'll sing the hymn from Mission Praise when we walk with the Lord. 760 in Mission Praise. When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds in our way.

While we do his good will, he abides with us still. And with all who will trust and obey. Amen. Lord, we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds God.

God, we walk with the Lord in the Lord in the Lord in the Lord. He abides with us still. And with all who will trust and obey.

[76 : 06] Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus. Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies, but a smile with he tries it away.

But we am so a care nor a desire.

God, by the ground in the end, O■, the with the love, the fr■ts and Lopez jong Leria luga Eternal in the exterior ministeren lina To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, but a joy he doth richly repay.

[77 : 16] Not a grief nor a loss, not a pride nor a cross, but it's blessed if we trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of his love until all on the altar we lay.

For the favor he shows and the joy he bestows, our forever will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

[78 : 27] Trust and obey. In fellowship street, we are saved at his feet, for from all by his time away.

What he says we will do, where he sends we will go. Never fear, only trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Amen. And 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. Amen.