

# 12.10.25 pm

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Date: 12 October 2025

Preacher: Dr Antony Latham

[ 0 : 00 ] And we are going to start by singing his praises in Psalm 46.! This is in Gaelic. I'll just read the first verses of Psalm 46.

We are going to sing. God is our refuge and our strength in straits of present aid. Therefore, although the earth remove, we will not be afraid.

Though hills amidst the seas be cast, though waters roaring make, and troubled be. Yea, though the hills by swelling seas do shake, a river is whose streams do glad the city of our God, the holy place wherein the Lord most high hath his abode.

And we'll remain seated for this in Gaelic. And we'll find you happy birthday. And you will find you happy birthday.

And you will find you happy birthday. And you will find you happy birthday. CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

[ 2 : 06 ] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Heavenly Father, we just thank you and praise you for this time that we have together. We thank you, Lord, that we come in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can come in no other name, because Jesus has opened the door to the Holy of Holies and given us boldness to come to the Father because of all that Jesus has done.

[ 5 : 02 ] We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you provided this because you came to be one of us. You lived a perfect life. You then went all the way facing Jerusalem and went to that cross.

And you did it for us because of your love for us. And there, in that terrible time, you took upon yourself our sins.

And all who turn to you and accept that wonderful sacrifice are brought into the kingdom of heaven and we are made children of God.

Wonderful. Wonderful. To be called a child of God, to be part of your family. And we pray that we pray that we are children of God.

And we thank you, Lord, that you want to bless us. We want only the best for each person here.

Whatever situation we are in, whether we are struggling in some fashion, we just pray, Lord, that we will know your strength, for we can do nothing without you.

[ 6 : 41 ] We pray, Lord, that you bless all those who couldn't be here tonight. Perhaps those who are sick, those who are unable for all sorts of different reasons. We ask you to be with them.

And we pray for those in our community who have no wish to be here, who have all sorts of other things to do, but have no thought of this.

We ask you, Lord, to be with you, Lord, to work in our community here, to bring about revival, to draw people to you.

Because the only way, the only full and complete life is that we find in Jesus Christ. All other ways are false ways. And we just pray, Lord, that we, as a church, will be able to go out from here and shine that light, to shine that love.

And where it's appropriate and right to be able to speak about our faith to those around us. We pray for David. We ask you, Lord, to continue to bless him as he leads services and finishes off in Gerloff.

[ 7 : 56 ] And we ask you to be with him. We thank you for our church, our denomination. And we pray, Lord, for all the leadership within the organisation, Presbytery, Mission Board and others.

And we ask, Lord, that you be guiding and leading and helping us to humbly seek your guidance and leading and wisdom.

And we pray, Lord, to bring the gospel into areas of God.

Where there is no light of Christ and where there's no preaching. We thank you, Lord, for those amongst us who are going into the ministry.

We pray for them, particularly Scott and Gordon, as they continue in their studies. We thank you for Stuart, as he continues to apply to the going into the ministry as well.

[ 9 : 18 ] We just praise you for these men. And we ask you, Lord, to be with them and to encourage them and to protect them as they go forward. We all need your protection.

And we ask that protection from the enemy as we go forward in our lives. So we ask your blessing upon us tonight. We pray, Lord, that as we look in the passage before us, that we'll look together later, that each of us will experience the Father's love, that amazing love that is lavished upon us. That we won't just know it in our heads, but we'll know it in our hearts. And that that will come out as we love others around us. So be with us as we continue tonight.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. So we're now going to continue praising God.

And we're going to go to number 1008 in Mission Praise.

The Lord's my shepherd. I'll not want. He makes me lie in pasture's greed. He leads me by the still, still waters. His goodness restores my soul.

[ 10 : 32 ] So let's sing this to God's praise. Amen. The Lord's my shepherd.

I'll not want. He makes me lie in pasture's greed.

He leads me by the still, still waters. His goodness restores my soul.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

[ 11 : 41 ] He guides my ways in righteousness. And he annoys my head with oil.

And my covenant overflows with joy. I feast on his pure delight.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone. I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

[ 12 : 55 ] ! I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

And I will trust in you alone. For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

And you alone. So we're going to read from the first letter of John, chapter 3, beginning at verse 1.

First letter of John, chapter 3, beginning at verse 1, if you have your Bibles there. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

[ 14 : 24 ] The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared.

But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

No one who abides in him keeps on sinning. No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you.

Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

[ 15 : 30 ] No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him. And he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Praise God for his word. We're just going to continue now, and we're going to sing from Psalm 116.

Psalm 116. I'll just read the beginning. I love the Lord, because my voice and prayers are needed here.

While I live, I will call on him, who bowed to me his ear. Psalm 116. Psalm 116. I love the Lord, because my voice and prayers he did here.



It can be such a wide variety of meanings. But, of course, it can also mean deep, sacrificial and unconditional love.

And that's the sort of love that Jesus has for us, that we are to have for others. John, here, he just cannot pin down this love of the Father.

[ 24 : 46 ] It's from, like, another country. It's something that he cannot fathom, and from which he doesn't seem to have seen, imagined, or experienced in human, earthly terms.

Now, most Christians, I think, have glimpsed or experienced this love of the Father for us in varying measure. We have to confess, though, that we often look away from God, and we fail to recognize this immense love.

Of course, we know in our heads that Jesus loves us. He died for us on the cross. But how often do we have the sort of astonishment and joy that John seems to convey here?

I speak for myself first. Too often, I know in my head of God's love. But has this reached my heart, as it should? And when I was converted, I did experience this love in a very overwhelming sort of way, washing over and through me.

And, of course, every conversion is different. Not everyone has that experience. But can we continue to have this sense of God's love?

[ 26 : 06 ] God is love, says John elsewhere in this letter. And if we know God, then surely we can also know this love. And he says in 1 John 4.19, We love because he first loved us.

And we really do need to know and experience this love, as John did, so that we ourselves can love. For our love is derived from his love.

We love because he first loved us. I think the occasion when a woman came to wash Jesus' feet in Luke 7.36 and following is a great example of what I'm trying to say here.

Jesus was at the house of Simon, a Pharisee, and he was reclining at the table. And we read, And anointed them with ointment.

Now you can just imagine the reaction of the Pharisees and the others looking at this scene. Jesus was not fazed by this.

[ 27 : 44 ] He knew what was going on. The Pharisee was outraged and complained about it, that Jesus would allow a sinful person to do this in his house.

But Jesus made it very clear that what she did for him was an outpouring of love for him. And he makes it clear that it's because she knew that she'd been forgiven so much.

It was a direct result of her knowledge of Jesus' love for her, sinner as she was, and his amazing forgiveness. And down the centuries, this woman's demonstration of love illustrates that unearthly, amazing love that she herself had received from Jesus and is now giving back to him.

We love because he first loved us. So I think in application, this verse in John's letter should encourage each of us to embrace this love much more than we do.

I'll speak again to myself. It's not a question of being worthy of it. We're not. It's accepting prayerfully, in our quiet moments, that God loves us with a love as if from another country.

[ 29 : 05 ] It's an unearthly sort of love. And immense. And I believe that if all Christians knew this and experienced, the world would change, wouldn't it? We'd be unable to hold such love in, like that woman in the Pharisee's house.

There surely would be revival. So we have the greatness of the Father's love. And then secondly, his love is lavished on us.

I've already more or less said this, but it's lavished on us, particularly as the NIV puts it, lavished.

It's not just a love that is somehow granted to a certain measure.

It's lavished. And I think that NIV version is possibly better. It's apparently what the Greek means. Lavished is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as bestowed in generous or extravagant quantities or given in profusion.

There's nothing restrained about the Father's love for us. It's lavish and it's profuse. Indeed, it's beyond any measuring. We see something of this in the parable of the prodigal son, don't we?

[ 30 : 18 ] The son comes, his head bowed. He feels completely unworthy. He just wants a house to stay in, some food and to be a servant.

What does the Father do? He runs to him. He embraces him. He puts a robe on him and a ring on his finger. He rejoices over him. He throws a party for him.

That is the extravagance of God's love. And how very cautious I am about believing that God has such a love for us.

I'm so tempted to think, poor, unworthy me. How could God really love me that much? But I think in having such thoughts, we are actually limiting the Father's love.

We're not stopping his love, but we're limiting it in our experience. We're actually denying all that the Bible tells us about God. The prodigal son, as I said, came feeling unworthy.

[ 31 : 25 ] His eyes cast down, repentant. But the love that was shown to him was overwhelming. And he, of course, would have known it and accepted it. And Jesus gave this parable for a very good reason.

And there's so much in it. But one of the main reasons was to say, this is the sort of love the Father has. We're very much works in progress.

We sin. We fall short. But John knew exactly the same problem as we have. Look at the earlier part of his letter in chapter 1, verse 8.

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

So John knew sin in his own heart. And he confessed this, and he was forgiven as we are. He was in the same boat as us, as a sinner.

[ 32 : 30 ] And at the same time, he knew the lavishly poured out love of God for him. And I'm very grateful for him writing these verses.

So that's the greatness of God, God's love. He lavishes it upon us. And thirdly, we are called children of God.

In this verse, the end of the first sentence is the evidence for John that the Father's love is great and lavishly poured out. He says, See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

So he knew he was a child of God. He was now part of the Father's family. As a Jew, he could do the unthinkable and cry, Abba, Father, in an intimate relationship.

And because of this fact, he knew that the Father loved him with this astonishing love that he cannot get over. And he emphasizes this with the next words, and that is what we are.

[ 33 : 42 ] We are not just called children of God. We are the children of God. And we, of course, read again from John in his Gospel, chapter 1, verse 12.

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or a husband's will, but born of God.

And this is, of course, a gift. It's all grace. You are given the right to become children of God. The commentator Barclay is quite helpful here.

I'll paraphrase what he says. It is by the gift of God that a person becomes a child of God. By nature, we are creatures of God, but it is by grace that we become children of God.

In one sense, all people are children of God. But in the sense of fatherhood, we are children of God when he makes his gracious approach to us and we respond.

[ 34 : 52 ] So let's be challenged tonight to approach our father, believing in this intimate, loving relationship, as children of God.

So there's the greatness of this love. It is lavished upon us. The evidence is that we are called children of God and we actually are his children. Fourthly, the world does not know him.

We read in the same verse, the reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know him. Now when I became a Christian, one of the most difficult things was the pain I felt and continue to feel that those around me who are not Christians, particularly family, didn't understand or know what had happened in a real sense.

They didn't know me. And I'm sure you all agree this is painful, but it's a true situation for many of us. The key to understanding this, of course, is they don't know him.

That is Christ. We're no longer children of the world, as John says here, but we are children of God. And the only way to be a child of God is through Christ.

[ 36 : 13 ] Colossians 3, 3, sums this up very beautifully. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. And our real new life is not understood or known because it is hidden with Christ.

Romans 8, 19 gives another fascinating glimpse into this mystery. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

The whole of creation will, at the end of time, recognise the children of God. But right now, the world does not know us as we really are. We know what it means to know each other in Christ, and this is the wonderful thing.

That's what fellowship is about, or should be. We recognise each other as we are actually children of God. That's one of the great privileges of fellowship, isn't it?

And sharing with one another that we are known in a way that the world cannot know us. And so there's a sort of sadness in these words about the world not knowing us because it didn't know him.

[ 37 : 25 ] And surely, this is another stimulus for us to tell people about our faith in Jesus. If they've come to know him, then they will understand.

Then they'll know us as we really are. We need to tell those around us. What does this mean in application? Think back, if you can, to when you're not a Christian.

And do you remember anyone going out of their way just to tell you about Jesus, about their faith? And do you regret now that they did that?

Even though at the time you may have said, ah, it's not for me, or that's a load of nonsense. I certainly remember a few people who told me about him, and at the time I disagreed or I decided that they were wrong or I tried to argue with them.

But now when I look back, I thank God for those very people who probably felt they got nowhere with someone like me. But never underestimate the impact that that can be.

[ 38 : 36 ] Certainly it had, I believe that had an impact later on in my life for me going to Christ. Don't expect immediate results when you tell people about Jesus. It could be years later.

Pray for them that they too can come to know Jesus and become children of God. So that's the fourth thing. The world doesn't know him and therefore doesn't know us.

The fifth thing is we shall be like him. Look at verse 2. Beloved, we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.

You see again that he wants to proclaim this wonderful fact that we are God's children. Now a newborn child is not the same as later on when we become adults.

The child grows and changes and will also come into an inheritance from the parents. John here is peering into the future when we have passed from this world I believe.

[ 39 : 50 ] What will this be like as God's children? There is uncertainty. Not all is revealed. He says here what we will be has not yet appeared.

But the order of events seems clear. First he will appear then we shall see him as he is.

One day we will see him as he really is. And finally we shall be like him. Now the image of God marred by the fall as it is will be restored fully and we will be like him.

Now that's very hard to take in, isn't it? Ephesians 4.24 we are told put on the new self creating to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

We read also in Romans 8.29 that we are predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son. And this theme of becoming like Jesus is confirmed also in 2 Corinthians 3.18 and we who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

[ 41 : 13 ] And our bodies too will be like his body. We read for instance in Philippians 3.21 the Lord Jesus Christ who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Now it's all mysterious but it's also true it's wonderful. And this fact that we'll be actually like Jesus not the same as Jesus but like in the sense of sinless in heaven is an extraordinary thing and very hard to take in but that's something that leads us on to the next point which is purify yourself as he is pure.

And this is the practical implications for us in verse 3 let me just read verse 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

As Christians we have this hope in him it's not a mere wish but actually means an unshakable confidence in him and as such we are to purify ourselves John says here as just as he is pure.

John Stott writes the Christian who fixes his hope as his confident expectation upon Christ's return will purify himself or herself not ceremonially but morally.

[ 42 : 52 ] Now purity in the Greek means freedom from moral stain so there's something we have to do. It's not a matter of sitting back. Yes forgiveness for sin is by grace and received by faith but

morally we have something to do to work on our lives if you like to work out our salvation in preparation for meeting Christ face to face because we will meet him face to face.

In the same letter John writes chapter 2 verse 28 and now dear children continue in him so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

That's what we want to be when we meet him we want to be confident and unashamed and we have to work at that we are sinners and we need to work at that and as John Stott writes again since he is pure and when we shall see him we shall be like him.

We must ensure that the process of purification is begun now and to begin to purify ourselves. True only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from the stain and guilt of sin but we have a part to play in purifying ourselves from its power.

That's good advice and I think really what he's saying John in this verse. So our Christian lives are not passive but active and we can only purify ourselves as we abide in him.

[ 44 : 34 ] There's a picture of the vine John chapter 15 we abide in him but we are to pursue this purity actively not passively confessing our sins regularly actively living out the Christ like life that he wants.

We want to be unashamed at his coming. So just going back over what we looked at the Father's love is great it is lavished upon us we know this because we are called children of God and we are the children of God the world doesn't know us because it doesn't know him he will appear to us we will see him as he is we should be like him and so we must purify ourselves just as he is pure let's pray Lord we just thank you for these few verses from John so inspired by you so full of truth so full of depth we pray Lord that we will experience and receive that wonderful love as lavished upon us and we pray Lord that we will indeed purify ourselves we know we thank you that Jesus has dealt with our sin but as we come again it's like he's washing our feet again and again we pray Lord that we will be purified and that we will actively purify ourselves so that when we meet you face to face we are unashamed and we can hold our heads up and we will worship you in Jesus name Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen