

1.6.25 pm

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Preacher: Iain A Macsween

[0 : 00] Welcome to our evening service. We will begin our service by singing in Gaelic, from the Gaelic Psalm of Psalm 46. The first two verses of Psalm 46. A very famous psalm, a psalm we sing often, which reminds us of our complete dependence on God for our strength and for our refuge.

God is our refuge and our strength in straits at present age. Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid. Though hills amidst the seas be cast, though waters roaring make, and troubled be ye though the hills by swelling seas do shake.

We remain seated to sing in Gaelic, and after this psalm, Calvin will come up and lead us in prayer in Gaelic. ...

... ..

... Thank you.

[2 : 06] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[5 : 36] Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll sing this time in English from the hymn, There is a Higher Throne, Mission Praise 3116.

There is a higher throne. There is a higher throne than all this world has known, where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come. We'll stand to sing Mission Praise 3116 after Angus has led the introduction.

There is a higher throne than all this world has known, where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come.

Before the sun will stand, before the fruit of the land beneath, in hearts and all its days, salvation comes.

[7 : 11] In heaven's voice is named, there are the sun that brings to heaven on board, and salvation comes.

There is a triumph, for glory is above, and that's the Lord that is called, our faith, who raised on high forevermore.

And there we'll find a hope, our life before the throne, with all the hidden perfect song, where we belong.

Where we belong. In white, these tears and die, our search of other God, the love becomes a shepherd king.

with rain with rain with rain. with rain with rain. with rain with rain. with rain with rain. with rain with rain. with rain with rain. with rain with rain.

[8 : 26] Thank you.

Our reading tonight is taken from the second of Paul's letters to the church in Corinth, 2 Corinthians, and we will read the whole of the chapter.

2 Corinthians, chapter 4. Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways.

We do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

[9 : 58] For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

We're hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed. Perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not abandoned. Struck down, but not destroyed.

We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. It's written, I believed, therefore I have spoken.

[11 : 10] With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we're wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen.

For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. This is the word of the Lord. Amen.

We're going to sing again, this time again from Mission Praise.

[12 : 23] Mission Praise 237. 237. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty. God in three persons, blessed Trinity. If you're able, please stand to sing this wonderful hymn to God's praise.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

Holy, holy, holy, holy, holy in the Lord God Almighty. Holy, holy, holy, Holy God Almighty, Holy, holy, Holy God Almighty, And their golden crowns are underlasting Children and children Falling down before thee Which were an art and leather more shall be Holy, holy, holy Though the darkness hide thee Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see Only thou art holy There is none beside thee Perfect in power in love and beauty Holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty All thy works shall praise thy name In earth and sky and sea Holy, holy, holy Merciful and mighty God in three persons Blessed Trinity Well, before we take some time to explore that wonderful chapter we read, let's call on God's help to assist us as we open up his word and break it down.

[15 : 57] Loving Lord God almighty, you truly are a holy God. And we are in awe when we come into your presence When we consider that the God who created the universe is our Father.

And Lord, now as we open your word, we pray that you would grant us clarity We pray that we would approach your word reverently And we pray, Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit That each and every one of us in here tonight Would be conscious of you at work in our lives Thank you for your word, Lord Where would we be without it?

So bless it to us, Lord And grant that we would have a very real and acute sense of your presence In our gathering here In Jesus' name, Amen Now I can't claim to know everyone in church this evening But I do know most of you, I would say And I'd say that the chances are probably 99% of you own one of these Which is a smartphone The 1%, I must admit, I'm sometimes quite jealous of you More so these days A smartphone Something to assist us, to guide us And if you've got a smartphone The chances are that you will have downloaded several applications Or apps on your smartphone We download apps to assist us For instance, this morning we heard Scott talking about Google Maps A very useful application Which we use when we're driving on the mainland Perhaps to a city we've never been Google Maps will take you right to the door Or you could have downloaded on your phone Garmin To show you how much you're running Or in my case recently, how little I'm running Or you could have something like the Met Office Which will give you the weather They're apps that exist to assist us in our lives But a recent phenomenon I say recent, probably 15 years Are apps called social media Which originally were brought into being To keep

us in touch with one another So if you have a social media app I.e. Facebook You will follow the profile of your friend They'll follow you back You'll keep in touch And it doesn't matter where you are in the world You can keep in touch on Facebook Through these profiles But something that's happened over the last few years Is that we've started following People that we are never really likely to meet

They're not our friends We're never really likely to meet them I mean, celebrity actors Footballers Musicians Chefs And the like We follow their profiles But we're never really going to get to meet them Or to know them And another group of people Who have blown up recently especially Are those who have become to be known as influencers Media influencers Social media influencers And if you are a successful influencer today You can make a lot of money One of the most One of the most famous influencers That we have these days Is a man called Andrew Tate And he's famous Because perhaps infamous Would be more appropriate Andrew Tate is an influencer He's made millions out of Influencing people online One man And he has millions of followers Why?

[19 : 36] Andrew Tate targets young men And he encourages them To portray their toxic masculinity In other words He's putting out this message That men Have control over women And if you want to assert your power You should look down upon women And that of course Is abhorrent It's a vile ideology And yet he has all these followers Who follow him faithfully Across the world So influential is Andrew Tate That countries Plural countries Have now come together To try and formulate a strategy On how to combat This ideology This toxic masculinity Plague And teachers Female teachers In particular Around the world Are complaining That never before Have they been faced With such a level Of misogyny Which can be directly Related back To this man This one man Andrew Tate Why am I saying this?

Well it's to prove the point That in 2025 Negative influencers Can cause a lot of trouble They can do damage And in 55 AD Negative influencers Were doing exactly the same thing To the church in Corinth A select group of negative influencers Have come into the church in Corinth Which Paul had put into place And in the space of two years That church was a church in crisis So much so That an SOS was sent out to Paul Now we've no idea how he got this SOS But we suspect it might be through Titus Informing him of what's going on In the church in Corinth It's a church that's in chaos What was going on?

Well we know That this church in Corinth Which Paul had established Had gone way off track You'll remember that some were saying I follow Paul Others were saying No no I follow Apollos And there were others Still who were saying No no we follow Cephas Completely Missing the whole Central tenet of Christianity Which is I follow Jesus They'd lost their way They were following preachers And they were taking their eyes off Christ Now there were also And this is astonishing When you think about How much we cherish Paul's writings There were These negative influencers Were of the opinion That Paul Wasn't quite good enough For them Bear in mind that Corinth Was a port city Very busy Very bustling Home to a lot of Greek philosophers And learned people They didn't like Paul's preaching style They didn't think He was a very good Public speaker In comparison To themselves And so they were Criticizing Paul This man who had come And who had set up The church in Corinth They were criticizing him Because they thought Of themselves As being learned And wise They also didn't like Paul's message Here was a man Who had told them That all they had to do To be saved Was to believe In the Lord Jesus Christ That wasn't good enough It must be more complicated Than that They thought And so they brought in Other rules And regulations Which completely distorted The simplicity Of the message Remember Jesus said Unless you come As a little child You can't enter my kingdom But they wouldn't accept that They were too educated To accept The simplicity Of the gospel They would also Come into church And they would start Speaking in tongues Claiming that they were Being divinely inspired By the Holy Spirit And when you consider That several of them Would be doing this At the same time It was chaos It was a racket And the genuine believers In this church In Corinth Were dismayed You can imagine How upset they were This was their church And it was a church That was in chaos So when Paul got word Of all of this going on What did he do?

[24 : 05] Well he certainly Didn't turn around And say Right that's it I've had it I'm absolutely disgusted With what's going on Paul as Paul Tended to do He was sympathetic To the church In Corinth And he Wrote them back This second letter To the Corinthians Which details That what is going on Is tragic And it is upsetting But it's not unexpected And he then goes on To tell them Why it's not unexpected And he tells them What they should do About it Ultimately This is a message Of

hope Remember the chapter Started by Therefore we do not Lose heart And that's Paul's Key message here Yes I am aware That this is a church In crisis Yes I am aware That you are suffering But you do not Lose heart We're going to have Five points tonight And they all begin With the letter B

The first is blindness Because Paul says That these unbelievers And remember They were thinking They were believers Paul says These unbelievers Are actually Spiritually blind There's a veil Over them So there's blindness And then he contrasts That with what we have If we are believers In Christ Which is brightness We have the light Of the glory of God Living in our hearts So there's blindness And there's brightness But Bit of a reality check Next Because despite The brightness That we have In our hearts We don't have it all made And it's not going to be An easy ride Because we are All broken Yes we have the brightness But we're still all broken And it's because Of our brokenness Because of our brokenness Not despite it Because of our brokenness That we are encouraged To broadcast our belief I'll explain that later

We broadcast our belief Because of our brokenness And ultimately The ultimate encourager Who is Paul Gives the ultimate encouragement In these last few verses Where he says Remember What this is all about It's the great beyond That exists For everyone who trusts in Christ There is a beyond That is the eternal resting place Of all who trust in Jesus So first of all There's the blindness Paul says The God of this age Has blinded the minds Of unbelievers So that they cannot see The light of the gospel That displays the glory of Christ Who is the image of God Now the God of this age Is generally understood To refer to Satan Paul is not suggesting That Satan is a God You'll note the small g But he does wield A lot of influence Can we all agree on that?

Surely yes we can He's a formidable foe Who wields an awful lot Of influence When you consider values Ideologies Opposition to God Satan is the one Who's behind it all But look There are two little words here And we can't overlook them Because they're critical To our understanding Of what Paul says here He says He's the God of this age He's the God of this age His time is coming to an end God's eternal kingdom Is a kingdom in which The God of this age Will play absolutely no part Because he's a defeated foe So Paul is saying He's the God of this age And he's wreaking havoc But remember His time is coming to an end Spiritual blindness Is what Paul uses As a metaphor For the inability To perceive Spiritual truth Paul is basically saying That unbelievers People who don't believe In Jesus It's not that they Just don't believe It's much more serious Than that They actually They can't believe Because there's a veil That has come down Which prohibits them From seeing Their need Of a saviour It prohibits them From seeing Their sin Their inherent sin Which necessitates Their need for a saviour They're blind What does that mean For us Who are believers That means that That veil That we had Has been lifted So we now see We can see spiritually So the veil Has gone Our blindness Has gone Blindness

[29 : 08] Prevents unbelievers From recognising The transformative Beauty and truth About Jesus And we need To remember that As Christians People who don't Believe Can't believe Because of this veil Now I'm sure That you've Spoken to people About Jesus You've tried to explain How wonderful A saviour we have You've done your best And you've been Met with Differing reactions Perhaps Sometimes they'll Look at you As if you're Talking absolute nonsense Other times They might be aggressive And other times They might be just Totally apathetic As if they just Don't care Remember here Paul is saying That there's a veil That's preventing them From seeing So how do we As Christians And remember We've had that veil Lifted A work of God Is there anything We can do then So that their veil Is lifted And of course

We know that Yes there is We pray We pray And we pray And we pray Because prayer Is just so vital And so key I'm reading a book Just now And I love the way That the author Referred to prayer In this book He said that Prayer Is an earthly warrant!

And authorising Heavenly interference An earthly warrant! Authorising Heavenly interference When you go Into a hotel They'll give you A key card And you'll go To your room And you'll put The key card Into the door And then you'll get Access to your room Prayer Is our key card To the unlimited Resorts of heaven We can unlock These blessings Now God Can do anything He's a sovereign God And he's all powerful But the Bible Teaches us That God Loves to work In cooperation With his Cherished Chosen people And that's us God Wants us To be in On his Salvation plan So prayer Is vitally Important If we want To see people Getting that

Veil lifted We'll never know How our veil Became to be lifted Who was praying For us? We'll find out One day of course But our responsibility As Christians Says Paul Is to continue To pray So that this

veil Would be lifted I know a woman Who's blind She lives in Stornoway And she's been blind For over 50 years She went in For routine surgery A long time ago And it went Catastrophically wrong Now I'm not saying This To put off anyone From having eye surgery Today Eye surgery Is perfectly safe But this was A long Long time ago And she went in For routine surgery And she came out And she was blind Now how do you think Her family Reacted When she came out Of the hospital Did they Mistreat her Because they couldn't See what she saw

Were they Abandon Did they abandon Her Because What's the point What's the point She can't see What I'm seeing And they just Left her to it Well of course They didn't Nobody in their Right mind Would mistreat Someone who's blind They treated her With love And with compassion And is that Not an example Of what we Should be doing To those who Are spiritually blind God hears your prayers Every single one of them So I don't know Who it is that You might be praying For a spouse It might be your Children Your friends But keep praying Be specific Name them Bring them Regularly To the God Of grace It's him alone Who opens Eyes to see His glory So then There's blindness There in the first place Blindness

[33 : 36] And Then Paul goes on To say That when The spiritual blindness Has gone What we see Is the light Of Christ So if the veil Is gone And we have Our spiritual eyes Opened We have the Brightness now Existing inside us The brightness Of the light Of Christ Why is it That we need Torches When we walk Anywhere that's Dark Of course It's because We can't see And just as Those who are Spiritually blind Can't see Those who have Had their eyes Opened Are able to Walk And find their Way Because the Light of the Gospel Is their Guide Now I'm Seeing some Children in the Congregation tonight So I wonder If any of the Kids can tell me What is the Biggest source Of light That we have In the world Just now Anyone know

What's the Biggest source Of light We have in the World Any idea I can understand Why you probably Don't know it We don't see it That often It's the Sun Isn't it The sun And I thought It might be Interesting to Compare The sun That we can Use as a Reference For what we See as the Biggest source Of light And the Light of the Gospel So the Sun It's the Most powerful Source of Light It gives Heat And it gives Energy for The earth And without The sun Life would Exist And similarly The gospel Is what Gives us A spiritual Source of Light and Life The bible Says in Him was Life That's Jesus And the Life was The light Of men Jesus himself Said I am The light Of the world The sun Every morning It will Get rid of All the Darkness When it Comes up It reveals What's been Hidden And the Gospel Reveals The truth It exposes Our sin And it Uncovers Spiritual Reality Now I Wonder If I was On Raleigh Park With Cammie And I'm Wearing Shorts And he's Wearing Trousers For a Change It's Usually him That's Wearing The shorts But if I'm Wearing Shorts On a Really Nice Day On Raleigh Park And Cammie's Wearing Trousers Is the Sun Only Going To Shine On Me Because I'm Wearing Shorts It's Ludicrous Isn't It Of course The sun Is going To shine On Both Of us Because The sun Shines On everyone Underneath It And the Gospel Is a Gospel That is For Everyone As well Everybody Jews Gentiles Men Boys Men Boys Girls Women It doesn't Matter

The gospel Is for Absolutely Everyone Doesn't Matter what You've Done The gospel Is for Everyone The sun Rises Gradually Doesn't It It rises Gradually At dawn And eventually It fills The sky With light And the Light Of the Gospel Can be Like that As well It can Work in Your heart Slowly As you Come under A conviction Of your Need of Jesus And then Your faith Grows Repentance And you're Transformed Now if You've been Ill Or if You've been Housebound For a while Doctors Will always Recommend That you Get yourself Out into The sun Why is This Well it's Because the Sun gives Us warmth It provides Us with Vitamin D Which is Produced when Sunlight is Exposed onto Our exposed Skin And it Transforms Landscapes So the Light of The Light of The Light of The Gospel Warms Their Hearts It gives

Us nourishment Spiritually And it Transforms Us And the Light Of the Sun It also Gives us Hope of a New day Doesn't It There's New Beginning And the Light of The Light of The Gospel Gives us That New Beginning As well It Transforms Us In Christ We are New Creations So the Light That we Have as Believers Is a Wonderful Wonderful Thing to Have Do you Have that Light In your Heart Do you Want it All you Have to Do is Ask for It and It's That Simple So there's Blindness Which is Contrasted Magnificently With the Brightness That we Inherit When we Become Children Of God But then Comes a Bit of a Reality Check Because Paul says This Treasure That's The Light The Gospel That I've Been Talking About He says We've Got it If we're Walking

[38 : 37] With God We've Got this Light But we've Got it In jars Of clay We keep It in Jars Of clay And he's Referring There to Our bodies What he's Saying is Effectively Is that We're all Broken We're Broken So we Cannot Just because We've got The light Of God Shining In our Hearts Assume That we've Got nothing Else to Do and That this Is going To be a Really easy Walk Because Paul Is saying Actually we're All broken But he Then goes On to Tell us That that's Not a Bad thing It's actually The best Position we Could be In Is to be Broken That's how God works He doesn't Follow our Rules of Nature and Science and Physics So for The So for The Christian To be Broken Is a Really good Thing Why The first Thing that it Does is it Reminds us of Who it is that Gives us our Strength Our brokenness

Reminds us of Who it is that Gives us our Power God gives us Our power And his glory Is revealed Through our Weakness Through our Weakness Not in spite of it Through our Weakness We live in a Society that Places so much Emphasis on Power Survival of The fittest Strong Strength And yet Paul tells us That through Being weak And being Broken We're Conduits Of God's Amazing Grace Later on in This very Letter in Chapter 12 He'll say When I am Weak That's actually When I'm Strong In ancient Times Clay Jars Jars of Clay Were very Very common They were Very very Cheap And they Were very Easy Breakable So Again Paul's Brilliant With metaphors These jars Of clay They represent

Us and Our frailty Bodies That are Weak Lives That are Very Imperfect Vessels That are Vulnerable Yet Within this Fragility He puts The treasure The light Of the Gospel Of the Glory Of Christ And this Encourages Us This is a Good news Story Because We don't Have to be Strong Or impressive For God To use Us Our Weakness Actually Becomes The backdrop For his Strength Now God Tells us Elsewhere In the Bible To be Strong And to Be Courageous But it's Not a Paradox He's Commanding Us That in Our Weakness We call On him To claim The strength That he Is willing To give Us God is Not Bothered About Our Ability What God God What God Is What God Do not Imagine Ever That you're Too weak To be Used By God Because God Uses Weak Imperfect People it's the only kind of people that are.

Your brokenness doesn't disqualify you. It might be the very reason God can use you. Cracks in the vessel, cracks in the jar let his light shine through and your mess becomes his ministry.

[42 : 12] Your scars become someone else's roadmap to healing. Don't wait to have it all together before you say yes to what God is calling you to do.

Are you feeling that God is asking you to do something? Calling you to do something? But you're just a bit scared because you don't have the courage? God's waiting to give you the courage. He used a shepherd to slay a giant. He can use you to shake a generation. Have you ever heard about the snowstorm that changed everything?

It happened on January 6th, 1850. A young 15-year-old man in Colchester in England. He was feeling really down.

He was actually coming under conviction of his sin. So he decided he would go to church. He knew exactly the church he was going to go to but God had other plans.

[43 : 21] There was a horrendous snowstorm and he realised he wasn't going to get to the church at all. So he did the next best thing which was find the church that was closest to him which was a tiny wee Methodist chapel.

And he went in there. He ducked in there to get out of the snowstorm. Now this 15-year-old boy wasn't the only one to have had his plans changed that night because the minister who was due to preach in this Methodist chapel was also snowbound.

He couldn't get to the church. So it fell to one of the members of the church to deliver the sermon. Now, I've had a month to prepare for this and that was bad enough.

Half an hour. That's really asking for something special. But you know what? That man, that man went into the pulpit completely unprepared.

And he preached on Isaiah 45-22. When I say he preached, it wasn't much of a sermon because he was so unprepared.

[44 : 37] He just kept repeating it. Repeating it. Look unto me and be saved. Look unto me and be saved. I can only imagine what was going through this man's mind as he was in the pulpit.

Feeling so weak and useless. But that young man, something flicked inside his heart and inside his mind.

And these words, look unto me and be saved. They hit the target. And he was saved. That young boy was saved.

Now think about this. The young boy is going to a church and he has to divert. The preacher can't make it to the service. So the layman, that's the name that they used for this member of the church who came in to give the message, they reckon he was a shoemaker.

He came in and he preached. God had ordained that they would meet that night. And the young boy was saved. And that young boy's name was Charles Spurgeon.

[45 : 39] Incredible. That God would use that member of the church to preach these words, which at the time he felt were so inconsequential.

He was painfully aware of his weakness. And yet, the arrow hit its target. And Spurgeon was saved. Remember that the weakness and the brokenness that Paul talks about here is not final.

Because one day, all of us who are in Christ will be made perfect. And that's worth remembering.

It's temporary. But it's important that we realize that our weakness does not, it doesn't stop us from being extremely useful for God.

So there's blindness, there's brightness, there's brokenness. And the next point is broadcasted belief. He says in verse 13, I believe, therefore, I've spoken.

And then, you know, very briefly what Paul's saying here is that if you believe in the finished work of Jesus, you have a duty to speak out.

[46 : 49] You have a duty to speak out. These believers were finding it really tough in this church in Corinth. All these influencers had come in. Paul's saying, you can't sit in your hands here.

You have to speak out. Now, the layman in the Methodist church, he didn't run and hide. That would have been easy to do. But he believed, and so he spoke. And Spurgeon was saved.

Now, of course, it's God who saves people. But he uses the unprepared and the unequipped because it's him that then prepares them and equips them.

If we believe we cannot be silent, it's not an option. Because if we do stay silent, we run the risk, a very real risk, of denying Christ if we stay silent.

And remember, Jesus said, if you deny me, if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father.

[48 : 03] And that's terrifying. You know, this world is increasingly confused and hostile to biblical truth.

Just look at all the ideologies that are being foisted upon us. I don't need to name them. You can think of them. Cultural reform. We are being expected to go along with this.

But we cannot stay silent. Because if we stay silent, you can guarantee that that silence won't last long. Someone else will come in to fill it. The very people who are trying to put down on the good news of the Gospel, they're not silent.

They're far from silent. They're very purpose-driven. And they will continually speak out until they achieve what they are setting out to do. Our story matters.

Our public faith, however imperfect, speaks volumes. I watched the Scottish Cup final a week ago. I thought, just for a change, I'll support Aberdeen.

[49 : 12] And they won the Scottish Cup on penalty kicks. And after the game, they interviewed, the BBC interviewed, the chairman of Aberdeen Football Club, a man called Dave Cormack. And they said to him, you looked so calm when that penalty shootout was going on.

What's all that about? And he said, well, I was calm because I have a strong faith and to God be the glory. What an amazing witness.

He broadcast his belief live on telly to millions of people. That's the kind of attitude that God expects from us. John Stott says, we're not only to receive the Gospel and to live by the Gospel, but also to transmit it.

Evangelism is not an optional extra. We're all entrusted with our public mission. If you believe in God, tell others about it and speak up for God.

Remember. Remember that we were talking about the Son. Jesus created the Son. Jesus created the planets. Jesus is our Saviour.

[50 : 24] And he went to the cross for us. Why would we stay silent? And finally, blindness, brightness, broken, broadcasted belief.

And finally, Paul, who is the ultimate encourager, gives us the ultimate encouragement. And these, for me, are among the most beautiful verses in the whole of the Bible.

He's pointing us away from the carnage that's going on in this world. The church in Corinth were so dismayed at what was going on and yet Paul is finishing off by saying, ultimately, you have to look above.

You have to look beyond what's going on here. The bigger picture. Therefore, we do not lose heart. Now, he said that before at the start of the message and he's saying it again at the end of the message.

In Gaelic, we call that a'adish, repetition. Authors, writers use it when they need to emphasize a point. So this is a'adish. He said it before, therefore, we do not lose heart.

[51 : 33] He says it again, therefore, don't lose heart. I know you're suffering, I know you're struggling, but you don't lose heart. Why? Outwardly, we are wasting our way.

But inwardly, we're being renewed day by day. There's that paradox again. Isn't God wonderful? We're growing old and at the same time we're getting young.

And then he says, our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes on what or not was on, sorry, we fix our eyes on not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

There are people in this room tonight who've endured events in their life, so painful that they're almost beyond description. And yet Paul says, these afflictions are light.

Why is he saying this? Is that not insensitive? Is he somehow belittling what you have gone through? Not at all.

[52 : 51] Paul himself suffered dreadfully, physically and spiritually, but yet he knew that in light of what Jesus had done at Calvary on the cross, everything you suffer here, no matter how horrendous it has been.

And Paul is saying, I know that you've suffered horrendously, but he's emphasising his point by saying, look, in the light of what's coming, it does not compare, and so it's light.

I'm wanting to use your horrendous suffering as an example of how incredible what you have coming is going to be. Because what we have awaiting us at the end of our walk is glory, where there's no more pain, no more separation, no more loneliness, no more depression, no more anxiety, no more sinful influence, no more toxic influences, no more sin.

When I was in Romania last summer, one of the songs of the summer, there's always a song of the summer, isn't there? The song of the summer, we heard it over and over again, it was called Clepsidra Vietzi, and I'm glad my wife's not here, because she began to daggers at that pronunciation, no doubt, but Clepsidra Vietzi means the hourglass of life, the hourglass of life, life is just like an hourglass.

What really struck me was the video for the song, because you've got the singer, her name's Georgiana Marina, and she's dressed beautifully, immaculately, and her backing band are dressed beautifully and immaculately, they are so, so smart, and yet the setting for the song is a crumbling old ruin of a castle, it's falling apart around them, totally out of place, they look just so ridiculously out of place, because they're so beautifully made up, and yet their surroundings are just falling apart around them, and that's what's going to be the case for us too, it doesn't matter how we try and dress it up, everything is coming to an end, everything is going to fade away and crumble, whenever I see this handrail, it reminds me of the person for whom it was put up, Roddy Morrison, and it was put up for

[55 : 14] Roddy because he was struggling to come to the lector, outwardly he was wasting away, but inwardly he was being renewed day by day by day, isn't that amazing, growing in grace each and every day, two weeks ago he was called home, he saw the fruition of all that suffering, all that perseverance and it was made perfect, day before he died medical staff spoke with Roddy and they asked him about a care package and he said well if this is my time I'm ready, it's just incredible to think isn't it, he was so ready, so eager to meet his saviour, he knew that that's what was waiting for him, outwardly wasting away, we all are, inwardly renewed day by day, there are no hand rails in heaven, because there's no weakness in heaven, when we close our eyes here we can think of people who sat here, who felt the burden of infirmity and yet persevered because of the beyond that is promised to all who trust in

Christ, the cross made sure of that and it's this future, this eternal future that we are being pointed to, to fix our eyes upon, only one life will soon be passed, only what's done for Christ will last.

So tonight, can you see that this will be your eternal future? Are you part of that wonderful kingdom that awaits us if we are in Jesus Christ?

And if you're not, if that veil still exists, you can cry it for God, to lift it right now, he's waiting for you. Why wouldn't you want it? A kingdom that's eternal, whose wonders are such that in our current state we can't comprehend them. Therefore, therefore, we don't lose heart.

[57 : 40] Amen. Amen. We'll close by singing from Mission Praise 52, I think it is. Mission Praise 52.

The hope that we have is all because we have a saviour who lives. He defeated death, and because he lives, we can face tomorrow. God sent his son, they called him Jesus, and so on, to God's praise.

God sent his son, they called him Jesus, he came to love, he died for him, he knew and died, to buy my pardon, and if he gives to prove my saviour lives, because he lives, and he gives tomorrow, because he lives, all fear is gone, because I know what I know, he owns the future, and life is worth living just because he lives.

I know, he is too old, and you are creating, and feel the pride, and joy he lives, and greater still, the calm and sure is the strength and face in certain days, because he lives, because he lives, and he can face tomorrow, because he lives, all fear is gone, because I know, I know he holds a future, and life is worth living just because he lives, and then one day, I'll cross the river, I'll find my side, no more with me, and then

I'll say, his way to victory, I'll see the light of glory and the glory is, because he lives, I can face tomorrow, because he lives, all fear is gone, because I know I know he holds a future, and life is worth living just because he lives, and now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, both now and forever more.

[61 : 15] Amen.