

27.3.22 am

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Date: 27 March 2022

Preacher: Gordon MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. It's nice to see a number with us in the church this morning and I recognise that there are a number online. It's good to be able to come together and to worship God. Just before we commence our worship, one or two intimations. The Gaelic service this evening will not be going ahead due to numbers, so I encourage everyone to link in to either one of the neighbouring congregations in Scalpy or in Leverborough or to take the opportunity to go further afield.

Intimations will have been circulating on the screen, the Ladies' Fellowship. There'll be the Little Fishes this week on Tuesday, all being well. The Road to Recovery meets on Tuesday evening.

The prayer meeting will be on Zoom only on Wednesday evening and a reminder that following the cancellation of the congregational meeting last Thursday, that will now take place this Thursday here in the church at 7.30. There'll be no Jam Connect or Rooted this Friday due to the Easter holidays and I pray that the kids will indeed have a good time on the holiday and we look forward to welcoming them back after the Easter break. The service is next. Lord's Day will be at 11am and 6pm.

And will God willing be taken by our own minister. And you'll have seen the intimation in relation to the Stornoway street pastors. Anyone that wishes to apply, there's a date there. They have to apply by the 1st of May and would encourage anyone that wants to be involved in that ministry to get in touch with Janice Brand. We'll begin our worship of God this morning singing from the Metrical Psalms.

Let's go Psalm number 1. And we'll sing the whole of the Psalm. That man hath perfect blessedness who walketh nor astray in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinner's way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law and meditates on his law day and night. And we'll stand to sing.

[2 : 1 8] Psalm number 1. And we'll sing the whole of the Psalm.

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Psalm number 1. And we'll sing the whole of the Psalm. Our gracious and our blessed Lord, we thank you as we come into your presence this morning that we can indeed come and acknowledge that you are Lord and you are God and that you are high and lifted up.

And we pray, Heavenly Father, that as we come and we acknowledge your greatness before us, we pray that we would indeed be still before you, that our hearts would be stilled, that our minds would be stilled and that, Heavenly Father, we would indeed recognise that you are God, that we would know what it is to taste and see that God is good, that those that trust in him are blessed.

[6 : 49] And our prayer would be, Heavenly Father, that each and every one gathered here in the building and those that watch online would indeed know what it is to trust in you.

We come before you this morning, Heavenly Father, and we seek your face. We seek to learn more about you. We seek to draw close to you.

We seek to know that calm and heavenly frame that only comes from walking close in your presence. That as the psalmist teaches us, Heavenly Father, that we would indeed meditate on your word, that your word would be before us in the morning and the evening and through the night.

That, Heavenly Father, from it we would draw strength, that we would be like that tree planted by the stream, and that in our season, Heavenly Father, whatever season you may give us, that we may indeed bear fruit for you.

So as we come and we acknowledge your glory, your presence, Heavenly Father, with us, we come before you and we bring our petitions to you. We pray, Heavenly Father, for those that suffer at this time, those that are laid low through sickness.

[8 : 10] We pray in particular, Heavenly Father, for the pandemic of COVID, that while we have indeed been protected from it these past two years, and for all that we have been able to benefit from, Heavenly Father, through vaccines and boosters, we recognise that, Heavenly Father, at this time there are many that are laid low with COVID at this time, and we bring them before you and we pray for your hand of healing upon them.

We pray, Heavenly Father, that you would indeed uphold them, and that this sickness upon them that would indeed pass. And those, Heavenly Father, that fear that they too will catch it, that their fear, Heavenly Father, would be cast upon you, knowing that you care for each and every one of us.

Your word teaches us that not a hair falls from our head, but, Heavenly Father, that you know about it. So we pray that while we may fear, that we may indeed lean upon you, knowing, Heavenly Father, that you have promised that you will never leave us, that you will never forsake us, that all we must do is believe and trust in you.

And while, Heavenly Father, we pray for those that are sick, we also come and we bring before you those that mourn at this time. And we pray, Heavenly Father, for the community of North Hewist and our sister congregation there.

And we pray in particular, Heavenly Father, for the Morrison family, for John, for Lucy, for Finlay. As they mourn, Heavenly Father, on this day, the loss of a mother and the loss of a wife, we pray, Heavenly Father, that they would indeed know your upholding.

[10 : 12] One that was so bright in our faith for you, taken so quickly. And we recognise, Heavenly Father, on a day such as this, that the hurt can be so much greater.

So we pray for them, Heavenly Father, and we pray for your upholding upon them. We pray for the congregation as they gather this morning. And, Heavenly Father, our hearts are sore while hearts are heavy.

That they would indeed know you as a God of refuge and a God of strength. A God that heals the brokenhearted. And we pray, Heavenly Father, as the community will come together on Tuesday for a funeral.

Again, Heavenly Father, that you would be with them there. That even now, that you would give Reverend Callum Murdo the words to say. Words, Heavenly Father, that can only come from you and through your word.

We pray for many others, Heavenly Father, that mourn at this time. Those within our own community that mourn, Heavenly Father, the loss of relations. Those further afield, Heavenly Father, that again mourn the loss of a father and a husband.

[11 : 33] Connected with the community here, Heavenly Father, we pray for them. We thank you again for the witness of Don McKinnon and for the legacy that he leaves behind through his son and his daughter.

Heavenly Father, as they walk with you because of the witness that they saw in the home. We pray, Heavenly Father, that each one of us as parents would indeed remember the importance of our witness in the home.

Our Heavenly Father, as we seek to see our children grow up to be rooted and grounded in the faith, that each one of them would remember their creator in the days of their youth, that before the evil days come and they say they have no pleasure in them, our Heavenly Father, that they would come and they would acknowledge you.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your hand upon us this morning. We recognize that there are many that are not able to come amongst us this morning. We pray, Heavenly Father, that as they watch online, that they will indeed feel joined to the body here and that Heavenly Father, each one of them will be able to hear clearly, will be able to participate in the singing and worship of your name.

But Heavenly Father, our prayer for each one of us is that as we come, that we would indeed come in the right spirit before you, that we would know your peace, that we would know what it is to have your word dwelling within us.

[13 : 11] And that, Heavenly Father, that each one of us would seek to be a living witness for you within this community and further afield wherever we are represented, Heavenly Father. We recognize that it is not we that are represented, but, Heavenly Father, that we are required to be your representatives here on earth.

So guide us, direct us, lead us, teach us, correct us, through your word, as we commit all things to you, recognizing our own failings, our own shortcomings.

In Jesus' precious name. Amen. This is the time we normally ask the boys and girls to come down to the front. It is nice to see some young ones here.

But I recognize that young ones will be watching online before they take part in the online Sunday school. I have a picture I want to show you.

Hopefully it will appear up on the screen. I don't know if you can all see that. As many of you know, one of our daughters is diabetic and has been in and out of hospital the last couple of months because of changes in her diabetes.

[14 : 33] And what you see on the screen there is a new monitor that Anna is now able to wear. And what it gives us is what they call constant glucose monitoring, CGM.

And every five minutes we get a reading as to what our blood glucose is looking like. It is, as Hannah keeps saying, a bit like Big Brother watching you all the time in terms of what you eat, what you don't eat, when you exercise, when you don't exercise.

But what it gives us is an idea of how Hannah's body is reacting to what she's eating, what impact insulin is having on her.

And you'll see underneath the graph there's various different alerts that have gone off there. Now this is Hannah's reading from last Sunday.

Things were pretty good during the night. She got up and had her breakfast. probably about 10 o'clock. And then all of a sudden her blood's started to crash.

[15 : 42] And you can see on the screen there that it gives you a warning that her blood's are going low and then that it gives that her blood's are going urgent low.

And that you have to take action. Why do I share this with you? This morning when I was up, I sometimes have my phone out so I can just see how Hannah's bloods are doing particularly during the night.

And what it actually made me think of was it's all very well for me sitting here watching what Hannah's bloods are doing and I can tell what she's been eating and when she's been eating. It made me think God sees everything I do.

Now the monitor that Hannah wears is just on her arm or on her stomach and it's a wee wire that goes in just under the skin to be able to take these readings.

Psalm 139 teaches us that God knows every part of us. No matter where we go God sees us God knows what we're doing even as the psalmist says if we go down into the depths of hell God is there with us and he sees us.

[17 : 02] And it made me think that while we get warnings and alarm bells going off for when Hannah's blood is going too low or whether it's going too high and we have to take action do we recognise how God sees everything that we do everything we say even everything we think do we get alarm bells going off to warn us that we have to take action do we hear that wee voice that says you shouldn't be doing this do you remember what God's word teaches you about walking in a straight path about meditating upon God's word so that our lives can indeed be a living example for God.

We're going to sing in a wee while in Mission of Praise and just to focus on the words of the hymn we will actually be looking at this in more depth when we come into the service take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee take my moments and my days let them flow in ceaseless praise does everything that we do our thoughts our actions our words we see the flow of the graph that I showed you earlier on there but do our lives flow in ceaseless praise to God everything that we do so my encouragement to you young ones as you you listen as you go off and do Sunday school think about what you learn in Sunday school what it teaches you and how it shapes your life do you want your life to be consecrated to God so that everything you do and everything you say is a praise to God a word of prayer and then we'll sing together dear heavenly father we pray that each one of us can say take my life and let it be consecrated

Lord to thee that heavenly father in our moments in our words in our thoughts that heavenly father all we seek to do is to praise you and we pray heavenly father for the young ones those of them that are sick that they would indeed know healing and we pray heavenly father for each and every one of them that as they grow that they would grow to know you not just to know you but to love you and to be able to call you Lord and Saviour and we ask all this in Jesus precious name Amen so we'll stand and we'll sing in Mission Praise 624 the words will be up on the screen take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee take my moments and my days let them flow in ceaseless praise and may that indeed be the prayer of each one of us take my life take my life and let it be consecrated

Lord to thee take my moments and my days let them flow let them flow and cease take my hands and let them move at the echoes of thy love take my feet take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee take my voice take my voice and let me sing take my voice and let me sing always only for my King take my lips and let them be filled with messages filled with messages filled with messages filled with messages from me filled with messages from me take my self and my gold and my gold not am I to die with hope take my intellect and use every power and let them be and let them be filled with messages take my will and make it thine it shall be no longer mine take my heart it is thine own it shall be be thy royal throne take my love my Lord

I pour at thy feet its treasure store take myself and I will be ever long in all for thee I could ask if you could turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 12 Romans chapter 12 and we'll read the whole of the chapter Romans 12 from verse 1 therefore I urge you brothers and sisters in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God this is your true and proper worship do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good pleasing and perfect will for by the grace given me

[24 : 19] I say to every one of you do not think of yourself more highly than you ought but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you for just as each of us has one body with many members and there are met and these members do not all have the same function so in Christ we though many form one body and each member belongs to all the others we have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us if your gift is prophesying then prophesy in accordance with your faith if it is serving then serve if it is teaching then teach if it is to encourage then give encouragement if it is giving then give generously if it is to lead do it diligently if it is to show mercy do it cheerfully love love must be sincere hate what is evil cling to what is good be devoted to one another in love honour one another above yourselves never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervour serving the Lord be joyful in hope patient in affliction faithful in prayer share with the Lord's people who are in need practice hospitality bless those who persecute you bless and do not curse rejoice with those who mourn and those sorry rejoice with those who rejoice mourn with those who mourn live in harmony with one another do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position do not be conceited do not repay anyone evil for evil be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone if it is possible as far as it depends on you live at peace with everyone do not take revenge my dear friends but leave room for God's wrath for it is written it is mine to avenge

I will repay says the Lord on the contrary if your enemy is hungry feed him if he is thirsty give him something to drink in doing this you will heap burning coals in his head do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good Amen and may God add his blessing to this his holy word let us again come before God in prayer dear heavenly father we do indeed acknowledge that you have given us your word to guide us to direct us on how we may glorify and enjoy you forever it is the only rule that has been given to us and we pray heavenly father that as we read your word that we recognize that we only read a portion of it this morning you teach us heavenly father elsewhere in scripture that we must know the whole word and do all that your scriptures teach us to do only then heavenly father will we know what it is to be prosperous not prosperous in terms of the world heavenly father but prosperous in our walk with you so as we come and as we examine your word this morning as you speak to us through it we pray heavenly father that our hearts would be still before you that we would come with an expectant heart expecting heavenly father that you will teach us if anyone seeking guidance this morning that they would find that guidance if any are needing comfort heavenly father they would indeed be comforted and for those that seek direction heavenly father that you would indeed point them in the right way heavenly father your word is what we are called to live by may we indeed use it may we indeed meditate upon it and may we indeed sing from it in Jesus precious name

Amen we are going to sing again in Psalm 119 Psalm 119 from verse 33 teach me O Lord the perfect way of thy precepts divine and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline give understanding unto me so keep thy law shall I even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully carefully we'll stand to sing we'll stand to sing teach me O Lord the perfect way of thy precepts divine and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline give understanding unto me give understanding unto me so keep thy law shall I yea, in with my whole heart I shall

I shall observe it carefully yea, in with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully in thy law's path make me to the end for I delight therein my heart unto thy testimonies in thy Lord's path make me to go for I delight therein my heart unto thy testimonies my heart unto thy testimonies I am to the end of my heart my heart unto thy testimonies my heart unto thy testimonies and not to greed incline turn thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity me and in thy good and holy way be pleased to quicken me confer to me thy gracious word which I did gladly fear into thy servant Lord who is devoted to thy fear turn thou away my fear my fear reproach for good thy judgments be look for thy precepts whilst I have longed in thy truth quicken me

As we turn to God's word can I ask you to turn in your Bibles to Colossians chapter 3 you can maybe keep your finger in Romans 12 just in case you want to flick back there and I'll read a few verses in Colossians chapter 3 from verse 12 we read in Romans 12 and we could just as easy have read in 1 Corinthians 12 as they both speak about the church and being joined together in one body in one body obviously the intention had been to have the congregational meeting last Thursday and if we're spared and well all been well we'll come together this Thursday and as part of the meeting the intention is to have a look at the vision that has recently been launched for the free church and what we would do is have a look at what does that mean for us as a congregation here in Tarbert you might be asking what is the vision for the free church well it's encapsulated in the statement a healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland a healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland and while not everybody may see the benefit of having a vision statement or asking what does it actually mean then it's probably a good place for us to start by asking you know what does it mean to be a healthy church what does it mean for our church here and what does it mean for me as an individual within that within the church and hopefully as we look at the passage in Colossians 3 coupled with the reading that we had in Romans 12 we may get some answers with God's help to some of these questions so we read in Colossians 3 from verse 12 and we'll read down to verse 17 put on then as God's chosen ones holy and beloved compassionate hearts kindness humility meekness and patience bearing with one another and if one is a complaint against another forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you so you must also forgive and above all these put on love which binds together everything in perfect harmony and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful let the word of Christ dwell in you richly teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God and whatever you do in word or deed do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him a healthy gospel church for every community in Scotland the vision statement is underpinned when you go to the Free Church website you'll see that it's underpinned by three statements first statement is healthy churches are committed to the worship of God on obedience to the Bible secondly they promote discipleship and are characterized by loving relationships and thirdly

[36 : 52] they are intentional about the sharing of the gospel message locally and throughout the world now if you permit me what I'd like to do is use these three statements and I'll give you three points and we'll go through them as time permits this morning and the three points are committed character and to have a complete alliteration we'll go for communicate committed if we look at verse 16 let the word of Christ dwell in you richly teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God the statement says healthy churches are committed to the worship of God on obedience to the Bible we have the word of God it's been given to us as our only rule to direct us on how we may glorify God and how we may enjoy him forever as is recorded and as many of you probably learnt in the shorter catechism what is the word of Christ?

that's obviously the Bible but let's just think for a moment of some of the things that Jesus said while he was here on earth I am the way the truth and the life he also said of himself I have come that you may have life he said come to me all that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest we can go to the sermon on the mount and all that Jesus taught us through his word does that word does that word dwell in the heart of each and every one of us?

what does it mean to dwell? well we all know that it means we all have a dwelling that we go to we might nowadays say that we live in somewhere we wouldn't stay somewhere we didn't feel comfortable I know one or two that when they were younger would be enthusiastic about going on a sleepover somewhere and then at one two o'clock in the morning the phone might ring and could you come and collect your daughter she wants to come home and it's not because the place they were staying in wasn't clean wasn't happy it just wasn't home and they wanted to come back home does the word of God dwell in the heart of each and every one of us so much so that we don't want to be separated from it is that our life?

is it our witness? somebody that you're older might book to go and stay in a hotel and you turn up there and the room's not what you expected you go and make a complaint or you move on somewhere else the word of God is given to us to teach us and direct us and how we may glorify God and enjoy him forever but what comes before that in the Westminster Shorter Catechism what is man's chief end?

man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever is that the will and the purpose of each and every one of us either here in the building or those that are online are we living our lives to glorify God or are we living our lives for ourselves says that the word of Christ dwell in your hearts richly in terms of the world in terms of the world richness is in terms of abundance generally what people will say is well they're rich meaning they have an abundance of money they're wealthy you might say that a cake is rich in flavour what is the richness that you have in your heart?

[41 : 24] is it God's word that's directing you? or is it something else? because from the heart is where the life comes and what each and every one of us have in our heart is what shows on the outside we can for a while hide it I went down to watch the football yesterday and there was a day I might have been able to play football but in conversation with somebody else that was there I had to admit that if I put on a strip I might look the part but five minutes into the game it would start to show that I wasn't part of the team that was playing on the pitch my heart might have been in it but because of my age because of my weight because of my lack of fitness because of my lack of skills with a ball I would have very quickly been shown that I wasn't part of the team what is it that drives you?

and I want you to hold on to the thought of what team are you part of? are you part of God's team? or are you with the team of the world? the team of the world we sang in Psalm 119 teach me O Lord the perfect way of thy precepts divine and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline did we just sing these words because we liked the tune that Farker had picked for it or did we actually think about the words that we were singing?

we're in church this morning either physically or online are we asking God to teach us his perfect way from his word that we will observe it and we will incline our hearts to it each and every day and observe it to the end we might not always understand what God's words teaching us but the psalmist acknowledges that and he goes on and says give understanding unto me so keep thy law I shall yea even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully we don't always understand everything that we read but as the psalmist adds God to give him understanding our prayer should be that God should give each one of us understanding because it's not always easy to understand what God is saying to us sometimes the word can be difficult for us sometimes it can be hard particularly if God is correcting us and directing us somewhere that we don't want to go

I ask you the question is the word of God dwelling in you richly if it's not what do you need to change to ensure that it is a healthy church is one that is committed to the worship of God and obedience to the Bible the word of God character said said a healthy gospel church is a church that promote discipleship and are characterized by loving relationships each and every one of us as we read in Romans 12 has a body that is made up of many parts and each part has its own function to carry out we read in 1 Corinthians 12 that says the hand can't say to the eye I don't need you or the hand can't say to the foot

I don't need you every part is needed and what we have to recognize is that as we come together as a body of God's people we all have a part to play each and every one of us no matter how insignificant we might think our role might be every single one of us has a role to play for some it's teaching for some it's leading for some it's giving each and every one of us has a role to play don't anybody underestimate the skills and the gifts that God has given you that can be used for his glory we talk about discipleship what does it mean to disciple somebody we saw that Jesus who was a perfect example of a disciple took 12 disciples and he taught each and every one of them some learnt quickly some had to be retaught some doubted at times that Jesus was patient with them and he taught them picture the scene you have to row a boat across a loch there's two of you in the boat one of you is 6 foot 2 and 52 years of age the other is 10 years of age and 4 foot the two of you have to participate in rowing across the boat to be able to get to the other side you have to work together now if the 52 year old takes one oar and the 10 year old takes the other oar you might make progress but what you have to learn first of all is you have to both be going in the same direction so the oars have to be going the same way the challenge is the challenge is that if the 52 year old starts rowing and the 10 year old tries to keep up one, they will very quickly get out of puff but what else will happen?

[47 : 48] the boat will go round in circles and there will be no progress so what has to happen? the 52 year old can still keep rowing but can also take a hold of the other oar and help and that's sometimes what we have to do in discipleship it's not stopping what we're doing but it's actually recognising that we need to help others to actually make progress if we carry on doing things the same way I'll do it myself nobody grows nobody develops we have to be able to help one another but there has to be a willingness in people wanting to learn and how do we make that happen?

it's by recognising and teaching everybody that everybody has a part to play everybody has something to learn and everybody is part of the body nobody is outside if they truly love Jesus as their Lord and as their Saviour we come to a list in chapter in verse 12 and it starts off put on then what's the most common thing that each and every one of us put on on a daily basis?

we get up in the morning and we put on our clothes now you can tell a lot about somebody by the very clothes that they wear some of you will have seen me standing at the door this morning with a collar and tie on and all of a sudden you recognise oh Gordon must be preaching this morning because he never ever wears a collar and tie otherwise so you can tell things about people by the clothes they wear you can tell something about their age you can tell something about their style you can tell something sometimes even about the family they come from if they're wearing a kilt you can tell different things about different people and we also recognise that some of us try and dress younger than we actually are and we give ourselves away in terms of what we wear I gave the example there about me pulling on a football strip to try and be part of a team and it would very quickly become apparent that while I might look the part initially when I try to actually participate

I'm not and there is a danger for each and every one of us that we have a head knowledge of God's word and we try and do things the way that we think we should do them but going back to our first point we're not committed to God's word and it's not in our hearts are we as a church characterised by our discipleship are we characterised by our loving relationships to one another do we love one another the way that we should we all have different attributes we all have different skills but each one of them is needed for the church to grow and develop just a warning it teaches us there in terms of putting on all the different attributes that Paul outlines putting on compassionate hearts kindness humility meekness patience that can be difficult even in our own family settings we can recognise that there are times that somebody irks us the wrong way do we forgive them?

do we cast it back? but we need to be forgiving if we don't have a forgiving heart how can we recognise that Christ has forgiven us forgiven us all our thoughts all our actions all our deeds why can we not forgive somebody who's either within our own home or within our own body in the church and it goes on in verse 15 and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body and be thankful let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts very specific it's not just let peace rule in your hearts it's the peace of Christ the peace of Christ Warren Wiersbe on this particular passage says there is a danger in thinking that you've got peace in your heart and it's not the peace of the Lord think of Jonah who had such peace fell asleep in the bottom of the boat while there was a storm raging round about and he was right outside the will of God let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts may we be characterized by our want and our will to disciple others but also to live in loving relationships with one another a healthy gospel church they're intentional about sharing the gospel message locally and throughout the world which takes us to our third and final point communicate what do we as individuals or the individuals that make up the church as a church body what do we communicate within our community here about the word of Christ about the gospel message are we communicating are we communicating

[54 : 24] Christ and him crucified or because of the way that we live out our lives is it something else are we living our lives in such a way that we are attracting others to Christ not to us as a church body attracting them to Christ or are we living out our lives in such a way that people actually say I want no part of that we're told what we have to put on and we have to put it on in such a way that it's not just inside the walls of this church that that is seen but it has to be seen in the wider community in the way that we live each and every day every day in our interactions with people we have to be living a life we read in Romans 12 about being living witnesses are we being living witnesses with everybody that we come into contact with those that we work with those that we see when we're at our work are we living out a witness that draws people to Christ because we have to ask ourselves if we are going to be a healthy gospel church we have to make sure that we're thankful for what God has given us and we live that thankfulness out each and every day if we are thankful we should actually be happy if we're unthankful it can create a spirit of a bitterness within us and whether we recognise it or not if our hearts are unthankful and we are bitter people actually see that how often does somebody come up to you and say are you okay?

what's wrong? and our immediate reaction is to say I'm okay, I'm fine but we know we know within our hearts that we're not fine that we're not walking with God the way that we should be we're not having God's word dwelling in our hearts and if it's dwelling in our hearts it's living out through what we are doing each and every day we're saying we're saying with the kids take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee take my hands take my feet take my life take every part of me my riches everything is that the way that we get up in the morning and think about how we have to live our lives for those that are maybe listening that aren't Christians here this morning I recognise that you probably look at the people that make up the church and you maybe think

I don't think I want to be part of that church can I just ask for a moment that what you don't do is focus on the people that are in the church take your eyes off the people that are in the church and put your eyes on Jesus each and every one of us as Christians who bear the name of Christ seek to be more like him but we're not perfect we're not perfect by any stretch but our desire is to get to know God better and to be able to live him out each and every day we're going to sing just in a moment the words from Mission Praise 755 when I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died my richest gain

I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride so often we put our weight in the riches that we have so often we look at how good we are at things and how well we're coping with things but we know and we are taught through God's word that we are here for a moment and one of us promised tomorrow during the prayer I prayed for the family down in Uist we mentioned it on Wednesday night in the prayer meeting a young woman, bright Christian went out on her bike on Monday evening and never came home God took her before she even got back home now yes we have a hope that one day we will all meet again and it's a comfort to the family but if you're not walking with Christ if you're not looking at Christ the second verse goes on forbid it Lord that I should boast save in the death of Christ my Lord what are you boasting in?

what are you thinking I'm okay, I'm getting on fine I'm good at this, I'm good at that I've got this to look forward to we must not look at the people who make up the church we must look to Christ and we must recognise that Christ has paid a price for us that nobody else could pay and that is a message that we as a congregation we as a body of God's people try and communicate not just here but all being well further afield that there is a gospel message that Christ came that Christ came and died for sinners each one of us recognise that we are sinners some of them acknowledged that we need a saviour others who boast in their own strength think that can go on alone but if we look at the cross and we see the price that God paid through his son see from his head his hands his feet sorrow and love flow mingled down did e'er such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown for us for each and every one of us one of us gathered here

[61 : 31] Christ suffered on the cross he bore the crown of thorns I pray that you hear that message I pray that each one of us try with every breath that God gives us to live that message out and communicate that message each and every day let us pray dear heavenly father we thank you for your word to us we do indeed pray that your word would dwell in our hearts and heavenly father that as we seek to teach one another as we seek to admonish one another as we seek to up build one another through the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and heavenly father that we would do it with thankfulness in our hearts to God and heavenly father that we would be thankful for the price that has been paid for us that we would be thankful that we have access to your word to read it freely each and every day we pray heavenly father that heavenly father that those that sit here this morning or watch online that have still not come and acknowledge you as Lord and as Saviour and heavenly father that they would look beyond the parts of this body that make up the church and they would look to you the head of the church and that they would see you heavenly father and the price that you paid through your son and that they would heavenly father hear the words

I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me that heavenly father that they would indeed answer that call to come unto you that the burdens of this world that they carry that they would indeed cast them away and that heavenly father that they would recognize that your yoke is easy and your burden is light we commit this word to you this morning heavenly father if anything that has been said amiss and heavenly father that you would indeed correct it for all we seek to do is to honor and glorify you in Jesus precious name amen bring our service to conclusion this morning singing as we said from hymn 755 that great hymn of Sir Isaac Watts when I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died and stand to sing my righteous kid

I come to sing to sing and sing and sing when I survey the wondrous cross and sing when
I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died and sing My richest kid I
count upon all, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbidden Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God.

All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

[65 : 43] See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love promangled down.

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, our thorns composed so rich a crown.

Where the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

We'll close with a benediction. To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to
present us before His glorious presence, without fault and with great joy, to the only God
our Saviour.

[67 : 16] Be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages and
forevermore. Amen.