

2.10.22 pm

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Date: 02 October 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good evening and welcome to the service this evening. We're going to begin this time of worship as we sing to God's praise from Psalm 106. Psalm 106 in the first three stanzas of the Psalm in Gaelic verses 1 to 4. Give praise and thanks unto the Lord for bountiful is he his tender mercy doth endure unto eternity. God's mighty works who can express or show forth all his praise. Blessed are they that judgment keep and justly do always. Remember me Lord with that love which thou to thine dost bear with thy salvation oh my God to visit me draw near. These three verses of this Psalm to God's praise we sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing and after we've sung Angus M will lead us in prayer in Gaelic please.

Seeds Gruetis, which is a honoring for his honor and savior at N speaker for his beach and the church of the city is sang to pray for those who are mutually iS records.

5CCX vite bleuats and struses. 5C Shadow's His swanaga sky.

6CÄS deW Elizabeth populace. 6CCvic verse 4X vs. Thank you.

Thank you.

[2 : 24] Thank you.

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[4 : 54] Thank you.

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[7 : 24] Thank you.

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[9 : 54] Thank you.

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[12 : 24] Thank you.
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Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[15 : 24] Thank you.
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[17 : 54] Thank you.
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[20 : 54] Thank you.
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[25 : 54] Thank you.
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[28 : 54] Thank you.
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[31 : 54] Thank you.
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Thank you.

Thank you.

[34 : 24] Thank you. And you Autob voi We look at these characters and we think, these are the kind of guys that are never going to be afraid.

They just seem to be such solid, brave, strong men of God. And we can think about women of God as well. And we might think they would never shake, they would never wobble.

But the reality is that these characters in the Bible, like Abraham, they seem strong and they seem full of faith. But at times, they were afraid.

At times, they went from being in a place where they were full of faith to a place where they were full of fear. And that's where Abraham was at this point.

It's a kind of strange thing when you think about it. And if you glance back at the last chapter, Abraham is fighting superpowers. He doesn't seem to have any trace of fear.

[36 : 29] He goes forward in God's strength. He doesn't hesitate a minute. He's straight out there against these leaders, trying to rescue the relation that he loves.

He shows such courage. But now, after the victory, when things seem to be actually quite settled, he's scared. And we often see that in the Bible.

Think about Elijah. We see that story of Elijah. And he's on his own. And he's facing down 450 prophets of Baal.

And he stands firm. He's got this supernatural courage. But immediately after that victory, a woman called Jezebel comes and confronts him.

And he just melts. He goes to pieces. Or think about Peter, whom we love. Peter, who we've been looking at in the mornings just a couple of weeks ago.

[37 : 28] Peter, he shows so much courage in so many situations. He says to Jesus, remember, meaning it from his heart. Jesus, I will be with you wherever you go. Everyone else might desert you.

But even if it's to death, I'll be with you. You don't need to worry about me. I'll stay by your side. But all it took, remember, as we looked at it two weeks ago, was a little girl to ask him a question.

Are you not one of the guys that was with Jesus? And he just crumbles. He crashes. He denies Jesus.

So this is a lesson for us. This is a pattern that we need to note. Very often, victory will be followed by a crash.

Very often, in spiritual terms, when we have had a victory, an amazing experience, a mountaintop experience, very often, immediately after it, there will be a crash.

[38 : 42] Very often, when we think we are secure, to put it another way, when we're feeling just spiritually top of the world, we're actually at our most vulnerable.

1 Corinthians 10 and verse 12, Paul gives us a short lesson in that. He says, And Abram here, he seems to be, he seems to be, he hasn't fallen, but he's stumbling with fear.

He's shaking with fear. And the Lord sees that. He sees this, this kind of faith crash that is going on in Abram's experience at that time.

So, so what comes next? Abram, he's, he's starting to shake. He's starting to wobble. So what needs to be done to, to address that? Well, that takes us to our second point.

There's the crash, first of all. And the second thing we see here is that Abram, he, he comes to God in prayer. And we see that in verses two and verse three.

[39 : 56] But Abram said, Oh, sovereign Lord. And that's a great thing to underline. Now, when we're starting to, to have a, a crisis of faith, when we're starting to, to find that spiritually speaking, we're, we're awake at three o'clock in the morning.

The thing that we need to remember constantly is that God is sovereign. You know, everything might look chaotic. Everything might look to, to be, to be falling apart in our lives.

But if, if you want medicine that will stabilize you, it's the remembrance of the fact that even though it might not always look like it, God is sovereign. He's still in control.

And Abram, he, he remembers that. And Abram says, Oh, sovereign Lord, what can you give me? Since I remain childless, and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus.

And Abram said, you have given me no children. So a servant in my household will, will be my heir. So Abram here, he, he comes to God in prayer.

[41 : 04] You know, this is actually the first recorded prayer that we have of, of Abram. This great man of faith. This is the first prayer that we have recorded that comes from Abram's lips in the Bible.

And it's a, it's a real, honest, simple, gritty prayer. Abram, see, he, he has a big problem.

He has no children. He, he has no heir. And he can see no future in terms of his people and his estate and the direction of his, of his family.

So, so what does he do as he feels his anxiety, as he feels this, this stress? Well, he, he takes it to the Lord in prayer. It's heavy on his heart.

It's filling his mind. It's causing him to wobble. And so he takes it all to the Lord in prayer. He doesn't sulk. Which I think probably often is what we do, isn't it?

[42 : 13] You know, when things are not working out the way we want. When we've been asking God for something, when we're hanging on to a promise and it doesn't seem to be happening, then our tendency and our, our fallen nature is to, is to want to turn away from God.

We stop speaking. We take the huff. But Abraham doesn't do that. He doesn't go away from the Lord. He comes to God in prayer.

And it's real, honest prayer. He has doubts. The Lord can see he has doubts and fears.

But in order for Abraham's doubts to be dealt with, in order for Abraham's doubts to be overcome, he needs to come to the Lord because it's the Lord who can deal with these doubts.

And so, so he comes to the Lord and he asks for that help in prayer. If you want a parallel in the New Testament, think about Thomas in John chapter 20.

[43 : 19] Thomas is doubting. He's in a, a faith crisis. But the doubts of Thomas are overcome through spending time with Jesus and through speaking to and listening to Jesus.

And so we have an example here. We have, we have an instruction here for us to follow. At times, we will face problems. At times, things will not work out the way that we, that we want them to work out.

At times, there will be doubts that crash into our lives. At times, there will be fears that grip us. So how do we deal with these things?

Well, we come to the Lord in prayer. I mean, it's not rocket science, this is it? You've heard this a hundred times before. But you and I need to hear this over and over and over again.

I so often quote that, that hymn, you'll be sick of me quoting it. What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry.

[44 : 36] Everything. Even our doubts. Even our fears. Even the things that we, that we might think we're not able to, to speak to God about. He wants us to bring them all to him in prayer.

And there's another thing to note here before we, we move on from this point. It's just an instruction on how we pray. And Abraham here, he teaches us how we're to pray in this kind of situation.

You know what he does? He just takes the problem, he takes his fears, he takes his doubts, he takes his struggles, and he just spreads it out before God. He just tells him.

He tells the Lord why he's fearful. He tells the Lord what it is that's bothering him. And that is prayer. You know, prayer is not a negotiation where we try to persuade the Lord to adopt our way of thinking.

You know, prayer is not a negotiation where we try to get the Lord and twist his arm to implement our solutions. Prayer is the means whereby we spread out our problems before him.

[45 : 52] And we just ask him to act. And when he does act, what we so often see is that his solutions are far higher and far greater and far more glorious than anything that we could ever have asked for.

So we just have to lay our problems out before the Lord, hand them over, and ask him to deal with them. You know, I'm sure you've got things in your life that burden you just as I have in mine.

And we look at situations, we look at people we love, we look at scenarios and we think, I don't know what the answer is to this. How do I pray about this?

And really all we have to do is just take the thing and pass it over to the Lord in prayer and say, will you please act?

I don't know how to deal with this. I can't see a way through this. I don't know what the answer is, Lord, but will you please, for your glory, for the encouragement of your people, for the salvation of souls perhaps, will you act?

[47 : 12] Will you intervene? And that essentially is what Abraham is doing here. He comes to God in prayer with his doubts, with his struggles, with his fears, with his problem.

He hands them over. And he's acting, he's asking the Lord to act. So there's a faith crash for Abraham and then he comes to God in prayer.

And from that point onwards, things begin to improve. And that gets us to our third point, which is probably as far as we're going to get tonight. And in point three, we see here that confidence, Abraham's confidence, his faith, is restored through God's word.

Verse four. Then the word of the Lord came to him, Abraham. This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.

And what God is doing here is he is, he's giving assurance to Abraham that the promises that he gave to Abraham in the past, they're true and they're going to come true.

[48 : 26] And when God speaks here, there is clarity. Abraham has been given a little insight into what God had planned for him and as he speaks with God and as God speaks with him, there's more definition given to this plan, there's more clarity given to Abraham as he looks to the future.

And this is so often the way that God works. It's very rare that the Lord gives you and I a ten-year plan. In fact, often he just gives us a ten-minute plan.

He gives us enough information for us to take the next step in faith. And then as we spend time with him, as we're close to him, as we're in the world, he gives us a wee bit more and a wee bit more, a wee bit more grace, a wee bit more clarity, a wee bit more assurance.

And that's what Abraham is receiving here. As God speaks to him, as he prays and speaks to God, and as God speaks to him through his word, he gives him clarification on how this promise that Abraham has been given will be fulfilled.

A son will come, says the Lord to Abraham, and that son will come from your body. Even though you're almost a hundred years old, nothing is impossible for the Lord.

[49 : 47] And this son, says the Lord, will come from your own body, which is nothing short of supernatural, but that is who God is.

So Abraham's doubts and his fears, his questions, are answered through God's spoken word. And you don't have to think too hard to think about how this applies to you and me.

You know, we need God's word. We need God's word. It's the answer to everything. In terms of the doubts that we have, this is where they're addressed.

In terms of the fears that plague us, this is where they're dealt with. In terms of the questions that we have when we're looking at a road ahead and we don't know which way to go, this is where we get direction, this is where we get clarity.

We need God's spoken word. And Abraham, he receives God's spoken word at this point. But there's more here. Because God in his grace and his patience, he doesn't just speak with words.

[51 : 01] In verse 5, the Lord speaks with pictures. Boys and girls, have you ever gone outside at night, on a clear night, and tried to count the stars?

Yeah? Miriam said, yeah? How did you get on? How many stars were there? Could you see? A lot.

A lot, yeah. But what was the number? That many? Can you count the stars? Michael?

No, there's just too many. And that's the illustration that the Lord uses with Abram. He takes him outside and he says, look up to the heavens.

Count the stars, if indeed you can count them. Then he said to him, so shall your offspring be. God in his patience and his grace and his goodness, he shows Abram this picture that he's going to see every clear night.

[52 : 09] and I'm sure this was of great help to Abram. On a clear night when his faith may have been starting to shake, he looks up to the skies and he sees the stars and he remembers this conversation where the Lord takes him out and says to him, there's a picture of my promise to you.

And it says that in verse six, Abram believed the Lord and he credited to him as righteousness.

Abram believes and he's made righteous through that faith. And you know, that's the message of the Bible for us.

Boys and girls, tell me, how are we saved? How are we made right with God? John, what do we have to do to be made right with God?

Put your hand up if you think you know. Do we have to attend 4,000 services? Do we have to memorize 726 Bible verses?

[53 : 29] Do we have to do 3,200 good works? Yes? No? So what do we have to do, Michael?

We have to pray. That's a good answer, yeah? I'm looking for a wee bit more. Lois, we have to believe.

We have to believe in God's word. That's what Abraham did. God speaks to him. He shows him this picture of the stars.

He gives him this promise which is supernatural, which is more than his mind can grasp. grasp. And it says that Abraham believed the Lord and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness.

And so, you know, boys and girls and all of us here, we are made righteous. We are saved through believing God's word.

[54 : 41] God. It's not about what we are doing. It's not about the level of religion that we can attain. We are saved simply by believing in God's word.

Or more specifically, we are saved by believing in the word made flesh. Jesus. Think of the text that we're so often in.

For God so loved the world that he sent his only son so that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

For those who are keen, you can go home and read Romans 4. Paul teaches a sermon on that one, but I'm not going to it just now. But what we can take away with us tonight as we leave is Abraham believed God's word and he was saved.

He was made righteous because of that. And the question for us as we go out the door is do we believe in God's word? Do we believe in God's son, the word made flesh who lived and died and rose for us so that we can be saved?

[56 : 05] the only way we can have confidence in our salvation, the only way that you and I can be made righteous is through believing in him.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. And we'll sing that hymn to close. The words on the screen.

There is one more point when we come back to it on week and Wednesday. But we'll sing to conclude now My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less. My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less On Jesus' Blood And Righteous Death No merit of my own I pay But only just in Jesus' name On Christ the Solid Rock I stand All other ground this sinking sun

When we begin this earthly race I rest on His unchanging grace In every wild and stormy gale My unclered hopes that will not fail on Christ the solid rock I stand All other ground this sinking sun His through through through His covenant and blood are my defense against the flood When earthly hopes are swept away He will uphold me on the day on

Christ on Christ's solid rock I stand All other ground is sinking sun When the last and the last trump shall sound Oh may I let him be found God in his righteousness alone For best to stand before his Lord On Christ the solid rock I stand All other ground is sinking sand And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore

[59 : 39] Amen Amen