

1.12.24 am

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Date: 01 December 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see all of you. Good to see some visitors as well. We've got some visitors coming from as far as Spain this morning.

So it's good to see all of you. There's tea, there's coffee at the end of the service. If you're able to stay behind, please do so. The notices, you've got the congregational email which goes out, gives all the notices.

If you don't yet get that, come and speak to Gordon, I think it is, at the end. And your email address can be added to that list. You'll get the full set of notices.

They've also been on the screen before the service began though, so I won't go through them all. Just to remind you though that the evening service tonight is a Gaelic service. Usually that would have been last weekend, but with the Scaladale visitors, we postponed it a week.

So Gaelic service tonight at 6 o'clock and that will be taken by the Reverend Kenny Ferguson. No fellowship afterwards, but the Youth Fellowship will meet in the manse tonight.

[1 : 0 7] Prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, which I'll take myself, God willing. And next Sunday I'll take the morning service, God willing, and Scott will take the evening service.

The only other thing to say just in terms of the structure of the service this morning is we'll follow the normal order of the service, but with the ordination of Stuart and Richard into eldership, that will happen at the end of the service.

So I'll finish the sermon, we'll have another praise, and then they'll come forward and I'll put the questions to them. So that gives a sense of the structure and also helps us to be prayerful as we go through the service.

We're thankful for this privilege. Let's now worship God and let us sing to his praise. And we sing in the words that will be on the screen, I hope, in just a moment.

And they're not in the book, it's that hymn that we've got to know over the last few months, The Ancient of Days. Though the nations rage, kingdoms rise and fall, there is still one king reigning over all.

[2 : 2 0] So I will not fear, for this truth remains, that my God is the Ancient of Days. We'll stand to sing in just a moment to sing to God's praise. The Ancient of Days.

So I will not fear, for this truth remains, that my God is the Ancient of Days.

None above him, but before him, all of time in his hands. All his throne, it shall remain, and ever stand.

All the power, all the glory, I will trust in his name. For my God is the Ancient of Days.

For the dead of night. The dead of night overwhelms my soul. He is here with me.

[3 : 5 6] I am not alone. For his love, for his love is sure, and he knows my name.

For my God is the Ancient of Days. God above him, and before him, all of time in his hands.

For his throne, it shall remain, and ever stand. All the power, all the glory, I will trust in his name.

For my God is the Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days. Oh, I may not see what the future brings.

I will watch and wait for the Savior King. God above him, and before him, all of time in his hands.

[5 : 08] God above him, and before him, all of time in his hands.

For his throne, it shall remain, and ever stand. All the power, all the glory, I will trust in his name.

For my God is the Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days.

The Ancient of Days. Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray together.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can come into your presence this morning. We thank you that we bow in the presence of the Almighty God.

[6 : 13] The Ancient of Days. The God who rules over all. And whose rule is unbroken. It is eternal. And it can never be challenged.

And we thank you for the comfort in realizing and being able to sing these truths. That you are the sovereign God. We thank you that you are the God who is King of heaven and earth.

And although the nations do rage. And although kingdoms rise and fall. And we see it and we feel it. We experience the turmoil of it in our own nation even.

We thank you that you are still God who reigns over all. So we pray that you would help us. Not to fear. Not to be distracted by all the things that happen in this world that distress us.

But to remember that no matter what we go through. Whether nationally, internationally or personally. You are our God. That Jesus is our Savior.

[7 : 18] And that we have the promised help of the Holy Spirit day by day. As we look to you and as we lean upon you. So give to us Lord we pray that sense of peace.

We see in our world so much in the way of trouble. We see wars. We see conflict. We see tensions. But we thank you that you are the God who is able to intervene and help.

And so even as we think of the situation in the Middle East. As we think of these places where there is such intense conflict. We thank you that we can pray. And in some sense we can enter into the midst of these places.

As we ask Lord that you would intervene. And that you would use your people. Where there is suffering. And where there is difficulty. To bring peace and consolation.

We pray Lord also for our nation. We think of so much that happens in our nation that is contrary to your will. And to your way. And even as we reflect on some of the decisions taken in Parliament in this week past.

[8 : 27] As we seek to use our own authority to end life. We pray that you would forgive us. That you would have mercy upon us.

And that you would help us to be humble to the extent. That we remember and submit to the fact that you are God. And you are the one who gives life.

You are the one who determines the number of our days. So help us we pray. To bow before you. And we pray that as a nation. That I have wandered far from you.

That you would draw us back. That we would once more open the book that has been set aside. And that we would look to the Lord Jesus. The one alone who is able to save.

We pray for all those who are struggling today. Those who are sick. We think of some who have been in hospital. Those who have returned back home. We think in particular of Ronnie McKenzie.

[9 : 26] And we ask Lord that your hand would be upon him. And all those who are sick. All those who are struggling. We thank you that you are the God who draws near to us in times of distress.

And we pray that all those that we are mindful of. And can see in our own minds eye at this time. We ask Lord that you would help them. That you would draw near to them at this time.

We pray also for those who are grieving. And we think especially of Joyce and Stuart and Emily and Anna. We think of Annie and Mary and Annette.

And the wider family. And we ask Lord that as they mourn. As they mourn for the passing of John Archie. That you would bless them.

That you the God of all comfort. Would draw near to them. And that they would know your peace. We thank you for Jesus. We thank you Father for sending your son into this world.

[10 : 24] And we thank you for the promise that whoever believes in him. Shall not perish. But have eternal life. And so we pray that each one of us today. Would be found looking to Jesus.

And believing in Jesus. We pray that you would be with Stuart and Richard. And their families especially today. As well as we think about the prospect of ordination to eldership.

We pray for them. And for all those who are in office in the congregation here. We ask that you would help them. That you would help us to serve you. And to serve you with diligence and cheerfulness.

That we would seek in all that we do. To lift up the name of Jesus. And not just those in office. We pray for every Christian. Every member of the Church of Christ.

That as those who are saved. That you would help us to seek to serve you each day. That we would use our lives and our time in this world.

[11 : 25] Not in a way that is wasteful. Not in a way that is selfish. But in a way that glorifies God. And we thank you that as we do so. We experience joy. In time.

And for eternity. We ask Lord that you would cleanse us. From our sin. We are sinners. Each time we come into your presence. You are the God who is holy.

And we are not holy. We are sinful. And so we pray for that forgiveness. We thank you that Jesus went to the cross. To turn the right anger of God away from us.

That we would know mercy and peace. And the love of God. So we pray that we would have that experience. And that we would know the assurance of sins forgiven. And the joy of life in abundance.

And life eternal. Through Jesus Christ. In whose name we pray. Amen. Boys and girls would you like to come forward please. NINGNINGNING How are you all today?

[12 : 44] Good. You had a bit quiet today. You had a good week? Good, good. A good school week. A good school week, Michael, yes. So, I was hoping I could show you something today, but I can't.

Because I'd hoped last night to go down to Leverborough with a camera and take a few pictures of something that was going to be in Leverborough last night.

Do you know what I'm talking about? No? Is it something to do with Sky? No, it's something to do with Sky. Last night in Leverborough, there was going to be a light switch storm. And tomorrow night in Tarbert, there's going to be a light switch storm.

And I was away in Edinburgh this week for a couple of days. And right along the street and in all the shops and in all the windows, there's all these amazing lights. And I was driving home and when I was going through, I think it was Belalham.

I think there must be two houses that are in competition with each other. And there was amazing lights. And maybe in your houses, you've got trees. And on the trees, you've got stars and crackers and lights.

[13 : 59] And so, what's all that about? What kind of lights are you filming? Christmas lights.

Christmas lights. That's exactly right. So, at the beginning of December each year, when actually everything outside gets quite dark, we see all these amazing lights.

And the lights are Christmas lights. So, who do the lights remind us of and point us to? Poor Finley. Poor Finley always has to answer the questions.

You can say it together. Finley and Michael. Who do the lights point us to? Jesus. Jesus. And all I want to say to you today, short talk, is when you go out tomorrow night in Tarbert, and it's all dark, and then at seven o'clock or whenever time is, all the lights go on.

And when you're down at the school in a few days' time, whenever it happens, whenever Murda Farrakhan, the Christmas elf, gets busy, and you see all the lights, and when you're walking along the street and in the windows, you see all the lights, then it's a bit exciting, isn't it?

[15 : 24] Because it reminds us that it's Christmas. But don't just think about Christmas. Think about Jesus. He is the light of the world.

And he came away, he came to this world to chase away the darkness. The darkness of death. The darkness of sin.

The darkness that the devil brings. Jesus came to chase it all away. He is the light of the world. So when you see the lights this Christmas, remember Jesus, and maybe say a prayer.

And thank Jesus for who he is. And what he came to do. So that we could have light, and that we could have life. So let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your son Jesus into this world.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you said, I am the light of the world. And we thank you that as we see all these lights shining in the darkness of December, we pray that we would think much about Jesus.

[16 : 36] And we pray, Lord Jesus, that you would help us. And Holy Spirit, that you would help us to remember, day by day, in all the busyness of the month of December, to remember Jesus, to pray, and to trust our lives to him.

We thank you that Jesus came into this world because he loved us. We thank you that he went to the cross, to the darkest place ever, to take away our sin, to overcome death, to beat the devil, and to bring light and life into this world and into our hearts when we trust him.

So Lord Jesus, help us this month to worship you. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now. We're going to sing Mission Praise 102, which is kind of like a pre-carol carol.

It's not quite a Christmas carol, but it's moving towards a Christmas carol. Come thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free. From our fears and sins release us.

Let us find our rest in thee. Let us find our rest in thee.

[18 : 27] Let us find our rest in thee. There's no strength and consolation, hope of all we earn the heart.

Dear peace, I love every nation, joy of every loving heart.

For thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king, born to reign in us forever, thou thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal spirit, rule in all our hearts alone, by thine own sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

Okay, boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school, as they go, remember to pray for them. If we could turn now, please, and our Bibles to Philippians chapter 2.

[20 : 27] Philippians chapter 2. And we'll read the whole of this chapter.

So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among you, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, God has exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[22 : 04] Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but more, much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise, you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you, for I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your own welfare, for they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel. I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me, and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.

[23 : 39] I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.

Indeed he was ill, near to death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

I am the more eager to send him therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honour such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're now going to sing again to God's face. We'll sing from Psalm 145, verses 7 and 8 of the Psalm.

We'll sing in Gaelic, and I'll read the verses in English before we sing. The memory of thy goodness great, they largely shall express. With songs of praise, they shall extol thy perfect righteousness.

[24 : 58] The Lord is very gracious, in him compassions flow. In mercy he is very great, and is to anger slow. These two stanzas of Psalm 145 will sing to God's praise.

We remain seated to sing in Gaelic. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[28 : 20] If you could turn back to the passage that we read in Philippians chapter 2, please. And let's pray again as we go there.

Lord God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the promise of the help of the Holy Spirit. We pray, Holy Spirit, that you would illuminate our minds, that you would take away every distraction, that you would help us to see Jesus, to understand the gospel, and to respond in faith by believing.

We pray that none of us here would read about the salvation that is offered to those who are in Christ and remain outside of Christ. We pray that each one of us as we read these favorite words of the Apostle Paul in Christ that every one of us would come to Jesus, that we would be in Jesus, and that we would know the encouragement and the salvation that comes only from him.

And what we pray for ourselves is we pray for the children. We ask, Lord, that you would bless them, that you would speak to them, that they would trust you from the earliest years, that they would walk with you all the days of their lives.

And we pray for some of these young ones who are still going along to Sunday school, but perhaps have already come to faith in Christ. And we ask, Lord, that you would give them the courage to proclaim, to profess that faith, that we would see young souls that are saved being sanctified and made more like Jesus.

[30 : 02] We pray for the persecuted church, those who would love to gather as we do, and yet are unable to do so. We ask that as they gather secretly in different places, that you would bless them, that you would protect them, and that the church of Christ would grow in places where even there is acute persecution.

We know that in these environments, very often, that this word revival moves quickest. And we pray for the churches around us as well here, the different denominations, the different congregations, wherever Christ crucified is preached.

We ask, Lord God, that you would be working, that you would be building your church, seeking and saving souls, and sanctifying your people, that we would bring glory to your name.

So hear our prayers and help us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I remember being taught in maths class that when you're answering questions, you should always show your workings.

So even if you got the answer wrong, which I usually did, at least the teacher could see what I was thinking on that journey to getting the answer usually wrong.

[31 : 25] Always show your workings, is what we were told. And I thought I would start today by showing you my workings, what's been going on in my mind.

We're in Philippians chapter 2. And I was checking back over the last 10 years. And as far as I can remember, I don't think we've been in the book of Philippians at all.

So you might ask the question, how on earth have we landed on Philippians chapter 2 on this particular Sunday when we have been studying in Matthew up until this time.

And the route to Philippians chapter 2 is through one small word and it's the word cheer or cheerful.

The end of the sermon, after we've sang the next praise, Stuart and Richard will be asked questions and they will take vows, they will promise.

[32 : 32] And one of the things that they'll promise to do is they'll promise cheerfully to discharge all the duties of an elder.

Which brings a bit of a challenge to me, doesn't it? Every elder has been called and is one who has promised to be cheerful.

And when I get nervous, this is my explanation, the smile evaporates, it drops off my face. I'm not blessed with Scott's smile. But I've got cheerfulness on the inside.

And that's the calling of every elder. When you think about elders, you should think. And we can see it very clearly in some. Cheerful.

And turning to Philippians chapter 2, we have what is a letter from the Apostle Paul to young Timothy. And Paul is writing from prison.

[33 : 38] He's in prison in Rome as he writes. And as he writes, and as he anticipates a response to his letter from Timothy, he says in verse 14 that he looks forward to being cheered by it.

So this is maybe something that we overlook. the call to cheerfulness. As we follow Jesus, as we serve Jesus, not just as elders, but as Christians in any capacity, we can and we should serve Jesus cheerfully.

with joy. With a smile. I'm working hard to try and get a smile. So I want to just think this through as we step through this chapter.

The first point that we come to in this letter is encouragement. Paul, as he writes to Timothy, he reminds him of the encouragement that we have in Christ.

And that takes us from verse 1 to verse 4 of the letter. Paul begins in the ESV, it's put like this. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, and we might pause there and just ask the question.

[35 : 10] We might say, strange word, if. If there is any encouragement in Christ. And one of the commentators, Alec Motier, says the word if does not imply uncertainty.

So there's no uncertainty about this if. Actually, the more straightforward translation would be since. Since there is encouragement in Christ, says Paul.

So I want to think in the first point, what encouragement is there for those who are in Christ? And just remaining in the first verse, the first thing that we see is that if we are in Christ, there is the encouragement of comfort.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, there is great comfort, says the Apostle Paul, from knowing the love of God.

How true that is. we are loved We may find it hard as we think about ourselves, but there is great comfort from knowing that solid truth that we are loved by God.

[36 : 43] Jesus loves me, this I know, is a hymn that brings comfort and it brings encouragement to us from our earliest years.

I have heard some of our tiny wee ones who are now through the wall just when they can hardly speak, singing along with that wonderful hymn, Jesus loves me, this I know, and that gives comfort in our early years.

It's a hymn that brings comfort all the way through our lives, and especially when we are going through hard times, when we are grieving, as we so often are as a community, when we are struggling, there is great comfort offered to us from Jesus.

the one who loves us. Remember the testimony of Stan Gowdy?

Stan Gowdy was the founder of Road to Recovery, the work with alcoholics, and Stan's testimony, Stan who's now in glory, his testimony goes back to one night when he was blazing drunk, and he was in a state of total despair, and hopelessness, and a Christian just came alongside him, and put his hand on his shoulder, and said, Stan, Jesus loves you.

[38 : 25] And these words changed his life. These words just came straight through him in the best possible way, and that evening he was saved, and he became sober, and he remained sober, and he served the Lord Jesus for the rest of his days.

great comfort, great encouragement, in knowing the love of God, the love of Jesus for us.

Somebody here might ask the question, how do I know? How do I know that Jesus loves me? Sometimes we don't feel maybe that Jesus loves us.

We have an enemy who whispers into our ears and says he can't love you with all that you do and all that you say and all that you think. So how do we know that Jesus loves us?

Well, we know we could say, first of all, from Christmas, the fact that he came into this world, he left heaven's glory to condescend to this sin-sick world.

[39 : 43] Why? Because he loves us. But even more powerfully than the incarnation, we can think about the crucifixion, the cross.

The cross is the place that presses upon us the truth that Jesus loved us. That place that he went will going to take our sin away from us, that place that he went to turn the righteous anger of God away from us, so that we can know the love of God.

We often sing the hymn, don't we? Here is love, vast as the ocean, loving kindness as the flood, when the prince of life, our ransom, shed for us his precious blood.

So there's immense encouragement from knowing the love of Jesus that is promised to all who are in Christ.

There's comfort in love, says Paul to Timothy. And then he says, as he goes on in verse 1, he talks about the participation in the Spirit.

[41 : 20] If we are in Christ, if we are Christians, then one of the most amazing truths for us to think about is the fact that God the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit, he lives in us.

1 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 16, Paul says, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God Spirit dwells in you?

It's a mind-blowing truth. The moment we give our lives to Jesus, God the Holy Spirit, he comes to live in us and he begins to work in us and when God begins our work, we're reminded in the previous chapter, Philippians chapter 1 verse 6, that when God begins our work, he always sees it through to completion.

There is that ongoing participation in the Spirit, the work of the Holy Spirit. There are no abandoned projects with God the Holy Spirit.

We can all think about our homes and our gardens and all kinds of things where we've begun a project and it's got complicated and we've just abandoned it.

[42 : 46] I was thinking about Christmas as a wee boy. You still love at Christmas time getting these model aircraft kits, these air fix kits of F-16s and all kinds of airplanes.

You still love getting them, you still love taking them out of the box, you still love putting all the pieces on the table and getting the glue out and I would start the project with great vigour but halfway through a big gluey unsightly mess and I would abandon it and I would never go back to it.

I don't think I ever finished an air fix model aircraft. left. But one of the really encouraging truths here is that God the Holy Spirit he never gives up on us.

He never abandons the work that he has begun on us. There is continuous participation, there is constant fellowship and there is such great encouragement in that truth.

If it was up to you and I, if it was up to us, the keeping on, keeping on, as Christians, the work would have been finished long ago, would have been abandoned.

[44 : 01] But the reason that we can keep on keeping on, the reason that God's work continues in us is because it's God's work. And he begins it and he continues it.

And so the Apostle Paul encourages Timothy with these words about comfort in the love of God, participation in the Spirit.

And then the ongoing experience of the affection and the sympathy, or as the NIV puts it, the tenderness and compassion that is shown to us by God and is shared among the people of God.

And again, it's such an amazing thing to think about the fact that we can come to the Holy God, God, the Almighty God, the God of heaven and earth. And we can call him our Father.

We can know him as our eternal Father, the Father who is always there, the Father who hears our prayers and who helps us in our time of need and who treats us with such tenderness, always, never bad tempered, but continually tender and compassionate.

[45 : 41] So, Paul says to Timothy, there's just a few reasons in one verse to encourage you, the encouragement that there is for those who are in Christ.

Christ, and when we just stop and think about what we have in Christ, our souls fill up with joy, and our hearts are cheered, and the effect of that should be not just that we want to smile, but that we want to serve God by loving and serving each other.

And that's what Paul instructs Timothy in. As he gives the encouragement, he continues in verse two to say, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

The summary of that is serve the Lord by serving each other. So cheerful service and encouragement, steady joy, heart cheerfulness comes from being in Christ.

[47 : 15] so for those today who may be in church but not in Christ, come to him today.

Trust the Lord Jesus today. And for those who are in Christ, let's be encouraged to abide in him, to stay close to Jesus, and as we do so, we remain encouraged and cheerful, as Paul was.

The encouragement for those in Christ, you must be concerned by now, we've spent all that time on one verse, don't worry, we're moving at much greater speed now. The second thing Paul says is he highlights the example of Christ, verse 5, he says, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

So as Paul, as he encourages Timothy, and as he encourages the church in Philippi who will receive this letter, he uses the supreme example.

He uses the example of Jesus. We heard this a number of times last Sunday evening as Scott preached from 2 Timothy, and Paul here, he says, have the mind of Jesus, have the attitude of Jesus among you, follow the example of Jesus, says Paul.

[48 : 50] And this is our calling as Christians, not just elders, certainly elders and deacons, but every Christian, we are called to be like Christ.

He is our example. But more than that, he, Jesus, is our Savior. And Paul takes every opportunity to remind us of the gospel, to remind us of all that Jesus did for us.

So read verse 6 to 8 again. Paul gives these amazing verses where he expounds the gospel. He speaks about Jesus though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing.

God, the Son, made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant. Being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

cross. The cross is not a place that we go to to be saved and then we move on from.

[50 : 18] The cross is a place that we need to keep going back to. Day by day, we have to go back to the cross.

cross. And Paul is taking Timothy again back to the cross. Because our service of Jesus flows from trusting him as our Savior and daily surveying the cross.

love. And we can say with the hymn writer, as we will do in just a few moments, love so amazing, so divine, it demands my soul, my life, my all.

That's where our cheerful service comes from. That's where our willing service comes from. It comes from seeing the amazing sacrifice of Jesus.

If we are grudging and reluctant in our service, we need to go back to the cross. Third point, exaltation of Christ.

[51 : 29] There's encouragement in Christ. There's the example of Jesus that Paul holds up. The third thing is the exaltation of Christ. Verse 9, Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, the glory of God the Father.

Paul's writing here to Timothy to encourage him in serving Jesus. He's prodding him, and he's pushing him along.

He's encouraging him to serve Jesus, and that was necessary because sometimes service can be difficult. I mean, that's evident even in the worldly sense.

Sometimes we can go into a shop, or we can be in a cafe, we can be in a restaurant, and the person who's serving isn't serving with great joy because service at times can be hard, and sometimes when you're serving people, they're far from appreciative of what you're doing.

So it can become a slog. And sometimes it can be hard to serve Jesus. Or at least sometimes it can be hard to serve Jesus cheerfully.

[53 : 01] you know, when it feels like the world is against you and your master, it can be hard to serve Jesus cheerfully.

And that's often how it seems, even if we think about our own island, Harris. The reality is, the sad reality is, that there are more people in Harris today who don't love Jesus than who do.

At least that's the profession. If we take all the churches in Harris together, and we add up all the people who are in worship this morning, and we set that alongside all the people who are not, there's more people who are not at worship than there are those who are in the place of lifting up the name of Jesus.

And when you speak to somebody about Jesus, when you invite somebody to come to church, very often the people that you seek to invite, as you serve Jesus, as you share the gospel, as you ask them to come to the place where the gospel is heard, they won't say, thank you very much.

I've been waiting for that invitation for a long time. Sometimes they will. But very often, when we speak to somebody about Jesus, there's pushback, there's rejection.

[54 : 38] And that can be hard. Because all of us have emotions. None of us like to be rejected and pushed back.

But think about the Apostle Paul. where is Paul? He's in prison. He's in prison in Rome. He's awaiting trial, likely execution.

Why is he in prison? What is he on trial for? He's in prison because he is a faithful servant of Jesus. He's in prison because he will not stop talking about Jesus.

No matter how many people push him back and tell him to shut up. He will not stop serving Jesus. And so he ends up getting thrown into prison.

But still he's cheerful. You can read Philippians this afternoon. You'll find nothing in Philippians where the Apostle Paul is saying, you know, I hate it in this miserable prison.

[55 : 50] The conditions are so terrible. The guards are so rude. I can't get out. The food is terrible. Please do what you can to release me from this place.

There's nothing about that. There's nothing bleak and miserable about Paul's attitude. He's cheerful. And he is looking forward to being even more cheerful when the postman comes and delivers a letter back from Timothy.

who will tell him about the church in Philippi. So how can Paul be that way? That's the question. How can Paul, when he is in this bleak, dark prison, with no real prospects of release, how can he still be cheerful?

How can he continue to serve, even with pen and paper, when a situation is so difficult? And the answer to that question is, because he knows that his master, the master that he serves, is highly exalted.

Paul knows that the name of Jesus, the name that is precious to him, the name that he is sharing, the name that he carries, the name of Jesus, Paul knows that the name of Jesus is the name that is above every name.

[57 : 19] Paul knows that he is serving the Savior, the one who died for sinners, who rose from the dead, who will return to this world in glory and power, and when he does, Paul knows that every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

And it's so easy for us to lose sight of this. It's so easy for us in a world that is so hostile to Jesus sometimes and dismissive of Jesus other times, it's so easy to lose sight of this.

that no matter what the world says or does, no matter what people or what even our parliament says, Christ is highly exalted right now.

and no one and nothing will not come off his throne.

Though the nations rage and kingdoms rise and fall, there is still one king ruling over all.

[58 : 58] King Jesus. And when we take time to meditate upon that, what great motivation there is to be cheerful and to serve our Lord and our Master well.

Exaltation of Christ. The fourth point is the exhortation to serve Christ. I'll just give you the heading really. From verse 12 to verse 18, you can scan the verses yourself just now.

There's a lot in these verses. There's a whole series of sermons in these verses from verse 12 to verse 18. But the ESV summary, if you've got an ESV there, gives a good flavor of the verses.

And the essence of it is that Christians are to be lights. The exhortation, the essence of this message, verse 12 to 18, is that Christians are to be lights in this world.

We said to the children, Jesus said in John chapter 8 verse 12, I am the light of the world. And Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 14, you are the light of the world.

[60 : 27] So if we are saved from the inside, then that salvation, it should work its way from the inside and out into this world.

God. So there's an exhortation here to serve Jesus. So Paul says to Timothy, obey Jesus.

In every detail, every decision, there's a calling to obedience. Once we're saved, we're not saved through our obedience, but if we are saved, one of the things that we will want to do is obey Jesus.

And so Paul says to Timothy, remember, exhortation, obey Jesus. Live blameless lives, says the apostle Paul, not sinless lives, we can't do that, but we're called to live blameless lives so we don't allow sin to find a harbour in our hearts.

Last night was wild. And when I took a walk down the front, I could see that there were boats that aren't usually there and that were harboured in, in Tarbert.

[61 : 44] They were staying there for a while. I think it's Psalm 66 that speaks about the fact that we are not to allow sin to harbour in our hearts.

And that's what it means to live a blameless life. We don't allow sin to harbour. We don't provide a harbour in our lives for sin. We are continually repenting of sin all our lives.

Paul encourages Timothy, exhorts him, do that. Live a blameless life, always be repenting. And don't be a grumbler, says Paul. Don't be a cynic.

But be joyful, be cheerful, shine as a light in this world. Live a straight life in a crooked world, says the apostle Paul. Hold fast to the word of life, hold fast to Jesus.

So these are some of the words of exhortation that went from Paul to Timothy and they come from the apostle Paul in the work of the Holy Spirit through the word of God to us.

[62 : 47] Christians, we are called to be lights in the world. We are saved by Jesus in order to serve Jesus brightly.

We are saved by grace, Ephesians 2 verse 8 and 9. We love that, but we are saved for works of service. That's Ephesians 2 verse 10. So followers of Jesus are called not to a life of self-pleasing, but a life of service.

Not a life where we put a spotlight on us. And see how much attention we can get online for us. We are called to shine a light on Jesus.

Exhortation to serve Christ. And finally, very briefly, Paul finishes with two examples of servants of Jesus.

And in verse 19 to verse 24, he spotlights Timothy. He gives us a short profile of Timothy.

[64 : 08] What do we know about Timothy? Well, we know that Timothy was young. 1 Timothy 4 tells us that. We know that he was timid.

2 Timothy chapter 1 tells us that. So if you think about Timothy, ministry wasn't easy for Timothy. He wasn't the kind of person who bounced around at the front with great confidence and enthusiasm.

Timothy's the kind of guy who would rather be sitting at the back of the church. But Jesus called Timothy to serve on the front line. And so he did.

Costly as it was. He was obedient to God's call and God used Timothy powerfully. So Timothy's an example of a servant of Jesus.

And then the second example, the final example, is Epaphroditus and look at verse 25 to verse 30. And we see this picture of this man called Epaphroditus.

[65 : 22] What do we know about him? Well, we know that he was older and he was tired. So we've got Timothy who's young and he's timid.

And he's a servant of Jesus. We've got Epaphroditus who is older and he's tired and he's struggling with his health.

And he almost died as he sought to serve Jesus. But still to this day, he's keeping on serving Jesus.

After so many others have already dropped out of the race. And Paul says, honour such men, servants of Jesus.

And we can think of many like Epaphroditus. Men who have served the Lord Jesus over the years and the decades and who are still serving.

[66 : 34] even when some days due to health and age it's a struggle and yet they still serve.

And we can be thankful for these faithful servants of Jesus, the Epaphroditus's. people who don't find it easy to stand up and step up.

People who aren't perhaps natural leaders but who are called by God and who depending on the grace of God serve Jesus.

We can be thankful for them too because they, we, all of us, are in need of prayer.

So Paul finishes the chapter with the mention of these two men as servants of Jesus. Be like Timothy he says. Be like Epaphroditus as they are being like Jesus as they serve Jesus.

[67 : 52] Bob Dylan sang in the 70s we're finished don't worry. He sang in the 70s you've got to serve somebody and the question we finish with today is are you serving Jesus?

there's no better there's no kinder there's no more loving master that we can have and serve.

So come to him if you never have and trust him and serve him. And if we've already trusted him and are already serving him then as we think about all that he has done for us on the cross let us stay by day serve him cheerfully.

We'll sing now to God's praise we'll sing from Mission Praise 755 When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died my riches gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride God I survey the wondrous cross on which the bread of glory died my riches gain I count but lost and more content along my pride!

Ritten Lord that I should boast Still in the death of Christ my God!

[70 : 11] All love in things that charm be most I sacrifice than to his blood He from his hand his hands his feet so on love for April Thine did e'er such love and sorrow lead our forms compose so rich a crown and the whole realm of nature high that were an offering far too small love so amazing amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all love so it's good to have the boys and girls back in and boys and girls just in case you're wondering what we're doing we are we've got lots of different elders in the church and the elders pray for you and the elders try and keep us all right as we stay close to the

Bible and we've got two more men who are coming into the eldership this morning so I'm going to ask Stuart and Richard to come forward please and just stand with me up on the platform so having followed the process for the nomination of elders and with no objections having been made to the life and doctrine of yourself Stuart or Richard we can now proceed with the ordination and what I'm going to do is I'm going to ask them these questions that have been set and then having answered the questions they'll confirm their answers by signing what we call the formula so

I'm going to ask you these questions and if you can respond with I do assuming that you're in agreement with all that is asked do you believe the scriptures of the old and new testaments to be the word of God and the only rule of faith and manners do you sincerely own and declare the confession of faith approved by former general assemblies of this church to be the confession of your faith and do you own the doctrine therein contained to be the true doctrine which you will constantly adhere to do you own and acknowledge the presbyterian church government of this church by Kirk sessions presbyteries provincial synods and general assemblies to be the only government of this church and do you engage to submit thereto concur therewith and not to endeavour directly or indirectly the prejudice or subversion thereof this is a longer one do you believe that the

Lord Jesus Christ as king and head of the church has appointed a government in the hands of church officers distinct from and not subordinate in its own province to civil government and that the civil magistrate does not possess jurisdiction or authoritative control over the regulation of the affairs of Christ church and do you approve of the general principles embodied in the claim declaration and protest adopted by the general assembly of the church of Scotland in 1842 and in the protest of ministers and elders commissioners from presbyteries to the general assembly read in the presence of the royal commissioner on 18th May 1843 as declaring the views which are sanctioned by the word of God and the standards of this church with respect to the spirituality and freedom of the church of Christ and her subjection to him as her only head and to his word as her only standard do you promise to observe uniformity of worship and the administration of all the public ordinances within the church and as the same are as the same are at present performed and allowed and do you promise sorry do you accept the office of an elder of this congregation and promise through grace faithfully diligently and cheerfully to discharge all the duties thereof let me pray for you both our heavenly father we thank you for

Stuart and we thank you for Richard we thank you for your work in their lives for seeking them for saving them we thank you for their service of the Lord Jesus up until this time and we thank you that as they accept the office of elder in this congregation that they do so depending on the grace of the Lord Jesus and we pray that day by day they would know that grace that they would know the wisdom that comes from heaven that you would enable them to faithfully and diligently and cheerfully serve the Lord Jesus with all the gifts that you have given to them we pray also for their families we pray for Joyce and we pray for Emma we pray for the girls as well that you would be with Hannah and Ellie that you would be with little Anna and Emily and we ask that you would bless them as families that in their homes that they would know the presence of God and that these homes would be places of great hospitality where the gospel is both heard and seen and felt so bless them we pray and help them as they and as each one of the elders and deacons here seeks to serve you help us to do so with zeal with cheerfulness and depending on the grace of the Lord

[77 : 17] Jesus and we pray for these young ones we pray for those who've come back through from Sunday school and we ask Lord that as they watch and as they listen that you would be their Lord and Saviour and that in years to come we may see some of them stepping forward as Richard and Stuart do to serve you in the courts of your church to hear our prayers and help us we pray in everything cleanse us from sin empty us of self fill us with the Holy Spirit we pray and help us live for your glory and we ask all this in Jesus name and for Jesus sake Amen if I could ask you both just to sign this document please thank you thank you both and please remember to pray for these men and pray for all the elders here thank you guys if you can get your seats again we're going to close our service by singing to God's praise and we'll sing from

Psalm 100 all people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord with cheerful voice him serve with mirth his praise foretell come ye before him and rejoice we'll stand to sing to God's praise all people that on earth do dwell sing to the Lord with cheerful voice and stand with mirth his praise foretell come ye before him and rejoice know that the

Lord is God indeed without a rate he day does make we are his clock he doth us feed and for his sheep he doth us take!

oh enter! enter then his gates with faith approach with joy his course unto!

praise praise Lord and bless his name always!

[80 : 39] for it is simply so to do for why the Lord our God is good his mercy is forever sure!

His truth at all times firm he stood and shall promise to endure now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen