

## 26.1.25 am

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Date: 26 January 2025

Preacher: Duncan MacPherson

[0:00] Good morning service this morning, a special welcome to the visitors who are with us, I notice one or two on the door, it's lovely to see you, our own ministers away preaching in Shabbos today at their communion services.

I'll not go through all the notices, you've seen them on the screen and you'll have had the email about them, just to remind everyone that there's a community lunch tomorrow from 12 to 2 and also there will be a fundraising brunch for free church youth camps at the church on Saturday the 1st of February from 9 until 12.

So takeaways are available for that and for the community lunch tomorrow so please do support that if you can. And another key thing I just want to highlight, Presbytery Oversight Visit will happen on February the 12th, so that's where members of Presbytery will visit the congregation.

But in advance of that meeting they're asking for the views of the congregation in order to help us think through how we can better serve Christ within our local community here.

So most of you will have received an email already and as I said, David said last week there's paper copies of a survey of a questionnaire out on the table outside.

[1:18] I've topped them up this morning for anyone who would like to take one away. And if you wish to say something, please do take one of those forms and fill it in and return it.

If you're doing the paper version, just put it in an envelope and mark it Presbytery Oversight Visit and they will be given to the committee. If there's anything you want to say of a sensitive nature, please feel free to say that.

We won't see your responses directly, but we'll get feedback from the committee. But the committee also say if you don't put your name on the form, they will have to discard the form.

So please do put your name on and just so they know that it's someone linked to the congregation who has been giving information to them. And then if you put that date in the diary and if you can come to the prayer meeting on the 12th of February, that would be great.

And hopefully the visit will be one that will be productive for all of us. I think these are all the intimations. So we will commence our worship today by singing to God's praise.

[2:30] And we're going to sing Psalms 24. And this is where I find Sing Psalms isn't here, so I need it on the screen. The world and all in it are gods, all peoples of the earth, for it was founded by the Lord upon the seas beneath.

Who may ascend the hill of God or in his temple stand? The one who shuns false gods and lies, who's pure in heart and hand. We'll be thinking about holiness in the Christian life today.

So those words are very appropriate. We shall sing the whole of this psalm. Sing Psalms 24 to God's praise. The world and all in it are gods, all peoples of the earth.

For it was founded by the Lord upon the seas beneath.

Who may ascend the hill of God or in his temple stand?

[3:55] The one who shuns false gods and lies, who's pure in heart and hand.

He will find favor from the Lord and from his Savior grace.

Thus are they blessed, O Jacob's God, who truly seek your face.

You ancient gifts, lift up your hands. Your doors be opened wide.

So may the King of glory come forever to abide.

[5:17] But who is this exalted King? What glorious King is He?

It is the Lord of strength and might. The Lord of victory.

You ancient gifts, lift up your hands. You doors be opened wide.

And wide. So may the King of glory come forever to abide.

But who is this exalted King? Who can this sovereign be?



And we pray, Lord, for the continuing difficulties in Israel and Gaza. And we pray, Father, that in your mercy, you would give people times of peace, that they would be able to get food to eat, that the injured would get treated, and that, Lord, places would be rebuilt.

But we recognize, Lord, where people have such different views of the world. Conflict is always a possibility, and indeed an inevitability. Inevitability. But we thank you, Lord, that the Lord Jesus Christ came to bring peace.

And we pray, Lord, for the spread of your gospel, that he would put his peace into the hearts of many, Muslims and Jews alike, and that, Lord, he would bring together people from totally different backgrounds to worship you in spirit and in truth through his name.

And it is in that name that we pray, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Okay, boys and girls, do you want to come down the front? Amen. Amen.

[ 13 : 35 ] Amen. Great to see you all again.

It's great to be in a church that's so lovely pitted out as ours is. Nice walls, nice windows to keep the weather out. Many, many years ago I worked in West Africa, and churches there were much simpler than what we have here.

They were made of mud brick, and the floors would be mud. Sometimes we'd put a bit of cement on the top of the floor, and we'd have benches sitting there.

But the windows would just be open, because the temperature outside wasn't like 4 or 5 degrees like it is today. And it's not like it is inside. I think it's maybe about 20 degrees in here at the moment.

But where I was, it would typically be 34 degrees each and every day. So you didn't need to bother about windows, because it was always very, very hot, and you wanted the heat to get out.

[ 14 : 40 ] For the same reason, lots of churches didn't have doors either. You could just walk in and out at will. And that was fine. But there was always a problem. Occasionally things came into church that you didn't like.

I remember one day, I was sitting in church, and the minister was reading from the Bible, and then there was a big noise outside as two dogs started to fight. And the next thing, one dog came flying through the window in front of me.

And he landed on the floor right at my feet. And it was actually my neighbour's dog. And he'd been running away from another one, jumped through the window, and seeing me, it just shot underneath the bench behind my feet, and he stayed there until the end of the service.

You're not going to have that in Harris very often, I don't think, are you? But there was another day, a friend of mine, who was a missionary, she was in a church, and she was sitting listening to the sermon, when all of a sudden there was a big commotion at the back.

And everyone who was sitting there, suddenly got out of the seats and they jumped back. Have you any idea what was happening there? Any guesses? No? No? I think you'd do really well if you guessed this one.

[ 15 : 47 ] What had happened was, a snake had come into the back of the church, and everyone just jumped out of the seats and ran back. Now what do you think they did next? There was a big ring of about 10 or 15 or 20 people and the snake was there.

What do you think they did next? Any guesses? Hmm? Left the church. Left the church? That would have been quite wise, wouldn't it? You want to stay clear of any snake. You know what happened? They all jumped back and then the snake was there, and it was like, oh, it's a snake. And they started moving forward a bit, but keeping a bit of a distance, and all of a sudden it would lift its head up, and everybody would jump back again.

And then they did it a second time, walking forward towards the snake, and then they started to move towards them, and everybody ran away. But they still didn't do anything about it. Apart from one guy.

Any ideas what he might have done? Any ideas? Hmm? Grabbed it. Where would you grab a snake? Go on, Nancy.

[ 16 : 51 ] It's a snake. That's wise if you can do that, but I think he wasn't a snake handler, so he wasn't grabbing by the neck. What he did was there was an old man sitting in the congregation with a stick.

You don't grab a snake by the tail. He got a stick off this old man. He walked up to the snake, and he's like, quack, quack, quack, and he beat it to death.

Was that a good idea? Yeah. It was, wasn't it? It was just the thing you needed to do, because that snake could have bitten somebody, and they could have died. And regularly people died in the area where I was living from being bitten by snakes.

Can you think, you know, when you think about how many people there were in that place, and at first they ran away from the snake, and then they went towards it, and then they ran away again, and they went towards it.

But there was just one guy who went and hit the snake, and he killed it. Now, can you think of a situation in the Bible where people didn't do the right thing with a snake?

[18:05] Adam and Eve, that's it, in the Garden of Eden. They listened to the snake rather than listening to God. They paid attention to something they shouldn't have paid attention to.

And that is what brought sin into the world. And that's why, even to this day, we are terrified of snakes, and quite rightly so. And we associate sin with snakes.

And it's actually really interesting that that example in that church was a really good example of how we had to deal with sin. A snake came in, people saw it, and they were immediately terrified, and they jumped up and they ran away.

But there was also something attractive about that snake. So folks started going towards it again. But then when it threatened them once more, they went back. But there's still something attractive there.

And so most people were looking at the snake, but one guy had the right ID, he got the stick, and he beat it to death. And there's words in Colossians where Paul says to believers, he said, put to death whatever belongs to sinful nature.

[19:09] Now there's all sorts of sins within our own hearts. You know, we may think of cheating other people. We may think of lying. We may think of fighting with our brothers or our sisters.

In some ways, there's something always attractive about these things. If you cheat someone, it's like you've made a benefit for yourself, even though you've done them down. If you tell lies, you may be hiding something that you've done wrong and you don't want to be found out.

But it's just like the attractiveness of that, it's not good because it destroys you just like a snake would. So the important thing, Paul said, is put to death sin.

So when you think sinful thoughts, if you want to do sinful things, you must say immediately, banish them from the mind, away, and always think on Christ instead. Think of Christ who died for your sin and the price of that cost.

And that is something that can protect you from temptation when it comes. Put to death sin, Paul said, like the man with the snake, don't give it any time, but put it to death.

[20:19] Big challenge for each and every one of us here today. Let's pray. Lord, our Father, we thank you that you have given us your word and we thank you that your word is true.

We thank you, Lord, that Christ conquered sin upon the cross and that, Lord, you do indeed give us the means with which to put sin to death.

We pray for each one of us that we would live for Christ rather than living for sin and enable us to put it to death each and every day in our lives, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Our next item of praise is Mission Praise 237. It's the hymn Holy, Holy, Holy. Lord God Almighty, early in the morning a song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity. Let's sing this hymn to God's praise. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, through the Mary in the morning, her song shall rise to thee.

[21:55] Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, Lord, in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy, all the saints adore thee, casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea. Cherubim of Seraphim, falling down before thee, which where the diamond evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide thee, though the eye of sinful God thy glory may not see. Only thou art holy, there is God beside thee, perfect in power, perfect in power, love and purity.

[23:46] Holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, all thy heart shall praise thy name, holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty, Lord, in three persons, blessed Trinity.

through Trinity.

this morning is from the book of Colossians and we shall start at chapter 2 and verse 13.

Colossians 2 and verse 13.

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us. He took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Therefore, do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration, or a Sabbath day.

These are a shadow of the things that were to come. The reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize.

[ 26 : 09 ] Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews grows as God causes it to grow. Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belong to it, do you submit to its rules?

Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch. These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Since then you have been raised with Christ. Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ and God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways in the life you once lived, but now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these. Anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other, and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you, and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you are called to peace, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Amen.

And may God bless this reading of his word. Now we shall sing once more this time in Gaelic, and we're going to sing a couple of verses from Psalm 15. I'll just read the whole psalm from the New International Version here. It asks a very similar question to the psalm, Psalm 24, that we sang at the beginning of your service, of our service. Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless, and who does what is righteous? Who speaks the truth from his heart, and has no slander on his tongue? Who does his neighbor no wrong, and casts no slur on his fellow man? Who despises a vile man, but honors those who fear the Lord? Who keeps his oath, even when it hurts?

[ 29 : 59 ] Who lends his money without usury, and does not accept a bribery against the innocent? A bribe against the innocent? He who does these things will never be shaken. We shall sing verses 1 and 2 to God's praise.

Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? Lord, who may live on your holy hill? Who may live on your holy hill? Who may live on your holy hill?

Lord, who may live on your holy hill? Who may live on your holy hill? Who may live on your holy hill?

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS ORCHESTRA PLAYS

[ 32 : 58 ] ORCHESTRA PLAYS There's one notice I forgot to say at the beginning.

And Cammie is going to say a few words to us about the conference next week. So I think he's way off to Sunday school. So if we remain behind after the benediction, just take a seat for a minute, and Cammie will give us an update on the arrangements for the conference that are taking place.

That would be grand. So if we can turn back to our reading in Colossians. And we're going to focus principally on Colossians 3, but just starting in Colossians 2, we started in verse 13 to get a bit of context.

And just, as I was saying earlier, thinking very much about this idea of holy living for the Christian, because this is what Paul is exhorting the Colossians to do.

And like many churches, they got themselves into a bit of difficulty being misled this way and that by certain wrong teaching and by certain individuals. So he's seeking to put them back on the right track.

[ 34 : 49 ] And in order to get them on the right track, at verse 13 of chapter 2, he comes out with this amazing statement. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ.

He's speaking there about the amazing transformation that occurs when somebody comes to Christ. They were dead in their sins, and yet God comes in and makes them alive in Christ and with Christ.

They are brought to life. And that life is in every individual Christian believer. It is that life that enables them to look to Christ for salvation.

It is that life that enables the believer to rejoice in the salvation that he has. And it is that life that enables the believer to persevere in the Christian faith against all the odds.

And, um, Paul puts that, uh, front and foremost and center, uh, of the message that he is giving here. Uh, and all the later parts derive from it.

[ 36 : 01 ] Because as we go through, um, this, the reading here, we get to things like verse 16. Therefore, do not let anyone judge you. Because you were dead in your sins, but are now alive in Christ.

Do not let anyone judge you. Uh, verse 20, since you died with Christ, the basic principles of the world. Another sense in there. And, uh, he's saying, don't merely follow human, uh, commands, because you died with Christ, and you're now alive with Christ, uh, again.

And, uh, a key thing that's behind all these things, uh, is, well, why should we avoid, uh, these human commands? Uh, and Paul sums it all up, uh, in verse 23, when he says, that these regulations have an appearance of wisdom.

They've got an appearance of it. Uh, whereas what he wants to give people, and what he wants everybody to have, is the reality, uh, of wisdom that comes in Christ. And it's the reality of that living, loving relationship, uh, that each believer has, uh, with Christ.

And he's therefore, uh, wanting them to live in the way that Christ wants them to live. So the beginning, uh, of, uh, chapter three, he says, since then you have been raised with Christ.

[ 37 : 21 ] Set your hearts on things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And this introduces, uh, our first point, which is, uh, the Christian's privilege, uh, and the, the privileged position, uh, that we have.

As we saw in, in two, verse 20, you died with Christ. And we have it in chapter three, verse three as well. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

You died, uh, along with Christ. You died to sin, uh, and to the consequences of sin upon the cross. It's one of those amazing things, uh, that, uh, for anyone who is in Christ, it is as if we ourselves were on the cross with Christ, uh, when he died.

Uh, because he bore our sin in his body, uh, upon the cross, and he took it away and dealt with it. It's therefore the reality that we died, uh, with Christ in that situation.

But more than that, as we see, uh, in verse one, you have been raised with Christ. It's a wonderful thing that Christ died, uh, because of sin.

[ 38 : 35 ] Uh, but if all he did was die, uh, we would really have no hope, uh, at all. Uh, but in dying and being a perfect man, death itself couldn't hold Jesus in the grave.

Any one of us can die, and we deserve to be in the grave, because the wages of sin is death. Uh, that is the inevitable consequence of sin. But Jesus, as the one who was perfect and holy, went into the grave, and the grave couldn't hold him, uh, for more than a couple of days, because he himself was perfect, and he broke free, uh, from the grave, breaking the power of death.

And the wonderful thing is that for everyone who has died in Christ, they have been raised with Christ. They, too, have been born, uh, to a new life. They, too, are free from the power, uh, of death. When we, uh, come to the end of our days, if we are in Christ, we pass through, uh, the valley of the shadow of death. I was reading recently, and I think it was Spurgeon, speaking, uh, on Psalm 23. And he said, for the Christian, they travel through the valley of death, not in the valley of death. He says, it's like going through someone's porch to get into the house. It's not a destination in and of itself.

[ 39 : 58 ] We've been, we died with Christ, we've been raised with Christ. The next part of our privilege, uh, is that each and every one of us is hidden with Christ. Uh, verse three, your life is now hidden, uh, with Christ in God.

What a wonderful thought, uh, to be hidden with Christ. We are united, uh, to Christ by faith, so close to him as to be hidden, uh, within Christ, so that our sins can't be seen.

Uh, we're protected, uh, from that. Uh, although, uh, on this earth, we may be taunted and troubled, uh, by the devil, yet he cannot, uh, take us out of Christ's hand.

The law that demands, uh, punishment, uh, for sin, uh, we are hidden from that too. Uh, there's no consequences, uh, for the believer because Christ himself, uh, has taken the consequences.

But more than that, uh, we're not simply hidden in Christ, we're hidden in Christ, in God. It's like a double protection going on in there.

[ 41 : 07 ] Christ, we are safe in Christ, and Christ is safe in God. Uh, in, uh, heaven with his father, uh, in all eternity.

Uh, and it's just a wonderful concept that the double and the sure protection, uh, that the Christian, uh, has, uh, in Christ. As Paul said in Romans 8, 38 and 39, nothing can separate us from the love of God.

And, uh, the final part of the privilege, uh, that we see, uh, in this section here is that when Christ, who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

You, the believer, will appear with Christ in glory. There's a, the reality is that when we go, uh, to be, uh, with Christ, we enter into his glory.

But equally, when he comes back to this earth, he doesn't just come back on his own, but he says he will bring all his holy ones with him. All those who have believed in Christ down the ages will come with him.

[ 42 : 10 ] And for those who are on earth at the time of his return, each and every one of them will also appear with him in glory at that point, because Christ is bringing his glory with him.

And those who are in Christ will be shown to be in that glory. And those who are outside of Christ will be terrified, uh, of that glory. Because Christ's glory is about the revelation, uh, of himself, uh, and of his father.

God's glory is about us knowing, uh, the true majesty and the might of him. And the more we know of him, uh, the more he is glorified. And the more we proclaim him, the more he is glorified.

And Jesus Christ will be truly known when he comes back, uh, at the end of time. There will be no mistaking anything about Christ in that time. And believers will appear with him in glory.

That is our privilege. Every believer has died with Christ, has been raised with Christ, has hidden with Christ, and will appear with him in glory. And this acts as a wonderful foundation, uh, for what Paul says next.

[ 43 : 22 ] Uh, and, uh, my second point here is the Christian's duty. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. And he goes to expand on that, uh, on the next number of verses.

And I think, um, um, I'm jumping ahead. I'll need, I'll need a step back. I, I, I'm jumping ahead.

I'm going to go too quickly here. That comes up as point number two under the Christian's duty. The first point under the Christian's duty is the holy direction. And, uh, we're seeing there, you've been raised with Christ, uh, in verse one.

So therefore he says, set your hearts on things above. Uh, our hearts are to be with Christ. That is where we are to be. Even though we're living on this earth, our hearts, uh, are to be with Christ.

And if we think of Matthew six and 21, Jesus said, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. And we often think of that terms very much.

[ 44 : 21 ] And if we've got lots of treasure on earth, and that is the one thing that we're living for, that's where our heart is. Uh, but he's also saying quite clearly, if I am your treasure, that's where

your heart will be.

And, uh, Jesus has unsearchable riches. And therefore for everyone, uh, who is in Christ, their hearts should be where the truly unsearchable riches are.

The riches that cannot be counted. Uh, the riches that we can spend the whole of eternity, uh, exploring. And if you're not in Christ, then the invitation is there quite clearly to you, to set your heart upon Christ, and to seek, uh, him, uh, in, in heaven, in glory, uh, and set your hearts in that position, so that you may have the right treasure, uh, in this world.

And our hearts are with Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God. Christ, uh, the one who is a great high priest, has finished his sacrifice.

It's complete. He has sat down as a priest. His work is over, uh, in that respect. But he continues to intercede, to pray for his people, to pray, to continue that role of the priest in presenting, uh, the people to God, and presenting our imperfect prayers, uh, to the holy God.

[ 45 : 42 ] So that is where our hearts should be. And our minds, uh, also, uh, should be there.

Verse 2, set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Our whole inner being, uh, ought to be, uh, upon the reality, uh, of being with Christ in heaven. It's not simply a heart issue, but it's a mind issue, our hearts and minds working together.

Um, it's very easy. If we only apply our minds, uh, to an issue, to become cold and dry, uh, in our Christian faith. If we only apply our hearts to an issue, uh, we can mislead ourselves, uh, with our feelings at times.

But if we combine our minds and our hearts together, we have that correct and proper view of Christ our Savior. We need a holy direction as part of a Christian duty.

Second point, we have to have a holy putting to death. Uh, verse 3, put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature.

[ 46 : 52 ] A holy slaying, a holy killing of everything that is wrong. It's the kind of words that make us feel a little bit uncomfortable, perhaps, because in our own day and age, we can think, uh, of particularly Islamic terrorism, uh, where the view is you want to kill, uh, people outside yourself, the infidels, the unbelievers.

Uh, but what Jesus says is the problem isn't outside, the problem is inside. Even for the believer, there is a problem remaining inside of indwelling sin.

And therefore, we should not be seeking to put other people to death, but we need to put to death everything inside us that belongs to the earthly sinful nature.

We have to be done with it. And he lists, uh, a whole load of things, uh, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. All of these things, they just give you the idea of the corruption, uh, of sin, uh, that goes on within our hearts.

And he says, we're to put that to death. And all of this arises because of the position that we have with Christ. We have that privileged position. And Christ is holy.

[ 48 : 08 ] God himself cannot look on holiness. Uh, and therefore, we need to be holy to be in Christ's presence. As, uh, the writer to the Hebrews said, without holiness, no one will see the Lord.

We have all this great cluster of things described there that cause, uh, corruption. And he's telling us to put them all to death. Why? Because verse six, the wrath of God is coming.

And, uh, in a variant reading, it can be the wrath of God is coming upon those who are disobedient.

And, uh, we all know that God is holy.

God wants to put sin, uh, to death. He has dealt with sin upon the cross, uh, in the form of his son. Uh, and yet we still live, uh, in this sinful world.

So why hasn't he come yet? Or why won't he come today? In scripture, where a number of reasons are revealed behind that, uh, very worryingly for those who are not in Christ.

[ 49 : 16 ] Uh, if we look in the old Testament, God talks of, um, his wrath being stored up, uh, against nations that are sinful. And talking about his wrath is not having reached its full message, measure yet against sin.

In terms of, uh, dealing with believers, uh, we're also told that Jesus isn't going to return until the full number of, of those, uh, whom he has chosen in eternity, uh, are drawn into the church.

The elect are still being called in, uh, to God's kingdom. And, uh, that is why, uh, in scripture, Paul is very strong that today is the day of salvation.

Because the reality is God's wrath remains upon sin. God has to deal with it and he will deal with it. And that could come, uh, at any point. Any of us, uh, could be called today into God's presence.

Uh, and the reality is today is the day of salvation, says Paul. Do not put this off because the wrath of God is a real, uh, and, uh, a living, uh, reality.

[ 50 : 26 ] There's a warning there, uh, that we should not tinker and we should not play, uh, with sin. I want to note here that this is a very active process.

Verse five, put to death, uh, Paul says, uh, and verse, um, eight, but now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these.

Rid yourself. You need to throw these things out, get them out of your life. And, uh, as I was thinking on this, I was thinking it's very much like, if you think of a compass, uh, in life, we all know compasses face to magnetic north.

But if you put a piece of metal next to a compass that's magnetized, it will actually draw that needle away. If you go into the coolant hills on sky with a compass, your compass is useless because the rocks themselves are magnetic and they take the compass and they drag it off in the wrong direction.

But as soon as you come out of the coolant hills, the compass works again. And I think this is very much, uh, like what happens in the Christian life. You have been born again.

[ 51 : 38 ] You've been given new life. Your compass is pointing in a direction towards Christ. And the sad thing about sin and the sad thing for the Colossians was they were getting drawn away because someone was coming in with false teaching.

And it was like another magnetized piece of metal, uh, that was drawing that away. But all that Paul needed to do was to teach these people, put to death these things, throw out, uh, all the things that don't belong.

Rid yourself of these things. And if the compass itself was clear, it would turn back, uh, to pointing in the right direction. Our compass will point back to Christ if we actively put sin to death, if we actively rid ourselves of all those things that hinder us, uh, in our race with Christ.

And you want to know, uh, if you are a Christian or if you aren't a Christian today, ask yourself, where are your thoughts principally? If you're wondering, have I, have I been saved?

If you've got doubts in your hearts, where are your principal thoughts? There will always be sin within us. Your thoughts will always be carried off in another direction. But if your thoughts always want to return to Christ and to his word, that is a sign that you are in Christ.

[ 52 : 58 ] Similarly, be careful that you don't deceive yourself. If your thoughts are always on sinful things, but you have an external appearance, like Paul was saying here, of holiness, beware you could be deceiving yourself.

Ask yourself, am I putting sin to death? Am I working out my salvation? So, the third point under a Christian's duty is a holy clothing if we look at verses 9 and 10, we see, do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self.

Verse 12, therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and daily love, clothe yourselves. you are to put on a holy clothing. You took off your old self.

That was taken off when you died and rose again with Christ. You have put on a new self. And the reality that Paul is speaking of here and using that kind of terminology is he's saying, be what God has called you to be.

Be what you already are in Christ. Don't act as though you still belong to the world. That is a massive challenge for us all as believers and yet, here we have it before us.

[ 54 : 25 ] We're encouraged, we're told, we're exhorted to do this and we know this is what Christ wants for us because he wants his people to be holy. He wants his people to be like him and he is working in us and through us but we have to put sin to death.

we need to get rid of those false things. In verse, chapter 2, verse 18, we see the false way of approaching living religion.

He describes there people who delight in false humility. They delight in the worship of angels and the result of that is their unspiritual mind puffs them up with idle notions and that's just a sign of the things that go wrong when people are not looking inward to get rid of sin but looking at it outward and projecting things outside.

And if you think of what Paul is saying, he is saying, clothe yourself with these characteristics. That is in complete contrast to the false teachers who are clothing themselves or trying to clothe themselves with all sorts of false attributes that didn't exist.

But Paul is calling on believers to clothe themselves properly. And as we said earlier, all those external rules, the clothing of unbelief, they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. [ 56 : 05 ] You can keep an act up on the outside but if your thoughts and your heart is set very much on the sin within you, there is no value to that whatsoever because although you might show to everyone else and they might think that you're looking like a good person, if inwardly you're letting your thoughts and your attitudes run riot, then before God and before Jesus, you are far from being holy.

external rules have no use, no value whatsoever. So Paul is saying therefore you are to act in an opposite direction.

You are to cultivate the attributes in verse 12, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. He's saying have a compassionate heart.

Think back to verse 1, to set your heart with Christ in heaven. There was never anybody more compassionate than Christ was.

Nobody was ever as kind as Christ, as humble as Christ, as gentle as Christ or as patient as Christ. We are to forgive one another as the Lord forgave us.

[ 57 : 27 ] How difficult it can be to forgive people and yet no one had a more difficult job at forgiveness than Christ did. He was perfectly holy. We were perfectly corrupt and yet he came in order that he might forgive and therefore forgiveness is something and a mark and a sign of Christians as is forbearance dealing with one another even when we differ, even when our characters are completely different and we find it difficult to get on.

And over all those things, verse 14, Paul says, put on love. It's an active choice to put on love. And you can see elsewhere in scripture, husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the church.

Paul's saying to people, this is an order. Love your wives as Christ loves the church. And he's saying here, put on love. It is something active. Our society has so corrupted the concept of love. We think that you fall in love, that love is something that happens between people and you can't stop it from happening. What Paul is saying is the very opposite. You are to be loving.

You are to put on love. And that is something that you cannot fake. But if your mind is set on Christ and your heart is on those things that are above and you drink of Christ's love, then you can put on love because you have his love within your own heart and in your own life to share with others.

[ 59 : 09 ] If we look back briefly at verse 12, the foundation for all these things are the three key points that he says, he says, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved.

You have been chosen by Christ if you are in Christ. You have been chosen by him to be holy. And more than that, you are dearly loved of Christ.

And this is a driver for acting in this way. Paul isn't simply saying do these things because they're nice. He's saying be compassionate, be kind, be humble, be gentle, be patient, because this is who Christ is.

And you, as people called out of darkness and into life, from death into life, you have been called to be holy like Christ, to be compassionate like him.

Because the purpose for which he called each and every one of us is so that we might be like him in eternity. So, we have the final point to have is the Christian's manner or way of life.

[ 60 : 30 ] I was struggling to get the right word for this. Maybe someone else can correct me at the end of the service. But just looking at these verses in 15 and 16 and indeed into 17, we have a picture of a Christian and the way they walk in this life.

And Paul says here, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since as members of one body you are called to peace. And be thankful, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Verse 17, and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. I think he's kind of summing up, if you put these things to death, if you clothe yourself with these qualities, then this is the kind of life you ought to be living from verse 15 onwards.

He uses the word let, I think there's still an element of duty in this, but it's passive. There's no resistance to the peace of Christ, there's no resistance caused by the indwelling sin that says, me, me, me first.

This is the reality of someone who wants to live for Christ and in Christ at all times. To let the peace of Christ rule in your heart.

[ 61 : 54 ] Secondly, the word of Christ is to dwell in you richly. It's a lovely picture that, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Think back to our minds from verse 1, needing to be set on heavenly things, not on earthly things. The word of Christ comes firstly to our mind and then to our will.

And we need to have it dwelling in us and dwelling in us richly. I love that word dwell because it's not just like kind of hanging around a bit but it's this idea of living in and being content and this is its proper home.

And as we know Christ himself is the word and whenever we hear the word preached we are hearing Christ preached. and each of us as we pick up our Bibles each day need to let that word sink in.

And I think one of the biggest weaknesses we have is that we're not letting it sink in and dwell in us richly. If we read a portion of scripture in the morning quickly pray disappear out the door to whatever we're going to do and we don't think about that word anymore it's of really no value to us whatsoever.

[ 63 : 16 ] If we come to church hear the word preached and go home and don't think about it for another second we might remember one or two things but we really won't gain the full benefit of it.

And what Paul is saying let it dwell in you richly. Meditate upon God's word. Think about it. And if something is there that you don't understand don't just say I don't understand it.

Think about it. Look for other verses that speak of the same thing. meditate upon it. Ask God to reveal to you his word and cultivate that attitude that manner of life that says I want to understand his word and polishing he'll let that word dwell in you richly.

And if you have the peace of Christ in your heart and the word of Christ dwelling in you richly I think the inevitable response is that the praises of Christ must come from your lips.

We see verse 17 sorry second half verse 16 as you you're to let the word dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

[ 64 : 37 ] Lovely picture there of believers singing psalms hymns and spiritual songs to strengthen themselves to build them up to help that word dwell richly but having that spirit of gratitude in their hearts as they think upon those things such as having been raised from the dead by Christ having our life in Christ and that promise of being with him in his glory.

the praises of Christ must inevitably come from our lips so the more that we dwell in Christ the more we will speak of him.

That is a challenge for every single believer. None of us can ever fulfil that in all its fullness while we are on this earth but we are called to strive for that, to put sin to death, to clothe ourselves with those qualities of Christ that we ought to have in our lives and to have thankful hearts that praise his holy name.

Absolutely vital for a believer and for anyone who is outside of Christ the absolutely important thing is that you are saved by Christ.

You must come to him and repent, put your faith in this living saviour, this one who came to die in order that he might raise us up.

[ 66 : 12 ] The word is full of exhortations to unbelievers to come to Christ. And when you look at the life of Christ portrayed just in these verses and the greatness of the Christ who is before us, please please do not reject him any longer.

Don't let this word drop away today or any other day for today is that day of salvation and the promise that Christ gives to you is that if your trust is in him, your heart will be with Christ at the right hand of God.

Your mind will be with Christ there and that when Christ appears you also will appear with him in glory. Who wouldn't want that?

The unsearchable riches of Christ rather than the riches of this world. They are there for each and every one of us. It's my prayer that each and every one of us takes hold.

Let's pray. Lord our God we thank you once more for your word. We thank you Lord for this exhortation to live holy lives that truly reflect the Saviour who has called us out of darkness and into light, out of death and into life and Lord we thank you that as we come in the name of Christ we know that we are holy, we have been set apart by Christ and that we are dearly loved.

[ 67 : 47 ] Lord we marvel that you could possibly love sinners such as us and yet because you have told us we know it is true and enable us Lord to love you in return as we should, to hate sin as we should, to put it to death and to clothe ourselves Lord with compassion, kindness, gentleness, humility and all the other things that speak of Christ our loving and living Saviour in whose name we pray.

Amen. Amen. Now our closing item of praise is mission praise 975 before the throne of God above. I have a strong and perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. And then in the final verse, we have behold him near the risen lamb, my perfect spotless righteousness, the great unchangeable I am, the king of glory and of grace.

One with himself I cannot die, my soul is purchased with his blood, my life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ my Saviour and my God. Is your life hidden with Christ?

I pray that each and every one of us can sing this with the truth of that resting in our hearts and with the confidence that indeed our lives are hidden with Christ in God on high.

[ 69 : 23 ] Let's sing the whole of this hymn to God's praise. before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea a great high priest whose name is love whoever lives and pleads for me.

My name is raven on his hands, my name is written on his heart, I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me then see part, no tongue can bid me then see part.

Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within upward I look and see him there who made an end to all my sin because the sinless Savior died my sinful soul is come to free for God the justice satisfied to look on him and pardon me to look on him and pardon me hold him there the risen lamb my perfect spotless righteousness the great unchangeable I am the king of glory and of grace one with himself

I cannot die my soul is purchased with his blood my life is saved with Christ on high with Christ my Savior and my God with Christ my Savior and my God and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all Amen through