

Hope for the growing Christian

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning.

Those who are watching online, those who are tuning in on the telephone, it's good for us to be able to come together and to worship God in this way. Intimations, just a couple of things.

Firstly, to say that the service this evening will be an English service. We're in Psalm 121 and that service should be online just before 6 o'clock this evening.

And the YF, as you'll meet at half past seven on Zoom, so you'll get information about that YF as you have done in past weeks.

And the prayer meeting, again, meets on Wednesday evening at half past seven on Zoom as well. And there's details on how to log in on the Facebook page. And if you need any further details, feel free to give me a phone at any point.

[1 : 14] So these, I think, are all the intimations that I need to share at this point. And I will sing to God's praise. And we sing the whole of Psalm 98, a psalm where we are called to praise God for the salvation that he has given to us and through Christ.

And it's a psalm also where we're directed to the fact that Jesus, our Savior, who came for our salvation, he is coming back to this world.

And that will be part of our focus today as we open the second letter of Peter. So Psalm 98, we'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise. We'll sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he hath done, his right hand and his holy arm and victory hath won.

The Lord God, his salvation hath caused to be known, his justice in the heathen sight he openly hath shown. And we sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

Oh, sing a new song to the Lord for wonders he hath done.

[2 : 26] His right hand and his holy arm, him victory hath won.

The Lord God, his salvation hath caused it to be known, his justice in the heathen sight.

He openly hath shown. He, mindful of his grace and truth, to Israel's house hath been.

And the salvation of our God, all lands of the earth have seen.

Let all the earth unto the Lord send forth a joyful noise.

[3 : 41] Lift up your voice aloud to him, sing praises and rejoice.

With harp, with harp and voice of psalms unto Jehovah sing.

With trumpets, cornets gladly sound before the Lord the King.

Let seas and all their fullness roar, the world and dwellers bear.

Let floods clap hands and let the hills together joy declare.

[4 : 44] Before the Lord, because he comes to judge the earth, he comes.

He'll judge the world with righteousness, his folk with equity.

Just before we turn to God in prayer, let me just share with you a prayer alert that I got from Release International.

It comes under the heading of China Extending Its Anti-Christian Programme. And it says, amongst other things in this update, authorities have banned all online services.

Officials have accelerated their programme to remove and to demolish crosses from church buildings. Pastors have also been detained for organising online prayer meetings.

[5 : 45] Two churches at least were demolished at Easter. And there's also reports there of this fellowship, several members of this fellowship being arrested on Good Friday in their own homes as they watched online Sunday school services and were taken in for questioning.

So just as we may feel restricted in terms of what we can and can't do just now, but we should be thankful for the fact that we can meet as we meet just now, even though it is online.

And we have the freedom for these broadcasts to go out. We have the freedom for our own Sunday school to have video messages put out there so that they can learn more of Scripture.

So let's be thankful for that and let's remember those who don't enjoy the freedom that we do, not just in China, but in many countries in the world the church is persecuted.

So let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the freedom that we have to come in worship.

[6 : 54] And we acknowledge, Lord, with thanksgiving that you are the God who alone is worthy of our worship. You have made us for yourself.

And Lord, as we come to you in faith, as we enter into that saving relationship with the living God, our hearts, which once were restless, find their rest in you.

And Lord, we thank you for those who have in the past shared the gospel message with us. We thank you for those whom, as we have been brought up, have opened the Bible and have introduced us to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We thank you that we live in a country where we have the freedom for that. And we thank you that even in these times when we are restricted in many ways, we do have this freedom to be able to open your word in buildings, just one or two of us, and in our own homes.

And we thank you that we have this freedom to be able to worship. We thank you that we can come online and join together, opening your word, joining our hearts in praise and prayer.

[8 : 10] And we thank you, Lord, that you have promised that as we seek to draw near to you in these different ways, you have promised that you will draw near to us. In fact, you are the God who is always near to us.

You are with us always to the very end of time. So we pray, Lord, and we ask that you would bless us as we seek to come together and worship this morning.

We pray for our young ones as well. The Sunday School and the YF is there scheduled to meet as well. We ask that as the gospel message is shared with them in a simple way, in a way that they understand and can take hold of, we ask that you would bless them, that you would guide those who will speak, that you will draw.

Many young people to yourself, Lord, because we thank you that when Christ is lifted up, many are drawn and everyone who looks to Jesus shall be saved.

We pray for those in countries that don't enjoy the freedoms that we enjoy. We think of those in China especially, as we hear of online services being banned, as we hear of crosses being removed from churches and churches being demolished, and even Sunday school gatherings being broken up.

- [9 : 28] We pray, Lord, for our brothers and sisters. We haven't ever met them, but we are eternally united to them as those who are trusting in Jesus. And we ask, Lord, that you would uphold them, that you would encourage them, that you would strengthen them as they endure this suffering and as they continue to look in faith to you.
- We see in that country as crosses are removed. We see the reality of the offense that the cross is to so many. And yet it's the means through which we are saved.
- We thank you, Lord, that the salvation that we've sung of in that psalm is a salvation that came at great cost to Jesus. He is the one who was lifted up on that cross to make an end of our sin.
- But we praise you, Lord, that as we believe in him, as we confess our sin, as we look to that cross where he was lifted up, we thank you that we have the assurance of salvation.
- So help each one of us, we pray, to look to Jesus, to put our trust in him, to be found never far from the cross. We ask, Lord, that you would be with those who are struggling today.
- [10 : 47] Each week as we come, we remember those who are struggling. We think of those who are sick, those who are near to us, those whom we have never met but we see reports of in the news.
- And we ask, Lord, that you would help them, that you would lay your hands of healing upon them. We hear of the care home in Portree, not far from us, where coronavirus has hit.
- And we ask, Lord, that you would protect the residents and the care workers there. We ask, Lord, that you would push back this virus and that you would drive forward those who are seeking to find a vaccination for this.
- For those, Lord, who are suffering, Lord, we bring them to you and pray that you would help them. For those who are grieving for loved ones lost, we pray that they would know the comfort of God, the peace of God that passes all understanding.
- For those, Father, at this time who are anxious, who once had a steady income and who now have no money coming in and no prospects of work for the future.
- [11 : 51] We pray for them, Lord. You're the God who provides. And we ask that you would provide everything that is needed for us as your people, as we look to you.
- We pray, Lord, for the souls of all those that are around us in this community. Those who are in our families, our extended families, our circle of friends.
- There are some who are still healthy, who are still relatively wealthy, whose lives are to an extent trouble-free. And yet, who do not yet know Christ.
- And we know that that is the most dangerous place to be. And we ask, Lord, for those who have not yet trusted Christ as Saviour, any who are listening in or looking on at this time, that they, Lord, that each one would look to you.
- And that we would make our calling and election sure by trusting in Jesus. How shall we escape, it says in your word, if we neglect such salvation? May we not be neglecting Christ, but may we be taking hold of him by faith.
- [12 : 58] So hear our prayers. Take away our sin. Lead us and guide us. We pray in the power of your spirit. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake.
- Amen. Boys and girls, I've got one or two things I want to show you this morning. And the first thing I want to show you is that.
- And the thing you can be thinking of when I'm showing you these different things is what is common to each thing that I show you. The first thing is that.
- What's that? Yes, it's a watch. And the second thing I want to show you is that.

What's that? Now that's a clock, isn't it? And the third thing that I want to show you is this.

[14:01] Now what's that? Well, again, you recognize that, don't you? It's a calendar. It's a calendar that has the Bible at the top of it there. The text that came through, I think it was given to us by the Free Presbyterian Church.

But you see all the days and the dates. It's a calendar. Now what is it that's common to these three things? There's a calendar, a watch, and the big clock.

Well, you know the answer to the question, don't you? The thing that's common to all these three things is they're all ways that we measure and that we think about time.

We have calendars on our walls and they tell us what year it is, don't they? It tells us that it's 2020. It tells us the month.

It tells us the day and the date. And so we have calendars on our walls. And when there's a special date, we might mark the date and put a circle around the date.

[15:10] So when we look at the calendar, we know there's something happening on that date that I need to remember. Today is the 3rd of May. It's Mary's dad's 70th birthday.

So it's a special date in our house. That one would be circled. On Monday of last week, I think that was the 27th, was it? It was Angus Alec's birthday.

He was 83 years old, the 27th. And so that one would be circled in his house. So there's certain dates that we mark and that we remember.

There's certain times that we watch out for. But there's some dates and there's some times that we don't know about.

We have birthdays that we remember and we can see them coming up. But there's some dates and we don't know when they're coming. When will lockdown be over?

[16:16] Well, we don't know. We wish we did know. We wish we could put a date in our calendar that we could look forward to. But we don't know what date lockdown is going to be over. When are we going to get back to school?

We don't know. When are we going to get back into the church here, all of us together? We don't know. When is the football season going to start again? We don't know.

When is Jesus coming back? We don't know. In Acts chapter 1, after Jesus died for our sin on the cross and he rose from the dead, he went up into heaven.

He ascended is the word. That's the big word that's used in the Bible. And as Jesus was going up into heaven, the disciples were looking on at him as he was going away. And it says in Acts chapter 1, they, that's the disciples, were looking intently up into the sky as Jesus was going.

When suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside him. These were angels. Men of Galilee, they said. Why do you stand here looking into the sky?

[17:34] This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.

So that's what's going to happen. God sent angels to tell the disciples that just as Jesus was going up into heaven, he would definitely, certainly come back.

And when he comes back, everyone who's trusted him will be safe forever. There'll be no sin, there'll be no sickness, there'll be no sadness.

It'll be a great day for those who trust in Jesus when he comes back. But what day will it be? Well, we don't know. We can't mark it in our calendars.

We can't take our phones out and put a reminder on our phone to tell us that it's going to be on this day. We don't know what day it's going to be on.

- [18 : 35] So what do we need to do? Well, we need to trust him today. And we need to be ready every day for Jesus coming back.
- Now, some people might say, you've probably heard some people say already, oh, that was 2,000 years ago. Jesus is not coming back.
- But the Bible says, in the chapter that we're going to read in a few minutes, with the Lord, a day is like a thousand years. And a thousand years are like a day.
- See, God doesn't wear a watch that's the same as our watch. He's outside of our time. He doesn't feel time long like we feel time long.
- He is patient. And the fact that Jesus hasn't yet come back shows us how patient God is, because he's given people more time.
- [19 : 37] So that they will come to Jesus to trust him and to be saved, to be safe forever. So, boys and girls, what I want to say to you this morning, and what I want to say to everybody, whatever age we are, is trust Jesus today.
- Ask him to be your saviour. If you've never done so before, ask him today. Don't mark it in the calendar for next week or next year. We don't know how many days we're going to see.
- But he's given us today. And so let's ask Jesus to be our saviour today, so that we'll be ready for that day, whenever it comes, when Jesus comes back.
- We'll pray. Lord God, we thank you that you've promised that just as Jesus came into this world to save us from our sin, Jesus will come back.
- He came into the world as saviour. He will come back as judge and king. And every eye will see him, and every tongue will confess, will say that Jesus is Lord.
- [20 : 51] And for some people, that will be a day of great joy. And yet we know for some people, it will be a day of sadness, because they'll realise too late that they should have trusted Jesus.
- So help us, Lord, we pray. Today, when we hear your voice, not to harden our hearts, but to trust you. And we thank you that when we've trusted Jesus, when we've asked for him to forgive our sin and come into our lives, we are safe for all of time and all of eternity.
- So enable us, we pray, boys and girls, mums and dads, grannies, shenners, everybody in between, to be trusting Jesus. We pray for all the boys and girls at home as they try and do their schoolwork as well through the week.
- Help them, Lord, we pray. And as they miss each other, their friends, we pray that they would know that you are very close to them, that you, Lord Jesus, would be that friend that sticks closer than any brother or any other friend.
- And we ask for those who are needing your special help just now. We pray for Jono, who hurt his arm. And we ask, Lord, that you would heal his arm and that you would make him better.
- [22 : 05] So hear our prayers and be with us, we pray, for the rest of this service. As the boys and girls go to Sunday school, as they get their lesson there, we pray that you would open their ears and help them to hear and to understand and to trust you.
- And we ask all these things in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. If you could open your Bibles now, please, at 2 Peter chapter 3.
- 2 Peter chapter 3. And we'll read the whole of this chapter. This is God's word. Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you.
- I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

First of all, you must understand that in the last days, scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, where is this coming?

[23 : 13] He promised. Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word, the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water.

By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends. With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness.

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

The heavens will disappear with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?

[24 : 29] You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and Spirit's coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

But in keeping with his promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him.

Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters.

His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort as they do the other scriptures to their own destruction.

Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be in your guards that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position, but grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[25 : 45] To him be glory both now and forever. Amen. Just as we turn back to look at this passage, let's pause for a moment and pray.

Lord God, we ask for your help now as we turn to your word. We pray that you would teach us, that you would lead us, that you would guide us, that the word that we have would come to us and be recognised within us as the word of God and not the word of man.

Cleanse us from our sin, we pray. Empty us of all that would turn on ourselves. Take away every distraction and speak into our hearts, we ask, for we pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Speaking to various people in the course of the last week and whether it's on the telephone or whether it's out walking the dog and a recurring question which I'm sure has not just come to me but has come to most of you is the question how long is this lockdown going to last for?

We're now X number of weeks into it, seven weeks into it or something like that and initially there was a novelty factor, it was strange but it wasn't unpleasant to be at home but as the weeks go on and we feel restricted then people are asking this question how long is this going the last one?

[27:15] And when that question remains unanswered it can be hard for people not to get a little frustrated it can be hard for some people not to feel slightly down and that's something I've detected in conversation over the last few days some people are starting to feel slightly down in these conditions well if you're feeling down today then this chapter 2 Peter chapter 3 is a welcome chapter to come to us it's a chapter that as my Bible gives it the title is described as a chapter that gives hope to growing Christians so is there hope in this chapter for you?

well that depends on two things one are you a Christian? are you someone who as Peter defines it in chapter 1 is made righteous through the blood of Jesus has received the grace of Jesus and has been brought into a relationship with Jesus and if you are someone who professes to be a Christian who recognizes these things in ourselves are we those who are growing going on with the Lord not going back into the world not being led away by false teachers not following our own way but following Jesus if we are Christians who are growing then this chapter is jam-packed full of hope for us so how do we then take the hope that we find in this chapter and import it in a practical way that will impact us at the level of our own lives and our own hearts well there's various things Peter says to us and the first thing is this he says remember to think wholesome thoughts look at verses 1 and 2 dear friends this is now my second letter to you

I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles now we know today probably more so than we have done ever before how important it is for us to have good mental health we know that there are certain things that we can do to improve to stimulate mental health we can take a walk up a hill we can take a walk just in the fresh air get out of the house and take our daily exercise we can pick up the phone or go on FaceTime and speak to people whom we know and love these are simple things that we can do to improve our mental health and Peter here he guides us on how we can improve our spiritual mental health how we can be to use his words stimulated to wholesome thinking and the stimulus comes through these letters what was happening through these letters well God was speaking

Peter was reminding them verse 2 of what God said through the prophets that's the Old Testament and Peter was speaking to them still in verse 2 here about Jesus and the commands that Jesus gave and that's what we know to be the New Testament so Peter is saying to the believers then and to us now the more you are in God's word the more your thinking will be wholesome and healthy and hopeful and Paul and Paul said something similar in Romans chapter 12 and verse 2 he says do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind our minds are renewed our minds are kept healthy our minds are kept hopeful as we are in God's word in the Bible and also our minds are kept wholesome and healthy and hopeful as we keep connected with other

Christians now Peter writes this letter because he can't physically be with many of the believers that he wants to address and he wants to encourage and so he picks up pen and paper and he writes this letter to them because he knew that they needed to be encouraged in the faith and we need to be encouraged in the faith this letter itself is a reminder to us that we are to encourage each other now usually we encourage each other as we come together in this building as we gather together as we are in the habit of doing it says in Hebrews do not get out of the habit of meeting together but encourage each other now we can't meet together at this time but we still need to encourage each other so just as Peter wrote a letter maybe we pick up a pen and we write a letter or we send a text or we draft an email or we go stand outside the window but we need to see here that we are to do whatever it takes to connect with each other as believers but not just to connect to the superficial level of talking about the weather and talking about what we've had for dinner we're to connect with each other in such a way as we focus together on the

[32 : 50] Lord Jesus and the hope that we have in him so how can we remain hopeful we're to be in God's word says Peter and we're to be connected as connected as we can be in these circumstances we're to be in fellowship with one another in the Lord so that's the first point we are to be those who remember to think wholesome thoughts because we live in a world that would encourage us to think anything but wholesome thoughts we live in a world that would drain us of hope so we need the Bible to stimulate us to hopeful wholesome thinking second point here Peter says understand that the last days will be difficult now lockdown as we know it is difficult we were warned about that when we began this period of lockdown and we needed a warning because that prepared us for what was up ahead initially it wasn't so bad being told to stay in our homes and not to go into work but as time goes on it can be more and more difficult and so the warning that came to us gave us the determination to keep on going through these days now Peter you'll see right through this letter and in this chapter again he talks about the last days what are these last days the last days are the time from which

Jesus ascended to the time it goes from the time that Jesus ascended to the time when Jesus will return so we're living in the last days and Peter says to us these will be difficult days so be prepared for them so what will make these days difficult well there's two things Peter says first of all you'll encounter scoffers and secondly he says you will be with alongside people who will want to suppress the truth so first of all verse 3 he says you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come scoffing and following their own evil desires they will say where is this coming he promised ever since our fathers died everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation so they come to the believers and they say

Jesus is coming back surely not they laugh they scoff at the truth of scripture now some of us find that very difficult some of us we can actually cope quite well with cruelty when people are nasty to us when people say things which are offensive some of us we can deal with that okay but when people laugh at us and ridicule us we find that difficult I saw a show the other night on television he was a comedian I could watch all of about 30 seconds of it before he in his routine began to mock God and scoff and so off it had to go in the last days there will be scoffers but we don't have to switch on our TV sets to see that we've all experienced something of that in conversation even in our normal lives people say to us you believe in Jesus really you believe in the goblins and the fairies at the bottom of the garden as well or we've all encountered at some point the person who would have a smirk on says you go to church really

I wouldn't have expected someone like you to go to church and they kind of walk away with a chuckle they scoff and Peter says that will be difficult but you need to understand before time that will be difficult he says secondly here there will be suppressors of the truth they verse 5 deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water and so on Peter goes but Peter says there in these verses 5 through to 7 there will be people that you encounter and they don't just scoff at the truth but they'll do their best to try and suppress the truth to bury the truth they deliberately forget the truth they deliberately forget creation they deliberately forget that verse 5 long ago by

God's word everything that was and is was brought into being they forget creation deliberately now that's true of today isn't it you know if you if you look for an account of God's creation in the school syllabus on the university campus you won't find it it has been deliberately forgotten and Peter says they deliberately forget God's past judgment that deluge that destruction that came at the time of the flood they'll forget that they'll suppress that and again we we know we live in these days people say to us as Peter warned us they would say you believe in Noah and the ark and the flood and the animals going in two by two surely not not a person with a degree of intelligence that you have surely you don't believe that let's just bury that truth and in future judgment

[38 : 56] Peter speaks about verses 5 to 7 you know those who who hear that Jesus is coming back and those who don't trust him that there will be a judgment fire and destruction not likely they say that's how it's going to be in the last days says Peter it will be difficult there will be scoffers those who laugh at you for the faith that you hold for holding to God's word there will be those who try to take God's word and bury it suppress it these days will be difficult understand that says Peter now you know are you finding it difficult as a Christian in these last days does it pain you to hear what people say about God and his word do you find sometimes that you are the butt of a joke which concerns the faith that you hold so dear the saviour that you are trusting in if you're finding that if you're experiencing that if you're finding these last days difficult don't be discouraged don't be depressed says

Peter be encouraged this is this is what we've been taught to expect and if we're encountering this we're likely on the right track if we know nothing of this we've probably drifted so if we're encountering difficult things in these last days we are to do what Martin Lloyd Jones was famous for saying and what Peter is saying in so many words in this letter we're to keep on keeping on don't lose hope says Peter to second point understand the last days will be difficult we are encouraged here to think wholesome thoughts remember to think wholesome thoughts third thing don't forget God is patient says Peter there's a story told I've told some of you this story before but it's a story about an atheist from the

Victorian era his name was Robert Ingersoll he was the Dawkins of his day and he would go from village hall to village hall speaking about his atheism and trying to persuade people of his atheism and in the course of one debate on one occasion he was debating with a Christian and he said in the dialogue as the debate continued if God exists I'll give God five minutes to strike me dead for the things that I've said against him and then he took a timer and he set the timer for five minutes and he continued in his narrative and then when the buzzer went when five minutes was up he gleefully would take the timer out and say there you go proof that God does not in fact exist and on this one occasion that's what he did as he had often done he took out the timer he proclaimed this is proof five minutes have come and gone

God surely does not exist and the Christian responded very wisely he said to Ingersoll does the gentleman think that he could exhaust the patience of the eternal God in five minutes and Peter says here do not forget this one thing dear friends with the Lord a day is like a thousand years this is verse eight and a thousand years are like a day the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness he is patient with you not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance don't forget says Peter God is patient now who is he patient with well he's with he's patient with you says Peter there were some who were who were reading and hearing this letter back then some who had never trusted

Jesus they may have heard the gospel message many times but still they hadn't moved in faith still they were in the world still they were holding on to their sin still they were saying maybe next week maybe next letter and Peter is saying how good is it that God is patient with you as you hear this message again why is he patient with you because he doesn't want you to perish says Peter he doesn't want you to be to be forever lost last weekend I took Shoros to dog up the hill the back of the house I was going on a particular route past a couple of cairns and then off to the right hand side and I thought Shoros was with me but Shoros decided he wanted to go his own route he wanted to go for his own walk and he got lost and so here

[44 : 39] I was standing on the top of this hill peering out and scanning the horizon for this little dog that was the same colour of every bit of heather in the place and shouting for him and shouting for him and after 15 minutes I have to say my patience was at an end how many years think about this has the God of heaven and earth been shouting to some who may be listening in or watching this here how many times have we heard the gospel message through different teachers and Sunday school teachers and the text of scripture has been open to us how many times has God said to some who are listening and just now come to me all who are weary all who are burdened all who are still holding on to their sin come to me and he shouts and he shouts and he shouts come to me or maybe he's saying to some who once were close with the

Lord and who now are far away come back to me and he says it again and again and again that's what Peter had heard after failing after failing Jesus didn't cast him off after the resurrection as we saw just a few weeks ago Jesus message was tell the disciples and Peter to meet me in Galilee and there when Jesus meets with Peter he brings him back to repentance how patient Jesus was with Peter think of that the eternal God the God of heaven and earth he takes time to go specifically to one wandering sheep to lead him back and in all likelihood there are wandering sheep listening in here today and how patient

Jesus is to keep calling us back to repentance the devil says to the person who's far away from Jesus forget it you're deep in sin you're too far gone you've had your chances you've blown your chances you're done you will burn with me and yet God says through Peter no don't listen to that voice don't forget don't ever forget says Peter the Lord is patient he doesn't want any to perish he will in no wise cast out any who come or who return to him he is patient and that should give great hope to each one of us don't forget God is patient that's the third point the fourth point that comes through Peter is don't doubt that

Jesus is coming back and this is a message that is given to us repeatedly to solidify our hope there will be scoffers who will laugh and say Jesus coming back not likely but Peter here reminds us of the truth of that great day the day of the Lord the day when Jesus will come back and there's four things here to note about that day first thing is it's a sure day we look forward to a day when lockdown ends where once again we'll be able to meet with each other and shake hands at the door and embrace each other and eat together and do all the things that we used to do we don't know exactly when that's going to happen but we believe someday it will and there's a day coming says the

Lord through Peter when this lockdown that sin has on this world it will end it's the day of the Lord it's the day when Jesus comes back the day of the Lord will come says Peter not it may come but it will come it's a sure day the second thing we see here under this point is it's a day that will be a surprise to some when it comes we don't need to look for an illustration to grapple with this point because we're given an illustration verse 10 the day of the Lord will come like a thief now the thief never announces his coming if he did he'd never managed to steal anything because the owner of the house would be prepared to fend off the thief and the sobering message that's given here is that there will be many people who are surprised and unprepared for the saying at this point is simply what

[50 : 03] Jesus first said to him if you go for a second to Matthew chapter 24 you can see that what Peter is saying is what Jesus first said Matthew 24 and verse 36 Jesus said no one knows about that day or hour not even the angels in heaven nor the son but only the father as it was in the day of Noah so it will be at the coming of the son of man for in the days before the flood people were eating and drinking madding and giving in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away that is how it will be at the coming of the son of man two men will be in the field one will be taken the other left two women will be grinding with a hand mill one will be taken and the other left therefore says Jesus keep watch because you do not know on what day your Lord will come but understand this if the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming he would have kept watch and would not have let his house at an hour when you do not expect her for some it will be a huge surprise and

I appreciate that this will cause necessary alarm in the minds of some the prospect of Christ's coming back because at present you are not prepared to meet with Jesus but for the believer the thought of the Lord's sure and certain returning keeps our hope levels high yes it will come as a surprise but it will be the most wonderful glorious surprise when the Saviour whom we have trusted comes to take us home so it's a sure day it's a day that will come as a surprise in terms of time it's a day where there will be a stripping away of many things the heavens will disappear with a roar says

Peter the elements will be destroyed by fire verse 10 and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare so there's a real sense of everything being stripped back and laid bare on the day that Jesus returns when we are on a flight before the plane takes off we were given the message in the very rare event of an emergency landing please leave everything behind that's the gist of the message and we get the logic of that if the plane is going down and we are on it and we're plunging towards the minch what good will a laptop be to us we leave that stuff behind to have no worth in that circumstance and that's the picture here when Jesus returns so much of what we've held so tight will just dissolve in our hands so many of the things that we thought were so precious and so secure will just melt there'll be a stripping away of the elements as we know them and there will be a stripping away of so much that we have filled our lives with our hearts our lives will be laid bare before

Jesus so don't forget that says Peter Jesus is coming back the day of the Lord will certainly it will surely come so what effect should all this have on us now in the present tense as we look forward to that day of the Lord well I think if we are here and listening into this just now and we have not yet trusted the Lord then the first thing it should do is it should cause us to see the urgency with which we should move Jesus is coming back that's certain we will stand before him and we need to be prepared for that day so if we are not yet prepared then what are we to do we're to ask him to save us we're to ask him to take our sin away we're to ask him to prepare us for that day when we stand before him somebody prayed in the prayer meeting on Wednesday night about how so much of what we have known in our lives has even in this context been stripped away and the gist of the prayer was if people will not trust Christ now when will they trust

Christ so the encouragement here the urgency here is that we're to trust Jesus as we see the surety of his return we're to trust him so that when we meet him we're ready we hear him say come to me and not depart from me and if we are already trusting Christ the effect of Christ's second coming should sanctify us the effect of remembering and not doubting the return of Jesus should sanctify us what kind of people ought you to be verse 11 says Peter you ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming will our living holy and godly lives save us no it won't but

[56 : 38] Jesus saves us what he has done on the cross and dying for our sin and rising from the dead that's what saves us he has done he has completed the work of salvation Jesus saves no other name no other way but our resolved to live holy and godly lives lives that are sanctified lives that are set apart increasingly from sin and set apart increasingly for Jesus that in itself is evidence of the fact that we are saved that we are going on with the Lord and not going back don't doubt that Jesus is coming back that's the fourth point I have one more point it's Peter's final words but time has gone this morning so we'll pick this final point up at the prayer meeting on

Wednesday evening and we'll pray now to close heavenly father we thank you for your word we thank you for the encouragement for the hope that we are given as we think about the truth of all that has been given to us through Peter and we ask that you would prepare each one of us for that day when the Lord Jesus will come may we on that day know joy and not terror may we be prepared and not unprepared may we hear the Lord Jesus saying come to me and enter the rest that has been prepared and not depart from me for I never knew you so hear our prayers and bless your word to us we pray press it into our hearts as we go on to do whatever it is we are doing in the remainder of this day and we ask all these things in Jesus name Amen our final praise is a praise that causes us to look at the deep love of

Christ the love that drove him to go to the cross to save us oh the deep love of Jesus vast unmeasured boundless free oh the deep deep love of Jesus vast unmeasured boundless free me holy as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me underneath me all around me is the current of thy love love leading onward leading homeward to my glorious rest above the love of the deep love of

Jesus spread his praise from shore to shore how he loveth love never love it changes never never more never more how he watches all his loved ones died to call them all his own is how for them he inter see earth watch for them from the throne the love the deep love of

Jesus love of Jesus love of every love the best tis an ocean vast lost all blessing tis the haven sweet of rest o the deep deep love of Jesus tis a heaven of hands to me and it it lifts me up to glory o it lifts me up to thee and we'll use peter's benediction from the end of the letter which will come to wednesday evening hopefully to to to finish but grow in the grace and knowledge of our lord and saviour jesus christ to him be glory both now and forever amen amen