

1.1.24 am New Years Day Service

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Date: 01 January 2024

Preacher: Farquhar MacLeod

- [0 : 00] Well, good morning everyone, and a very happy and prosperous new year to each and every one and with all those who join with us online.
- We pray that this year opening up before us would be a blessed year for each one of us when we would all be found walking closer with our Lord.
- And as we gather on this New Year's Day, let us praise and worship our gracious God, and we're going to sing in Psalm number 40, Psalm number 40, and at the beginning of the Psalm.
- I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear, down to the end of the verse marked five.
- In order none can reckon them to thee if them declare, and speak of them I would they more than can be numbered are. Psalm 40, verses 1 to 5, to God's praise.
- [1 : 18] I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear.
- And there to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.
- He took me from a fearful pit, and brought a mighty clay.
- And on a road he sent my feet, establishing my way.
- He put on you so in my mouth, a God to magnify.
- [2 : 29] Many shall see it and shall fear, and on the Lord rely.
- O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies.
- O Lord my God, for many are, the wonders thou hast done.
- Thy gracious thoughts to us were far, above our thoughts are gone.
- In order none can reckon them to thee if them declare, and speak of them I would they more than can be numbered are.
- [4 : 09] Amen. Let us unite our hearts in prayer. Let us all pray.
- Our gracious and almighty God, who has brought us together this morning, the morning of a new year's day.
- And we thank you, Lord, that you have brought us to this time and to this hour, with a measure of health and strength of mind and body, that allows us to go about our daily duties and chores.
- And as we are privileged to come into your house this morning and to wait upon thyself. We pray, Lord, that you, through your spirit, that we are in the presence of the all-seeing and the all-knowing God.
- And we thank you, Lord, for this new year that is opening up before us. A year that we do not know what it holds for us.
- [5 : 33] But we know that you hold the future. And that you are the one who will go before us into this new year. And as we reflect on a year that has closed behind us, it is a year that has brought much joy and happiness to many.

Those who have succeeded in the workplace. Those who have succeeded in relationships. Those who have formed new friends.

Those who have got houses for themselves for the first time. And those, Lord, who are walking closely with you.

And we thank you, Lord, for all those wonderful gifts. And on the other hand, there are those who this year passed.

They are glad to see the end of it. A year that brought sadness into their lives. Because the voice of death came very near to them.

[6 : 47] And our heart goes out to all those who mourn the loss of their loved ones. And they come before our mind's eye at this moment.

And we pray, Lord, that you yourself would draw near to them. That you would surround them with the arms of your love. And that you would comfort them and uphold them.

And there are those who have been laid aside with illnesses. Some for weeks and months.

And we are thankful that some of them are now home. And that they seem to be getting on pretty well. And we thank you, Lord, that that is the answer to many prayers.

And we pray that you would continue to lay your healing hand upon them. And restore them to health and strength again. Will that be your gracious will.

[7 : 54] Lord, we thank you, Lord, for your remembrance of us. For all your goodness. For all your mercies that we enjoy from your hand day by day.

Your hand is open to us in so many ways. And you provide for all of our needs. We pray this morning for all those who are still out with the fold of Jesus Christ.

Those who see no form of beauty or comeliness in thee that they would desire thee. We do not despise them, Lord, in any way. But we bring them lovingly to the throne of grace and of your mercy.

Knowing that you are the God who cares for them. The God who is saying to them, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden.

And I will give you rest. May the peace of God which surpasseth human understanding be their rich portion. And may they be drawn by the power of your spirit.

[9 : 03] To the eternal warmth and safety of your bosom. We pray, Lord, for the world in which we dwell. And in the year that has gone by there has been so many wars.

And rumors of wars. We have seen on our news and our TV screens the bloodshed that is taking place in Russia and Ukraine.

In Israel and in the Gaza Strip. And in many other countries of the world. Where soldiers are being called from the sin of time in the twinkling of an eye.

And not only that, but women and children likewise. Oh Lord, we pray that you would intervene and that you would make wars to cease.

And that people would study war no more. But that they would come to bow the knee to King Jesus. And to accept him as their Savior and Lord.

[10 : 19] And Lord, nothing is too big or small for you. And nothing is too difficult or too easy. But you are saying to us in your word.

Pray and believing that what you pray and ask for. That God is able to do it. And he will do it. And we thank you, Lord, for that wonderful promise.

We pray, Lord, for our own nation of Scotland. A nation that in times gone by sent missionaries all over the world.

A nation that was once known as the land of the book. But sadly that title has long departed these shores.

And we pray, Lord, that you would visit our nation once again. And that you would set our beloved Scotland on fire once again for your gospel and for your truth.

[11 : 24] And that men and women would stand up and be counted for you. And that they would not be ashamed to own their Lord or to defend his cause.

Maintain the glory of his cross and honor all his laws. We pray, Lord, for those who need you in special ways today.

We remember those who are housebound and whose desire it is to be with us in the place of worship. We remember them, Lord, and we pray that you would bless them.

You are not confined to a temple made by hands. But where you are sought, there you are found. And we pray that you would bless them at the point of their deepest need.

And that you would minister to them in all of their needs. We pray, Lord, for those who are in our care homes. And those who look after them so diligently and so faithfully.

[12 : 32] We pray that you would bless them and that you would undertake for them in their need. We pray, Lord, for our church worldwide.

That we would see your church growing. And that many would be brought to a saving knowledge of thyself. We pray for your servant, our ministers, who proclaim the riches of the gospel.

Lord's day by Lord's day and weekday by weekday. We pray, Lord, that the good seed of the gospel that is sown. That it would be watered by the prayers of your praying people.

And that you, our God, would give the increase in your good time. We pray, Lord, that we would see men and women and boys and girls in all tribes and tongues and kindreds to the ends of the earth.

That you, O Lord, would bring your sons from afar. And your daughters from the ends of the earth. And that we would see your kingdom extended with power.

[13 : 38] Glorious things being done in the name of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And your family circle being enlarged. We pray for our minister who is, and his family who is away from us at this time in a well-deserved brick.

We pray that you would restore them to, and renew them in their mind, spirit, and soul. And when the time comes for them to travel back home, that you would grant them traveling missions.

And when they come back, that they would take on again the mantle of the gospel that you have entrusted to them. We pray for your congregation here. We thank you, Lord, for brothers and sisters.

And we pray for the prayers of your praying people. Audible and those that rise up never heard, but they are heard by you. And will answer in your own good and perfect time.

And so, Lord, as we gather together on this first day of the year. First service of the year. We pray that each one of us will be conscious of your own closeness and nearness.

[14 : 55] That you would move from seat to seat, and from soul to soul. And that the touch of your spirit may be upon each one of us. And that we would know that you are in the very midst, for you have promised.

Where even the two or three are gathered in your name. That you will be in the midst in order to bless. And so, Lord, bless all we seek to do this day. As we sing your praises, as we read your word.

And as we seek to meditate upon it. May all that we do and say be to the honor, glory, and praise of your most holy name.

And the blessing be out. Continue with us, we pray. Cleanse us from all our sins. And accept of us freely. For we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. We will further sing to God's praise in hymn number 303.

[16 : 04] Hymn number 303. God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year. God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year.

God is working his purpose out, and the time is drawing near.

Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be.

God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year succeeds. And the time that shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

What can we do to work God's work, to prosper and increase?

[17 : 27] God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year succeeds. The brotherhood of all mankind, the reign of the prince of peace?

What can we do to haste the time, the time that shall surely be, when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God?

God is working his purpose out as year succeeds. The glory of God has the waters covered the sea. Let's sing. Let's sing. March. March free forth in the strength of God, with honor Christ unfurled.

That the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine throughout the world.

Fight me that fight with sorrow and sin to set the captives free.

[18 : 40] That the earth may fill with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

All we can do is nothing worth unless your blessings be.

Then we behold the harvest high till God gives life to the sea.

Yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be.

When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

[19 : 39] Let us now read a portion of God's word as we find that in the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews and chapter 12.

The epistle of Paul to the Hebrews chapter 12. Amen.

Amen. Speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.

For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

[21 : 46] Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the father of spirits and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure. But he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

Amen and so forth. We'll end our reading there. And may God bless to us the reading of his own holy and inspired word.

[22 : 59] We'll sing again in Psalm 91. Psalm 91 at the beginning of the psalm. And if we can sing verses 1 to 4, and then the last verse.

Lord, he that doth in the secret place of the Most High reside, under the shade of him that is, the Almighty shall abide.

And then the last verse. With length of days unto his mind, I will him satisfy. I also my salvation will cause his eyes to see.

So Psalm 91, verses 1 to 4, and then the last verse. He that doth in the secret place of the Most High reside. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[24 : 33] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hey, amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Amen. Faithfulness shall be a shield, and buckler unto thee.

[26 : 12] With length of days unto his might, I will him satisfy.

I also my salvation will cause his might to see.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. As we come to God's word, let's ask for his help and guidance.

Amen. O most gracious and almighty God, as we stand before your open word this morning, we thank you, Lord, for your word.

And we pray that you would speak into all of our hearts and souls. That your word would come alive to us. And that we would all be challenged by it.

[27 : 26] and that we could all of us say truly along with the psalmist of old not unto us Lord not unto us but do thou glory take unto thy name even for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake I ask Lord for the help and guidance of your spirit you know my weakness and you know my frailty and you know that I can do nothing without you but when you were with us in the passion of your Holy Spirit we are unable to do all things through Jesus Christ who is our upholder and our sustainer and so Lord we ask for your blessing to be upon your word and that you would make a glorious name for yourself this morning out of my weakness and out of my failures cleanse us we pray thee from all our sins and accept of us freely for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake

Amen Now for a short time together let us turn to the portion of scripture we read together in the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews chapter 12 and we can read again at verse 2 Fix your eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of a faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God and especially the beginning of the verse which says fixing our eyes upon Jesus at the beginning of a new year some of us tend to make new year resolutions and I'm sure that with every good intention to keep those resolutions but ultimately as time goes by maybe a week two weeks or even less than that we find that our resolutions have come to nothing so what better resolution to make at the beginning of a new year than to fix our eyes upon Jesus three things

I would briefly like to bring before you all today with the help and guidance of the spirit and the first thing is Jesus is our focus fix your eyes upon Jesus and the commentators tell us that the word fix comes from a Greek word and I'm not into Greek as we heard our friend last night but seemingly the word has the idea of concentrating our gaze on something or someone it means to look away from things so that we can focus all our attention on one object or one person

John Wesley the famous minister was out walking one day with a Christian friend his friend was going through a rough patch in his Christian walk and he was telling Wesley all his troubles and woes and as they walked on they came to a field with some cows in it and Wesley asked his friend why is that cow looking over the wall and a bit astounded by the question his friend said I don't know to which Wesley replied because she can't see through it and that is what you must do he said look away from all your problems and all your worries look to the one who was able to fix all your worries and that is what we must do as well friends we must fix our eyes lift our eyes from the troubles that afflict us lift your eyes and fix them on the

Lord Jesus Christ the one who is able to do all things and when you do that you will find that your troubles are taken the Lord Jesus Christ who is on the other side of them he not only knows your difficulties but he will also bring you through them and not only that but he will strengthen you and uphold you he will bless you in your Christian walk and there is one thing that God requires of each one of us and that is our trust that we trust in him Isaiah chapter 43 and verse 2 this is

[34 : 02] God's wonderful promise if we trust him when thou passest through the waters I will be with you that's God's promise and through the rivers they will not overflow you when you walk us through the fire thou shalt not be burned neither shall the flame kindle upon thee in Hebrews chapter 13 and the end of verses 5 and 6 I will never leave you nor forsake you so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me sin that wonderful promises from the Lord that is sound advice at the beginning of a new year none of us can tell what this year holds for us but we know who leads us into this new year we are to fix our eyes on

Jesus we can do that when we walk down the street we can do it while we were at our work we can do it in the still watches of the night when sleep deserts us do we fix our eyes on Jesus do we give him our undivided attention in Matthew's gospel chapter 14 and verses 22 to 32 we see Jesus walking on the water and Gordon touched on this in his service yesterday and when Peter Jesus is walking on the water and when Peter realizes that it is Jesus walking on the water he says to him Lord if it be thou bid me come unto thee on the water and

Jesus said come Peter climbed out of the boat and walked on the water towards Jesus but when he heard the howling wind and he saw the boisterous waves rising up he was afraid he was afraid and beginning to sink he cried out Lord save me while Peter had his eyes on Jesus he walked on the water it's when he took his eyes off Jesus that he began to sink you know my friends there's a lesson there for each one of us today a lesson where we have to fix our eyes on Jesus and when we do that we can do wonderful things not in ourselves but through the spirit that is in us our second point this morning is

Jesus is our example who for the joy set before him endured the cross scorning its shame two words in this little sentence that don't seem to go together joy and the cross the cross speaks of pain and suffering and there's certainly no joy in that but Jesus had to suffer its agony and its humiliation before receiving the joy someone once said no pain no gain no suffering no glory no cross no crown no tears no joy let's take a look at some of the glorious example

Jesus left us John chapter 13 and verses 1 to 17 Jesus washes the disciples feet shortly before this event took place the disciples had argued amongst each other who of them would be the greatest filled at that moment they must have been stunned or even ashamed but

[39 : 50] Jesus did not come to earth to be served he came to serve and to give his life a ransom for many Matthew 20 verse 8 one of the commentators said and I quote Jesus act of washing the disciples feet illustrated their spiritual cleansing Jesus is the one who forgives and the disciples had experienced the full cleansing of salvation and did not need to be bathed again in the spiritual sense salvation is a one time act of justification by faith what follows is the lifelong process of sanctification a daily washing away of the stain of sin unquote and we all need to come to

Jesus every day to have our sins forgiven Luke 22 and verse 19 tells us that he had his Jesus he took bread and gave thanks and break it and gave unto them saying this is my body which is given for you this do in remembrance of me likewise also the cup after supper saying this cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you this is what we did two weeks ago we sat down at the Lord's table once again and we partook of the elements of the broken body and the shed blood symbols of Christ's sacrifice for us we thanked

God as we partook of those elements and we thought of what Jesus did for us and the wonderful example he left to us do ye this in remembrance of me after that supper was over we followed Jesus to the garden of Gethsemane along with his disciples Luke 22 and verses 39 to 46 in verse 40 Jesus commands his disciples to watch and pray while he himself goes on a bit before kneeling and praying to God the Father and this is what Jesus prayed Father if thou be willing remove this cup from me nevertheless not my will but thine be done what was it in the cup that made

Jesus cry to the Father the words of that prayer well I can't speak for you but if it were only my sins compacted into that cup it would be more than enough to make him cry out but not only my sins in that cup but the sins of the whole world were compacted into that cup is a little wonder that Jesus recoiled at it that means the sins of all who trust and believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour now notice that little word all that means that every sin that you have committed past present and still to commit they are all compacted into that cup forgiven cleansed washed away

Luke chapter 2 and verse 44 and being in an agony he prayed more earnestly and his sweat was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground all the agony of Jesus as he suffered for his redeemed people did God the father leave the son to suffer alone no he didn't verse 43 tells us an angel appeared from heaven strengthening him but what about those who have not as yet given their heart to Jesus is there any hope for them well yes there is if you are still outside of the fold of

[45 : 27] Jesus Christ today then if you confess your sins and you accept Jesus as your savior and redeemer then your sins can also be washed clean away and our prayer is that the lord would do it and after Jesus after Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss and he was arrested Matthew 26 and verse 56 tells us that all the disciples forsook him and fled but Peter followed at a distance Peter who said to Jesus in Matthew 26 and verse 33 though all men shall be offended because of thee yet will

I never be offended and I'm sure we've all said that at some time and I'm sure Peter meant every word of it but let's see what happened in verse 70 Peter first denied Jesus said to Peter this night before the cock crows you will deny me three times and let's see what happened with Peter in verse 70 Peter first denial I know not what thou sayest verse 72 the second denial and again he denied with an oath I do not know the man verse 74 the third denial then he began to curse and to swear saying I know not the man and immediately the cock crows Jesus turns round and looks at

Peter is it a withering look is it a look that says I told you so Peter no it's a look of love a look of pity a look of compassion a look that melted and broke Peter's heart he went out and he wept bitterly did he weep because he was found out no he wept because he was deeply sorry for his sin deeply sorry for what he had done have you and I ever been in a bitter situation well if we're truthful we can all say that we have been again I can't speak for any of you but we all know our own heart in

Matthew chapter 27 we see Jesus falsely accused of many things but he does not answer anything the soldiers strip him of his clothes and put on him a scarlet robe they put a crown of thorns on his head they beat him with sticks they spit on him they kneel before him in mock worship and they scourge him that is whipping him with leather thongs with bits of bone and metal at the end of them and with every stroke of the whip his flesh is ripped open and in all this he never once retaliated he never uttered a word and this is what

Jesus has done for you and for me and for all those who are still out with the fold who would come to him confessing their sins and seeking his forgiveness Isaiah 53 and verse 7 says he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb so he openeth not his mouth what a wonderful example when we would probably when somebody reviled us we would retaliate and we would defend ourselves but Jesus he uttered not a word what an example and as he looks down from the cross he sees the Roman soldiers gambling for his clothes the criminals either side of him reviling him the religious leaders mocking him and the crowd blaspheming him surrounded by this unworthy bunch

[51 : 06] Jesus prays father forgive them for they know not what they do what an example Haw in John chapter 19 verses 26 and 27 despite this agony and suffering Jesus looks with pity on his mother and provides for her.

One of the commentators said, and I quote, First he saw her. What horror did he see on the face of his mother as she looked upon her crucified son?

Not only did he behold her, but he gave her his full attention. He made provision for her after his death.

Not just any provision, but he entrusted her to the disciple whom he loved. And that disciple took her to his own home.

The wonderful provision of Jesus. The wonderful example of Jesus. There are many more examples we could highlight, but time does not allow.

[52 : 45] The third and the final point is, Jesus is our hope. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day.

And if Jesus had not risen from the dead, then our hope, our faith, our everything does not exist. We are still dead in our trespasses and in our sins.

But we know and we believe that Jesus rose on the third day. He is alive forevermore. And he is at the right hand of the glory of God.

And he is interceding on our behalf at this very moment. Isn't that wonderful to behold that Jesus is praying for the likes of us?

But Jesus, after his resurrection, he did not go straight up to heaven.

[53 : 54] Acts chapter 1 and verse 3 mentions 40 days. Now the commentators don't agree with that at all.

They are divided about how long Jesus was on earth before he went up to heaven. And the reason Jesus did not go straight to heaven was that he appeared to the disciples and to many others.

Some put their finger in the imprints of the nails in his hand and his feet and put their hand in the wound of the spear in his side to make them realize and know that he was alive.

He ate bread with them. He made them touch him so that they would truly know that it was really him, the Lord.

Acts chapter 1 verse 9 tells of Jesus' ascension to heaven. The work the Father had given him was complete.

[55 : 13] There was nothing that could be added to that work. There was nothing that could be taken away from it. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12, 2 And Philippians 2, 9 and 11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow every tongue will confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus finished the race. We are still in our race. We are to fix our eyes on Jesus.

Not to turn to the right or to the left. Not to be distracted by the things of the world. And in the words of our own minister keep on going on.

Fixing our eyes upon Jesus. Fixing our eyes on Jesus and running the race with all our might.

[56 : 39] Heading for the finish line. Let none of us falter in the race set before us. The Lord Jesus has already run the race.

He is the captain of our salvation. Let us fix our eyes upon him in this opening year. In the opening day of the year.

And we know that all will go well. The story was told of a man that went out onto the hills one of the highest hills in the world.

And he had a guide with him to lead him up the mountain. Everything was going well until they came to a place where there was a landslide.

And the man thought this is the end of our journey up the hill. But the guide started inching his way across.

[57 : 45] And he said to the man coming behind him don't look down or you're dead. Watch where I put my feet and you put your feet in the same place.

And very soon they were on the other side and heading up the mountain. That is another wee lesson for us. We don't follow Jesus at a distance.

We don't go ahead of him. We go on side by side looking what he does. We do it as well. Fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

May it be so for us all. Amen. And may the Lord be pleased to bless anything on the mindset of his spirit. Let's pray.

Lord gracious and ever blessed God we do thank you for your word. And we pray Lord that each one of us would be found fixing our eyes upon Jesus.

[58 : 59] The one who has left us so wonderful an example who has given us hope the hope of life everlasting when we follow you and when we trust in you.

We pray Lord that you would bless our gathering together this day and that we would go on from here ever looking unto thee who art able to do for us and in us and through us far abundantly above anything that we could ever think or even hope.

Bless us now as we sing your praises in conclusion and may all the glory be yours and the blessing out. Cleansing us from all our sins and accepting of us freely we pray in Jesus name and for his sake.

Amen. Our final praise is hymn 611. 611 We'll sing the whole thing O God our help in ages past our hope for years to come our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home the verse 6 O God our help in ages past our hope for years to come be thou our guard while troubles last and our eternal home hymn 611 to the praise of God O God our help our hope O God our help in ages past our hope for years to come our shelter from the stormy from the stormy blast and our eternal home under the shadow of thy throne thy saints have dwelled secured sufficient is thine arm alone and our defense is sure before before the hills in order stood our peace he had frame from everlasting the

Lord God to endless years the same a thousand ages in thy sight are like an evening gone short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun time like an ever rolling stream clear solid suns away they fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day

[63 : 27] O God our help in ages past our hope for years to come be the world guard while troubles last and our eternal home now may grace mercy and peace from God the Father Son and Holy Spirit one God blessed forever rest and abide with each and every one of us and with all those whom we love and hold dear and with all of God's people everywhere this day forth and forever more Amen to