

Joshua Chapter 5

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Date: 09 October 2016

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning. A warm welcome to church this morning. It's good to see everyone here. Good to see some visitors with us this morning as well. Your welcome especially tea and coffee are at the end of the service served and if you're able to stay at the end please do so. It'll be good to meet with you.

The evening service will be at 6 this evening and will be conducted by myself God willing and the youth fellowship will meet this evening after the evening service but not here as usual but at the McKellar's house this evening.

This is the last evening that Angus will be leading the youth fellowship and he's decided to step back from that at this stage and so we're having a get together in the house this evening.

So if you could pray for Angus we're very thankful for all that the Lord has done through him over the years with the youth in Tarbert and also Kirsty and if we could pray for the youth work in particular it's a time of change and your prayers will be valued at this time.

Deacons Court will meet tomorrow evening at half past 7 and at 7 o'clock actually not half past 7 and we'll meet at the New Mans to have a look around and to talk about one or two points.

[1 : 24] Ladies Bible study meets at 8 on Monday and the First Truth Fellowship on half past 7 on Tuesday in the Church of Scotland Hall. Ladies Bible study meets at half past 7 and the First Truth Fellowship on half past 7 and the Church of Scotland Hall.

Over the October holidays there's been a camp in the Scalladale Centre organised by the Free Church and the first week I think is the younger ones and the second week is the older ones.

So the camp and the campers will be coming to the morning service and we'll be giving them lunch afterwards and they'll be coming to the evening service also so please make them welcome.

And if you're able to help out with contributing to the catering or serving there's a table over there with a sheet on it please put your name on the sheet and indicate what you can do to help.

Women for Mission meeting in the Leverbury Church Hall Tuesday 18 October at half past 7 and also if I can highlight the communion season. Women for Mission meeting in the Leverbury Church Hall.

[3 : 18] And also the Reverend Thomas Davis from Carlyle and they'll be taking the services over that weekend. If there is anyone who is considering confessing faith in Christ for the first time then the invitation is extended.

Of course you're able to come forward over the communion season as you always have been. But if anyone would like to speak to myself or any of the elders in advance of that please also be warmly invited to do that.

You'll be wondering where I'm standing looking at the phone just now and we don't have the information sheets. Ina phoned me earlier this morning to say that Adrian who produces the information each Sunday, he hasn't produced it in the house but he was taken off to hospital early on this morning.

And so he's in hospital in high dependency at the moment. And if we could be prayerful for Adrian and Ina and for the family then that would be very much appreciated.

So let's just take a moment and pray. Just like you. Lord God we thank you. For this day. And we thank you that you have given us the desire.

[4 : 32] And you have enabled us to be here this morning. We have health. We have strength. We have freedom to be able to worship. We have security. And Lord we have been given the desire.

To meet in this place. In the name of Christ. With that intention. That we will worship you. And Lord with that expectation.

That as we seek to draw near to you. You will draw near to us. We ask Lord that as we bow in your presence. That you will receive us in Christ. We pray that we may be given that expectation.

That sense of waiting upon the Lord. Lord and that promise we ask we would know extended and also realized in our beings.

That those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. So we pray for all who are gathered here this morning. Those who meet here week by week. We pray for those who are visiting with us this morning.

[5 : 31] And we thank you for them. And ask that they may know refreshment in their time in Harris. And Lord we pray for those who would desire to be with us this morning. But who are unable to be here.

And we commit them to you. Thankful that you are the God who is not limited by four walls and a roof. But you are the God who is everywhere at all times. And the one who responds to all who call upon your name.

And responds to all those who call upon you for the needs of those that we are burdened for. And so we pray for those who are struggling this morning. Those who are in hospital.

Those who are housebound. Those who have different situations in life that they are dealing with. And especially we pray for Adrian. And we ask for your hand to be upon him.

We thank you for him. And for all that he does in your service. We thank you for who he is. And Lord for the witness of Christ in him. And we pray that as he takes time in hospital this morning.

[6 : 34] That you would guide the hand of all those who care for him in the medical sense. And Lord that you would draw near to him. And he may know your presence and your peace.

Be with Ina also. And the whole family. We commit them to you. As we commit ourselves to you now. And ask that you would meet us. All at the point of our need. And cause us to lift our eyes.

To see Jesus. And we pray these things in Jesus name. Amen. We will worship God. And sing to his praise.

From St. Sam's. And it's Psalm number 139. And the words of that psalm are on the screen.

We have sung this one here before. Not too often. It goes to the tune of Highland Cathedral. And we stand to sing. Lord you have searched my life.

[7 : 38] And all my heart. You see my going out.

And lying down. And you have perfect knowledge of my ways.

Before I speak a word. You know it Lord. For nothing can be hidden from your gaze.

Behind me for you. Have me in your heart. And you have laid on me.

Your mighty hand. Such knowledge is to honor all for me.

[9 : 05] To hide your grasp. To pray. To understand. To understand. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life.

And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life.

And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life.

And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. And you have perfect knowledge of my life. and you have perfect knowledge of my life. Jenni, me. Savior, holiness, ben Bella. A Minnie, queen, arow, act, and dying.

Thick ■■■ine, washtole, hygrine, Gandhi,■■■,aron, cy ■■■■■■■■ The spirit of God. And you have perfect knowledge of mine. And you have perfect knowledge of mine. And you have perfect knowledge of mine.

[10 : 01] And you have perfect knowledge. And you have perfect knowledge of mine. You have perfect knowledge of my life. And God in your life. And if I sat down further far beyond the sea.

Then also youers fight me with your hands. I still your right hand will keep hold of me. Again, let's turn you into God's appearance.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word that we have sung. We thank you for the fact that you're the God who is everywhere and the God who knows all things and who sees all things.

You're the one who sees all that we do. You're the one who hears all that we say. You're the one who is able to scan our hearts and even read every thought that passes through our minds that we don't even articulate.

You're the one who sees our actions and our reactions. You're the one who reads our motives and who knows us through and through.

[11 : 23] From the beginnings of our life, even in the womb, through every day that you have numbered for our time on earth. Right the way through that allocation of days, Lord, you know us.

And you have revealed yourself to us as the God who knows us. And Lord, as we bow before you this morning, we are thankful that you're the gracious God who bids us come to you.

We are thankful that you're the God who has made it possible for sinners to come to you. And as we consider the fact that you know us and you're all searching gates, we confess this morning of grace that we are sinners.

And we fall short in all that we do and all that we say and all that we think. And Lord, we don't hide that from you because we cannot hide that from you, but we confess it.

And we ask, Lord, that once more you would cleanse us in the blood of Christ. Wash us clean. We thank you that, Lord, sins may be like scarlet.

[12 : 33] They shall be made as white as snow through the blood of Jesus. So we ask, Lord, for that cleansing. We pray that you would pour out the Holy Spirit upon us.

That you would fill our hearts. That you would fill this place. And that we may sense your presence. And as the word is read, we pray that it would come to life as the Holy Spirit carries it into our thoughts and into our minds.

And presses it upon our hearts and our souls. We ask, Lord, that as we sing, we may truly be in worship. Our hearts may be engaged and not far from.

And Lord, we pray that in all that we do in this year's day, we may remember with great thanksgiving that this is the day that the Lord has made.

This is the day where we remember that the Saviour died and rose again, triumphant from the grave. And pleads our cause at God's right hand, omnipotent, to save.

[13 : 36] Save those who are lost, we pray. In this church this morning. As we gather, Lord, before you, there are those who perhaps have not yet come to Jesus.

We ask, Lord, that this morning they may come and find that you truly are omnipotent to save. Sanctify, Lord, those who are find.

That we may be more holy, more like Christ. That we may walk with a greater sense of your presence with us. That we may bear more of a resemblance to Jesus the Son.

And Lord, we pray that you would be not only with us in this place and dealing with us as individuals. But we pray that you would sweep across this nation in reviving power.

A nation that once was so close with you and yet we have wandered far. Grant repentance, Lord, we pray. That we may turn back as a nation and once more know times of refreshment.

[14 : 45] That we would know that healing that we so desperately need for our land. We pray for those who are in authority over us. You have permitted each one to be where they are.

And you have called us to pray for them. So we bring them to you. The government, our Queen, all those in positions of power. We pray that they may use the power that you have allowed them to govern with fairness and equity.

And we ask, Lord, that we may continue to have the freedom to worship you in this land. We pray for a world very much broken under the weight of sin.

And we ask, Lord, also for your redeeming, healing touch to be upon all these places where there is such darkness and such resistance to Jesus and his gospel.

Lord, grant that the light of Christ would shine and that more and more would turn and be saved. And, Lord, we pray for those who are suffering this morning because of all kinds of disasters in this world.

[15 : 54] We pray on for places where there is suffering because of man's and humanity to man. Places like Syria. And we ask, Father, that you may meet each one at the point of their need.

And, Lord, that in the darkness of these situations there may be the hope of Christ. We pray also, Lord, for places where there has been natural disaster, we think, especially of Haiti.

And we ask, Lord, that you would be with all those who seek to reach out with aid. That you would clear the way for them. And that your people may be seen to serve you and to serve those of you at this time.

We ask, Lord, that you would continue with us now on this day as we pray for those in hospital. We pray for those who are housebound. We pray for those who are battling with addictions that they struggle to break free from.

We ask, Lord, that you would break the prisoner free from the chains that bind them. We pray that you would give healing to those who are sick. We pray that you would give comfort to those whose hearts are sore.

[17 : 02] We pray, Lord, that you would give direction to those who are confused and searching for your way in life. And, Lord, we pray that for each of them and for each of us we may fix our eyes upon Jesus, who is the way and the truth and the life.

Help us, we pray, and help every church that are gathered across this island at this time. That we would fix our eyes upon Christ. I know your blessing.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? Boys and girls, have you had a good week? Yeah?

Have you had a good week? Good stuff. Can you tell me, please? You need to get more boys. Ask some of your friends who don't go to church. Come to church.

Come to Sunday school. There's far too many girls and far too few boys. There's not far too many girls, but there's far too few boys. So, get some more boys here.

[18 : 08] Can you tell me, boys and girls, what are signs? Do you want to tell me what's a sign? It tells you things.

Yeah. It tells you things. Can you see any signs in this hall this morning? No. Well, open your eyes. Girls, Katie, what did you see?

Where did you see a sign? You pointed. Where did you see the sign, Katie? I found it. Somebody stand up and show us where the sign is. Go on then, John.

Are you seeing us here? There, behind me. One sign. Which one? Come over here and tell me which one it is. I don't know. This one?

That's kind of a sign. And that tells us that on a Tuesday night, people meet and they pray for people who are having struggles in life.

[19:11] And so that's a sign. There's another sign, John, that says, please watch the cables before you get a little bit shock. Katie, what sign can you see? Pardon?

There's one over there. Which one? The high one or the low one? One. Both. What do they mean, these signs? Do you know?

Do we have our fire officer in the building? Tammy, what do these signs over there mean? Fire exit. It's a fire exit. So if there was ever a fire in the building, then you would have to go over to where the fire exit signs are.

And these fire doors open. And that's the way you would go out. Do you think? So hopefully there'll be no fire in the building this morning. Any other signs that you see? There's a sign over on the door.

That says fire door as well. There's some more signs. Boys, come around this way, please. Away from the cables. Sit beside the tip side Gordon in the beginning.

[20 : 18] Not because I'm giving you a ride, because you need to see the screen. What is on the screen? Nothing yet.

It's coming. Anxia, would you put the lights off for a wee minute, please? No. No. No. No.
No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. viruses. No.

Why are you Winston? No. No. No. No. Haha. It's in the tower umercise. what does that sign mean? Can I be going?

I'm not going. a sign for Scott Road, no. Can I be going? ? What's that came that are you coming? come and tell us. come over here and tell us. Ant., it's showing you not to go that way but go that way.

[21 : 17] So when you're not to go that way, but go that way. No, go that way, but not go that way. Sorry, that way, but not go that way. Because you'll crash. Because if you go the wrong way, you'll crash.

Like what happened when I came back from a swimming club. Like what happened when you came back from a swimming club, yes. That is a very good answer. Carry on, go over the science.

What does that one mean, and where is that one? Emma. Anna, you have your hands going to stay up. What does that mean, Anna? That one means no entry, doesn't it?

Where is that one? Is that in London? Where is it, Alistair? It's not in Scalby.

Where is it? Where is it, Alistair? Tarbird, yes. How does everything be in Tarbird? That was in Tarbird. So that's just, do you know where that is?

[22 : 20] Do you recognise where that is in Tarbird? Just outside AD's shop? No. That's a sign that means no entry. It's not the best angled sign, actually. Someone needs to go and turn that around, so it's a bit clearer.

Okay, keep on going. No signs. What about these two? That's the church. That's the church down there. And these two signs, Katie told us perfectly.

These are signs that are saying, don't go that way, but go that way. Is there any more? No, no, no, no.

Is there any more signs? Is it the last one, no? Is it? Okay, just put it back. That's fine. You can put the lights back on there. I can see that sign. It thinks that I am. So, signs are very important things.

And signs are very important things in Tarbird. Because in Tarbird, if you've got a car, or if you're driving in a car, can you choose to go anywhere you want? No.

[23 : 21] No, you can only go one way. So, you've got to follow these blue signs, and they tell you which way to go. And you've got to follow the red signs that tell us which way not to go.

And if we want to get safely around Tarbird, we have to follow these signs. Now, in the story that we've been reading with the big ones, the children of Israel, they were headed for the promised land.

But they needed to follow the signs. They needed to make sure they weren't going their own way, Lois. But they were going God's way.

And so they had to have their ears open. They had to have their eyes open. And they had to follow the signs that they would get to the land that God promised them.

Can you tell me, boys and girls, what land did Jesus promise for all the people who trust him?

[24 : 27] But we don't have here, but it's beyond here. Hayley, your hand up straight away. What's it called? What's it called? Heaven.

How do we get to heaven? Do we get to make up our own ways? Do we get to go our own way?

How do we get to heaven? Don't worry. We believe in God. And we trust in Jesus.

Is there any other way to get to heaven? Could we make up our own way and decide this morning at Sunday school, we think we'd like to have a different way to heaven.

So we're going to make up our own minds and we're going to come and figure out a different way to get to heaven. Is there any other way? There is no other way. Could we pick another religion and say, let's have another religion and that will get us to heaven.

[25 : 34] No. You know what Jesus said? Jesus said in John chapter 14 of verse 6. You know this. Jesus said, I am the way.

Way. The only way. And I am the truth. The one who tells you the truth. And I am the life. The one who, if you follow me and go my way, will give you life not only in this world, but life forever in heaven.

So, let's remember to follow the signs around Tarver. Remembering there's only one way to go safely around. And let's remember, more importantly, to follow Jesus.

Because there's only one way to get to heaven. And it's through him. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you that you have made it so clear for us.

So that we would know how to get to heaven. And we thank you that Jesus is the way. If we were left to figure it out on our own, we'd get so lost. But we thank you that Jesus came into this world.

[26 : 41] And he told us he is the way. And he showed us the way. And he opened up the way for us to get to heaven. We ask, Lord, that you'd forgive us. Because sometimes we want to go our own way.

And sometimes we don't listen to what you say to us. And sometimes we look at other things. And we believe that instead. And we know that's sin. And so we pray that you'd forgive us for that.

Forgive us for thinking that we know better. Help us to follow Jesus. To trust in him. And we thank you that when we do that, you will guide us.

All through life. And into heaven. And everlasting life. After. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now.

The words on the screen. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Worship his holy name. We're going to stand to sing in just a minute. And just as they head out, we turn in our Bibles, please.

[27 : 41] To Joshua chapter 5. Joshua chapter 5. And we read from verse 1.

Now, when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan. And all the Canaanite kings along the coast. Heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan for the Israelites. Until we had crossed over.

Their hearts sank. And they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites. At that time, the Lord said to Joshua. Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again.

So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites. At Gibeah Haraloth. Now, this is why he did so. All those who came out of Egypt.

All the men of military age. Died in the desert on the way after leaving Egypt. All the people that came out to be circumcised. But all the people born in the desert during the journey to Egypt.

[28 : 42] Had not. The Israelites had moved about the desert forty years. And to all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt. Had died. Since they had not obeyed the Lord.

For the Lord had sworn to them that they would not see the land. That he had solemnly promised their fathers to give us. A land flowing with milk and honey.

So he raised up their sons in their place. And these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised. Because they had not been circumcised on the way.

And after the whole nation had been circumcised. They remained where they were in camp. Until they were healed. Then the Lord said to Joshua. Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.

So the place has been called Gilgal. To this day. On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month. While camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho.

[29 : 40] The Israelites celebrated the Passover. The day after the Passover. That very day. They ate some of the prodigies of the land. Unleavened bread. And roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after.

They ate the fruit from the land. There was no longer any manna for the Israelites. But that year. They ate of the prodigies of Canaan. Turn with me please to Genesis 17 also.

Where we read the promises of God to his people. And the covenant of circumcision is instructed.

Genesis 17 and in verse 1. When Abraham was 99 years old. The Lord appeared to him. And said I am God Almighty. Walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between you.

Me and you. And will greatly increase your numbers. Abraham fell face by. And God said to him. As for me. This is my covenant with you.

[30 : 46] You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abraham. Your name will be Abraham. But I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful.

I will make nations of you. And kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant. As an everlasting covenant. Between me and you. And your descendants after you.

For the generations to come. To be your God. And the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan. Where you are now an alien. I will give.

As an everlasting possession to you. And your descendants after you. And I will be their God. Then God said to Abraham. As for you.

You must keep my covenant. You and your descendants after you. For the generations to come. This is my covenant with you. And your descendants after you. The covenant you are to keep. Every male among you shall be circumcised.

[31 : 41] You are to undergo circumcision. And it will be the sign of the covenant. Between me and you. For the generations to come. Every male among you. Who is eight days old.

Must be circumcised. Including those born of your household. Or brought with money. Or bought with money from a foreigner. Those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household.

Or bought with your money. They must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh. Is to be an everlasting covenant. And so on in that chapter.

One last reading. 1 Corinthians 11. And verse 23. The old covenant. Of circumcision.

And then you see here. The new covenant. In Christ. 1 Corinthians 11. Verse 23. Jesus. Passes this on to Paul.

[32 : 36] And Paul passes this on. To the church. In Corinth. And to all. The church of Christ. For I received from the Lord. Verse 23. What I also pass on to you.

The Lord Jesus. On the night he was betrayed. Took bread. And when he had given thanks. He broke it. And said. This is my body. Which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way.

After supper. He took the cup. Saying. This cup. Is the new covenant. In my blood. Do this whenever you drink it. In remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread.

And drink this cup. You proclaim the Lord's death. Until he comes. Amen. And God bless our reading. Or these readings. Of his holy word.

To us. God bless you. And I will lead us in prayer. In Galilee. God bless you.

[33 : 55] God bless you.

God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you.

Then we asked how a scholar did not come above.

When the Greeks went up to 1,000 to 27 years old We know that when the within■ papier is moved within our hearts He fought for the behind his six years the Father want me to sing together, the GW par wonders of the how blessed are you.

[36 : 01] My Hashem shall not live again, and the mayfill of the sontians our ears. Don't chamois Jamie, ihn is a yes, church.

Amen. We sing again to God's praise. We sing a thing from Psalm 1 and the first two verses.

Two standards of Psalm 1 in Galat. That man of perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, in counsel of ungodly men, nor sits, nor stands in sinners' way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night.

We remain secret to sin in the same east of the St. Louis in Galat of Psalm 1. St. Louis in Galat.

St. Louis in Galat.

[38 : 19] St. Louis in Galat. St. Louis in Galat. St. Louis in Galat.

He is going with me to have on of his sweet days I have your colors He is on your other head I was on my own Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[40 : 36] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Father, we thank you for the privilege that we are given that the psalmist also have, that we are able to meditate upon your law. And in your law and your word, you reveal yourself to us and you reveal ourselves also to us.

And Lord, we pray that you would do that this morning, that you would show us our great need of you. And Lord, that you would show us that you are the God who is able to meet and surpass every need that we have.

So, Lord, prepare our hearts, search our hearts, and bless us, we pray, as we meet in your holy name. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you. Thank you. Well, we've kind of considered this a wee bit already with the children, but I think we can all be in agreement, especially those who are used to driving cars.

[41 : 53] And signs are very important things. Signs are very much necessary things and helpful things. If you don't know your way around a city, you need to follow the signs.

If you don't know the correct way around Harvard, you need to pay particular attention to the signs. If you don't, then there is trouble, as we've demonstrated some weeks back.

But we see the need for, we value, we gain confidence as we see and as we follow signs. They help us to know that we are heading in the right direction, that we are on the right track.

And in Joshua chapter 5, which marks another step along the way for God's people on this journey further into the promised land, we see here in this chapter that God, in his goodness and in his grace, he takes time.

He is patient. He knows how much his people, his children need the reassurance and the direction and the confidence that he is willing to give them.

[43 : 03] And we see them receiving that direction and that confidence and that courage through the sign that he instructs. And that's our first point this morning.

We look at the sign that God instructs. And we see that in the first three verses of the chapter. Now, when all the Amorite kings west of Jordan and all the Canaanites and kings along the coast heard how the Lord had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until we had crossed over, their hearts melted and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

Crucial point. At that time, the Lord said to Joshua, make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again.

So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeah Haraloth. So there's the sign that at this particular time, God instructs.

What was the sign? Well, it was the act of circumcision. It was the mark of circumcision, verse 2, which was a symbol of a cutting off of the old life and a beginning of the new life.

[44 : 21] I won't go into any more detail than that on it. But this sign of circumcision, which God had instructed, would mark the people of God as the people of God.

And it would remind them daily. It would remind them, as one commentator put it, every time they used the facilities of the covenant, of the promises that God had so clearly given to his people in Genesis 17.

Now, we know from the text, verses 4 through 7, that for whatever reason, there was a whole generation that had not been marked with the sign that God instructed.

Now, why did not be marked with the sign that God instructed, the text doesn't say. So in some ways, it's pointless for us to speculate. It might have been that the Lord had withdrawn that sign from the people for a period.

But I think that's probably unlikely. The greater likelihood is that as the people strayed from God and as their faith waned and as rebellion within them raised up so often as we see that it did in the wilderness, they just became negligent.

[45 : 39] And part of the symbol of the rebellion was that they did not follow the sign that God had instructed. And so what we know for sure is that there was a generation that had not been circumcised.

And it seems that that mattered to God. For those of you who drive, do you remember, I don't know if they still do this, I expect they still do.

Do you remember the emergency stop routine? You're going along and you have to get the car up for 30 mile an hour. I think it was. And then all of a sudden the instructor slaps down the paper on the dashboard and says, STOP!

And you have to, you have to slam on the brakes and control the car. Not on a skid, but in a very sharp emergency stop.

It seems here that it's almost that kind of intervention that the Lord makes here. This is almost like an emergency stop that he applies to the people.

[46 : 48] Because think about the point that they were at in terms of time in their journey. They've gone all the way through, they've got to the Jordan, we've looked at the Jordan for weeks now. They cross the Jordan.

And all the nations on the other side of the promised land who are occupying the land that God had promised them, they have seen and they have heard how God miraculously took the people across the Jordan.

And we're told that when they learn that, verse one, they are melting with fear because of it. Their courage is gone.

And these were the people that the children of Israel were going to have to engage in battle. Now, if you're aware that your enemies' courage is dissolved and they're melting with fear because of you and the God who you follow, then from a political and from a military strategic viewpoint, that's the time to attack.

The enemy is fearful and your confident strike. And that's what we'd expect, I think, from the common sense point of view.

[48 : 06] But the Lord didn't allow that. And the Lord made clear that at this point, when all they may have wanted to do was charge ahead, he wanted his people to stop.

And he instructs them, before they take another step, the sign that he had instructed that they were not marked with, they had to be marked with.

And so before they proceed into the land that he was given them, they have to be identifiable as God's people.

So that was the sign that God instructed. And that was back there and then. And the question that may be going through your minds is, what possible bearing could that have on us here and now?

Because today, thankfully, God's people are not marked with the sign of circumcision. We're in a new covenant as we were in.

[49 : 17] But God still speaks to us, does he not? And he still deals with us and he instructs us and he invites us to respond to him through silence.

And likely the most emphatic and recognizable sign of the church today that affects us in the here and now is the Lord's Supper.

Because this is a sign that we are to be encouraged to. And this is a sign through which we are to be identified and identifiable as God's people as we respond to it.

The bread and the wine. They are signs. They are symbols and they point us to the God who keeps his promises.

They are signs and they are symbols that direct us to the God of the old covenant. Who does not change. The God who promised Israel all these things and who delivered on every single point.

[50 : 26] But not only the God of the old covenant, but the God of the new covenant sealed in Christ's blood. And that God is the God who takes all who trust in Christ.

All who follow Jesus as the way. He takes us into the land that Christ has promised. Which is Emmanuel's blood.

The sign that we read of here in Joshua 5 is very clearly necessary for the people. That's why God brings them to such a sharp halt. They needed to be reminded that God was their God.

They needed to be reminded that he was the one and it was in his strength that they would proceed. And the sign was a sign by which they would respond in obedience to the call of God to be marked as his people.

In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper which we are increasingly thinking about over the next few weeks. It is necessary.

[51 : 45] Or God would not have instructed it. It is necessary so that you and I will remember that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is our God.

This is a sign that is necessary that we will place our trust in following that sign, not in ourselves, but in our God.

We trust in Christ as we respond in obedience as God the Holy Spirit draws us to him. And as we take the bread and as we take the wine, we respond to the Lord.

And we proclaim to the Lord that we are God's people. It is a visual thing. It is not a secret thing.

It is something whereby we proclaim that we are God's people. That we trust in him. That our faith is not in ourselves.

[53 : 00] That our strength is not in ourselves. That we are believing in the one who came and died and rose. Who shed his blood so that we might be forgiven.

So that we might be free. So that we might be ushered into the land, the heaven that has been prepared for those who follow him. So there is first of all the sign that God instructs.

Second point is there is the sincerity that God requires. How many times have you ever seen a family?

Harris has got some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. I think that much is absolutely authoritative. Harris has some of the most beautiful beaches in the world.

How many times have you seen people who have travelled to Harris with their buckets and spades out and their trunks on. And their picnic basket open and their mat on the grass as they take a nice day out just underneath the sign that says 10 miles to Luskatar beach.

[54 : 10] How many times have we seen that? Never. Of course we haven't. You know what? People don't go for a day out at the foot of a signpost.

They follow the signpost. They follow the sign to the destination. Signs give direction. They give encouragement. They give instruction for us to proceed to the destination.

But signs are not the destination. They're not the end point. And the sign that God instructed, it taught them that God was their God.

It taught them that they were his people who were to go forward in his strength. It directed them to continue in the way that God was leading them.

It called them to trust and obey the God who was speaking to them through the signs. But now from Joshua 5 onwards, having been marked with the sign and given the sign, what were they to do?

[55 : 19] They were to follow it. They were to trust and obey the God who was leading them and guiding them.

They needed to go from the point of being hearers of the word and marked as hearers of the word to being doers of the word.

Followers. Followers. Followers. And their lives and their walk and the direction that they would take from this point forward would underline the sincerity or otherwise of the profession that they now physically made to be God's people.

Go in God's way. So the sign was important. The sign was instructive. But the sign is not enough.

And the previous generation that we're told of in the chapter were the perfect sobering illustration of the fact that the sign was not enough.

[56 : 28] We see in verse 5 that the previous generation had been marked as God's people. They had been circumcised. They had been identified as those who were faithful to and trusting in and following God.

They had the sign. But verse 6 tells us they did not obey God. Marked as those who were God's people and yet their lifestyles did not gel with the mark that was on them.

And that generation marked as they were did not inherit. They did not see. They did not enjoy the promised land. And we need to pause to apply this.

Because in this there is a very straightforward but striking warning to us. And it's simply this. It is possible to have all the outward signs of being a Christian and still not be one.

It is possible that we were baptized as infants. It is possible for us to have gone through Sunday school and sat as the children sit today.

- [57 : 48] It is possible that we have gone to church and sat in blue chairs or nice ornate wooden pews for year after year. We can even have responded and taken the communion.
- The bread and the wine. And made a profession of faith. It's possible to have gone through all of that and be somebody that can be pointed to as they are one of God's people.
- They have all the signs of being God's people. It's possible to wear a collar and stand at one of these pulpit. And be identified as one who has all the signs of being God's.
- And yet still not know God. Signs are helpful. Signs are instructive. But signs will not save us.
- Signs simply point us to the one who will save us. And that's Christ.
- [58 : 55] Acts 16 31. How many times have we heard it? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Romans 10.
- A passage very precious to me. We have such a great balance of what God expects from us.
- If you confess with your mouth. Jesus is Lord. And believe in your heart. That God raised him from the dead. You will be saved. For it's with your heart that you believe.
- And are justified. And it's with your mouth. That you confess. And confess. And are saved.
- So the outward sign. Or the audible confession. Must accompany the sincere heart.
- [59 : 53] The mouth that confesses goes hand in glove. With the heart that believes. Or there's no salvation. There's no entry. There's no entry.
- To the land that Christ has promised. And that's why we began today with Psalm 139. Where our hearts are examined.
- And moved on to Psalm 1. Where we think about. And consider our walk. The way that we live. There must not be a disconnect.
- Between the inner heart. And the outward life. We are not to be hypocrites. We are not to pretend.
- We are not to wear a mask. That God expects. He requires sincerity. The sign. But sincerity.
- [60 : 52] Not a sinless. This. Not a life that is absolutely. Absent of sin. We can't live that life. But we are called to be sincere.
- Not pretenders. Not pretenders. So there's the sign. That God instructs. That it's the sincerity. That God requires.
- Third point. Is the security that God assures. We've all heard the jokes. That do the language.
- About the Scottish man. And the English man. And the Irish man. And depending on where you're standing. In terms of the country. These jokes are told a different way. And I can see various sets of arms. Folding.
- At the prospect of a joke. That may come about the Scottish man. And the English man. And the Irish man. I'm not going to tell you. But we know they exist. And we know that they are told. Different ways. Depending on. Whether you're a Scottish man.
- [61 : 49] Or an English man. Or an Irish man. And it always seems to be. Depending on where you are. That one nation is the butt of the joke. In Joshua's day.
- With the surrounding nations. Looking in. Israel was the butt of every joke. Every time. And even. When we think about the freedom.

They were promised freedom. When they left Egypt. And yet their freedom. Didn't look much like freedom. Their freedom looked like a. An aimless wandering around the wilderness.

For 40 years. And the nations. As they looked at Israel. And as they. Saw them. Wandering around. And making mistakes.

And in this barren land. So hopeless. From the point of the other. Surrendering nations. They looked in at Israel. And they mocked them.

[62 : 46] They laughed at them. And God heard it all. And so the Lord says. To Joshua. In verse 9. Today.

I have rolled away. The reproach. Of Egypt. From you. So the place. Has been called Gilgal. To this day. Which speaks about.

Rolling away. And essentially. God is saying to them. No more jokes. Folks. The nations. Around you. As they are looking in on you.

Today. Are not laughing. They are not scorning. They are not mocking. Because they can see. Today. That you are my people.

And I am your God. And yes. The journey. Was longer than they may have expected. And yes. Your faith. Israel. Was non-existent. At times.

[63 : 43] And your rebellion. Was almost unspeakable. And yet. I promised. That I would take you. And today.

I have secured. That promise. In taking you. Into. The. First few steps. Of that. Promised land. And. The nation saw it.

And the approach. Of Egypt. Was rolling away. The security. That God. Promised. Was delivered. And the security.

That God promises. Is always delivered. It's bomb proof. It's never a question mark. Of that. What he promises. He delivers. And the nations.

Were seeing that. And they were melting. With fear. And their courage. Had dissolved. Because they. They realized that. Had lost. That. That.

[64 : 43] I think. Has the most fun. Here's the question. As we take. This into. Our own lives. Who do you. Look for. Security. from?

Where do you. Try to search. For. And take hold of. Security. Where. is it that you are craving?

Who is it that you want to approve your life? Because that's what we see everywhere. Everybody's looking for approval from somewhere. And as we look for approval and security in this world, what we see is that the world, all it can offer is so fickle and so fragile, and invariably it's promised and not delivered.

And if it is delivered, it's delivered for 15 minutes or fail, and then it's gone. You know, we see that in the celebrity culture. We see it. We can't avoid it. We watch people, and they're marked out as somebody with potential, and the spotlight starts to go on them, and they start to rise from potential to, this person is good.

And they rise a bit further to the superstar status, and they have it for 15 minutes as they're built up and put in a pedestal, and for a week perhaps they bask in the approval of the world, and the following week, crash.

[66 : 06] Some revelation, some misdemeanor from the past is dug up, and those who are so celebrated in one moment are destroyed and disgraced in the next.

It's the way of the world. It's the way of the world. We search for security and approval from the world. We won't get it. But if we are Christ's, one thing that we need to be aware of is that the reproach of the world, the scorn of the world, the finger-pointing, the mocking, is something that God's people have always experienced, and will always experience, throughout the ages and throughout the generations.

Jesus said in John 16, 33, in this world, you will have trouble. But there will come a day, and it's the day of the Lord, when the reproach of the world will be rolled away for the Christian.

And every eye will see, and every tongue will confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord. And on that day, the Christian will begin to enjoy, and will be seen to begin to enjoy, that security, which is rich, and unshakable, and eternal.

And on that day, also, those who are out of Christ, will suddenly realise, that eternity, is going to be a place, of endless, tormented, reproach.

[68 : 21] So the question for you and I, is what security, do we value? What security, do we value? What security, are we seeking, to take hold of? Whose approval, do we really think, we need? The answer is Christ's.

And the second question, is, if you are going to be Christ's, won't you just live, with the reproach, of this world, for such a fleeting, time, as we are here?

Whose security, do you crave, and approve? Whose security, do you crave, whose security, do you want to take hold of? And whose reproach, are you willing to live with?

If you, live with the reproach, of the world, it will be for a short time. And then there is, eternal bliss.

[69 : 31] Or we can switch back. And chase, a security, in this world, that can never be given, and find that, eternally, we are suffering.

Because of what we have lost. So there is the security, that God assures, and only God assures. And finally, and just very, very briefly, there is the sustenance, that God gives.

The day after the Passover, verse 11, that very day, they ate some, of the produce, of the land, unleavened bread, and roasted grain. The manna stopped, the day after they ate, this food from the land.

There was no longer, any manna, for the Israelites, but that year, they ate, of the produce, of Canaan. Good friends here, last weekend, and they told us, some big news, from West of Ross, where we had been.

And the news was, that this particular restaurant, that had had, the same menu, for over 10 years, they had changed the menu. New food was being offered, to the locals.

[70 : 40] Big news. On this day, there was a change of menu, for Israel. For 40 years, manna had been served.

Miraculously, bread from heaven, rained down. Goes back to Exodus, chapter 16. And we don't have time, to go there.

But the manna, the miraculous manna, that was rained down, it was the emergency supply, for God's people, in a wilderness, that they could not cultivate, and they could never stay, for long enough, in one place, to be able to cultivate.

But now, they weren't in the wilderness. Now, they weren't in the wilderness, they were, they were in the promised land, and because they were in the land, that God had promised, a land that could be cultivated, there was no need, for emergency supplies, there was no need, to rain down bread, from heaven, because they could eat, unleavened bread, and they could eat, roasted grain, that could be harvested, from the land, that God, brought them into.

And the very simple point, to note here, is, that, it is God, who provides both. The miraculous, that fell from heaven, into their laps, when they were starving, they thanked the Lord, for it, or they should have, because they recognised, he gave it.

[72 : 11] And now the mundane, which they had to dig up, and harvest, and work with, they enjoyed it, but they were to recognise, that it was still the Lord, he was providing it.

It was still the Lord, that was to be given it, and they were to be thankful, for that. And that's the point, they take with us, as we go from here.

We sit in the comfort, of this hall, we go back, we go back to the comfort, of our homes, and the comfort, of our cars, many of us, we will have something, on the table, likely, we have clothes, to wear, the water, and the taps, let's recognise, the same God, provided for them, in the land, on that day, is the same God, who's providing for us, each day, that we eat, and drink, and enjoy shelter.

Yes, we could tell stories, about miraculous times, when we had nothing, we were in a corner, we were tearing our hair out, saying, what are we going to do, and miraculously, God intervened, and we said, praise the Lord, for that.

The simple point, to take today, with us, is that we're to praise the Lord, for everything, everything that we have. I read a story, in one of the commentators, and he said, he talked about, the sacrament, of taking out the bones, and made this, simple point, that every time, we take the rubbish out, and every time, we have a bag, to put in the, the black bone, with banana skins, and, this quackets, and empty bags of this, and empty bottles of that, as we go out with it, we shouldn't be going out, grumbling, saying, why do I have to put, the bin out today, we should be going out, praising the Lord, because in that bag, is the evidence, of the sustenance, that he provides, day by day, for our bodies, so thank him for it, and thank him most of all, for how he has, saved us, and sustained us, eternally, the Israelites, celebrated, the Passover,

[74 : 35] Passover, and whenever we see, the Passover, we think forward, to the Passover lamb, the lamb of God, who came, to take away, the sin, of the world, Christ, and he is the one, who saves us, from our sin, and he is the one, who sustains us, for all of time, as we trust in him, takes us, into eternity, so praise the Lord, for Christ, the sin, the sin, God instructs, that has to go together, with the sincerity, that God requires, the security, that God, assures, and the sustenance, that God gives, let's pray, heavenly father, we do thank you, for your word, which sustains, our souls, day by day, as we are, pointed to, and as we reveal, as we are, finding, you reveal, more and more, of yourself, to us, help us, we pray, as we come, today, and as we, follow the sign, to meet together, as you've, called us, to meet together, we pray, that not only, would we have, a foreign part, of the sign, by being present, but we pray, that we may know, that sincerity of heart, that we wouldn't be, those who, who come together, in formality, but whose hearts, are far from, touch, our hearts, we pray, and Lord, we thank you, that as we, look to Jesus, we are indeed, given, a security, that this world, cannot give, we are given, the approval, the only approval, that really matters, so help us, to crave, and to, receive that, and not to chase, so much, that we'll never, satisfy, and always promise, and never deliver, and Lord, we do thank you, for, not just, the miraculous, salvation, of our souls, but we do thank you, also for, the mundane, provision, that you give to us, in our bread, and our water, and the shelter, all, we have needed, even in the physical sense, thy hand, hath provided, and Lord, we praise you for that, and we pray these things, asking that you would, receive us in Christ,

Amen, we sing, to conclude, from the hymn book, number, six hundred, and ninety-four, six hundred, and ninety-four, in the hymn book, the sands of time, are sinking, the dawn of heaven, breaks, the summer, morn, a cypher, the fair, sweet morn, awaits, dark, dark hath been, the midnight, but day spring, is at hand, and glory, glory dwelleth, in Emmanuel's land, and I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, the Father, and the fellowship of God, the Holy Spirit, be with us all, both now, and forevermore, Amen.