

Now is the day of salvation

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Preacher: Farquhar MacLeod

- [0 : 00] So for a short time together, let us again turn to that portion of scripture we read together in 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians and chapter 6.
- And we can read again at the end of verse 2. 2 Corinthians chapter 6 and the end of verse 2.
- Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. We are once again drawing nigh to the end of another year.
- A year in which some of us have experienced great joy and great happiness. Others, on the other hand, have experienced great sorrow and sadness.
- Whatever our experience may have been, we can say along with Samuel of old, that hitherto the Lord has helped us.
- [1 : 19] He has been our guide. He has been our stay. He has been our help in time of need.
- And as another year draws to its close, we find ourselves once again coming to that time when we remember that a Savior was born.
- There are so many lights and so many tensors. And there are so many, much laughter and merriment. But what we need to remember that the true meaning of Christmas time is that Jesus came into this world to seek and to save sinners such as we are.
- And you know, from the very moment that we came into this world, to the moment that we leave this world, we are on a journey.
- A journey from time to eternity. And each one of us tonight, we are a step closer to eternity than we have ever been before.
- [2 : 49] And that, my friend, is a solemn thought. Outside the city of London, a gravestone can be sent.
- And the inscription on the gravestone reads, Passerby, stop and think. I'm in eternity.
- You are on the brink. All the many hundreds, and dare I say thousands of people, in the year that is now closing behind us, and they have been so suddenly swept from the sin of time to eternity.
- Some of them by the hands of evil and brutal men. Some through natural disasters.
- Some others through accidents on land, air and sea. I cannot help but think, where are they? Did they make their calling on election sure?
- [4 : 10] When they were called so sudden, they wouldn't have had time, but had they made their calling on election sure before?
- What about you and I? If we were to be suddenly called from the sin of time to eternity, where would we expect to spend that eternity?
- Have you made your peace with God? That is a solemn thought as well.
- And Jesus tonight is saying to each one of us, Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation.

Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day of salvation. Tomorrow is not promised you or me or anyone else.

[5 : 22] Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 7 says, Today if you hear my voice, harden not your hearts.

Hebrews again chapter 2 verse 3, How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation? When the ship, stephan whitney, hid the rocks on the shores of Ireland, and she hung there on the rocks for a few minutes, and those who jumped from the ship onto the rocks, they were saved.

But those who stayed on board ship, waiting to be rescued, they were lost. The ship slid off the rocks and sank, and those still in the ship, they were lost.

And we sit under the proclaimed word of the gospel, and God's word every week. We hear the gospel in all its purity, in all its simplicity.

And this morning itself, we heard of the shepherds, those people who were so despised, the rejects of society, and yet the angel of the Lord came to those shepherds and gave them the good news that a saviour had been born.

[7 : 11] And those shepherds, they were petrified at the sight of an angel. And isn't it wonderful that God uses everyday normal people in his work.

And as we hear the word proclaimed on Lord's Day and weekday, what effect does it have on you?

What effect does it have on me? A few weeks ago, our brother John McSwain preached a Gaelic service.

Unfortunately, I was away and I didn't hear. We were away, we didn't hear that service. But he preached on Jeremiah 8.20.

The harvest is past, the summer is finished, and we are not saved. That was the lament of the prophet for Israel.

[8 : 24] Israel, who had turned their backs on God, who had worshipped false idols, and they were brought in captivity to Babylon.

Is that your old lament as we come nigh to the end of another year? Lamenting the days that have gone by, and are you saying to yourself, I am not saved.

And you know, my friends, there are a lot of people, and I've heard people say this, if I'm going to be saved, I'll be saved anyway. There is nothing I can do to be saved.

But what does the word of God say? It says, ask, and you shall receive. Seek, and you shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. So there is something that you can do. You can pray to the God of heaven, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

[9 : 45] Well, this God, the God that is saying to you tonight, now is the accepted time. This is the very same God who is listening to the prayer from the whimper of the poor prisoner that is locked in the prison of sin.

And that is for each one of us who have been saved, that is where we were. Out in the cold hills of sin and iniquity, far away from God with no hope in this world.

And we did nothing to deserve God's mercy and God's grace, but in his great love he reached out to us and he drew us to himself.

And there are plenty in here tonight, and they can testify that they would never again go back to what they were. And I remember years ago, I used to love the concert hall and I used to love the dance hall until the Lord Jesus came into my life.

And the things I love most is the things that have further pushed away from me. the word of God says, Behold, the old things have gone, all things have become new.

[11 : 24] God is listening, even as you sit in your seat tonight, the whimper of prayer that rises from a broken heart, the prayers of the poor and the destitute, he will not despise them.

Would you stretch out your hand tonight in faith?

To the hand, the unseen hand that is stretched out to you. When you sit at your lunch table, there is the unseen guest sitting at the table with you.

when you sit in your home relaxing, there is the unseen guest. And tonight the unseen hand is stretched out to you.

And will you stretch your hand in faith and take hold of that hand? hand? Jesus is saying, now, now is the accepted time.

[12 : 37] Now is the day of salvation. when he takes hold of your hand, he will never let you go.

We might lose our hold on him, we might turn our back on him, and we at times we backslide, but he will never lose his hold on us, he will never turn his back on us, no matter how far we stray away, he will never fail us.

You can turn with me. To Matthew, Matthew chapter 28, verse 20 says, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

The next chapter 26, the apostle Paul stands before King Agrippa and his court, and we see the boldness of Paul.

He's not ashamed to own his Lord. It doesn't matter whether it be king's royalty, it doesn't matter who it is, he stands boldly before King Agrippa and his counsel, and he witnesses to them about his life before he is converted state.

[14 : 28] He tells them how he persecuted the people of God and how he put them in prison and how some of them were put to death.

He told them how on the way to Damascus that he met with Jesus, that a light shone from heaven such as he had never sinned before.

He told how Jesus met with him and how he was poor he was flat on his face on the ground and he said, Lord, who art thou?

And Jesus said to him, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. Paul goes on to testify how he received his sight again and how he saved the Lord Jesus Christ and how his whole life was changed forever.

And you know the Lord can change your own life as well. You might not have the wonderful earth shattering experience that Paul had, but everyone in here tonight has a different testimony, but they are all wonderful testimonies.

[16 : 16] And we see Agrippa's answer in verse 28, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

Almost. You know, my friend, almost is never good enough. Many a promising Christian started well in the Christian life only to fall back in the ways of the world.

Matthew chapter 13 and at verse 3 14 and he that is Jesus he spake many things unto them in parables saying behold a sower went forth to sow and when he sowed some seeds fell by the wayside and the fowls came and devoured them up some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth and forthwith they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth and when the sun was up they were scorched and because they had no root they withered away and some fell among thorns and the thorns sprung up and choked them and we pray God that none inside these walls tonight would be found in that situation that the word of God would have been choked even before it got root in our hearts but that we would all be found as we read in verse 8 but other fell into good ground and brought forth fruit some a hundredfold some sixtyfold and some thirtyfold we pray that the seeds that fell by the wayside would not be a picture of ourselves but that we will be found taking the word that is proclaimed week by week and acting it out in our own lives coming closer to God each day in Acts chapter 24

Paul again we find Paul again his reasoning with Felix he is talking to Felix about his spiritual well-being and Felix gets the picture alright and he knows what Paul is telling him is true but we see in verse 25 that Felix says to Paul go thy way for this time when I have a convenient season I will send for thee we are not told in the Bible that that convenient season ever materialized oh my friends the danger the danger in delay and I can if I can be personal

I can say that I was the same myself I knew the Lord was working in my heart but I let many a communion season pass by because I thought I wasn't good enough that I wasn't ready and I was right I wasn't good enough I'm still not good enough all the goodness is at the one at the right hand of God Jesus Christ someone once said one of the greatest labor saving inventions of today is tomorrow and that is what the devil would want you and me to do put it off till tomorrow a wee story was told about the devil and his angels they gathered together they were so concerned about the Christian church it was growing at such a great rate how can we stop those Christians they're getting so plentiful and one devil said we can tell them there's no such thing as a heaven or a hell oh that's alright but it's not good enough another devil said that they could deceive them some other way but another wee devil stood up and he said this is what we'll tell them we'll tell them that they've got plenty of time that there's no need to come today and I you know my friends

[22 : 03] I believe that that is the most potent and most lethal weapon in the devil's armory he deceives so many people by telling them you've got plenty of time you've got your whole life in front of you but God doesn't say that God says now is the appointed time now is the day of salvation Satan will have you put off the saving of your soul till tomorrow and when tomorrow comes it's next week and next week comes to next month and then next year spring turns to summer summer to autumn and before you know where you are you're into the winter of your years time's going by that's where the devil would have you he wants you to be in the pit with himself and with his angels in that place where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth where the fire is never quenched that is where the devil would have you be it's a hell to shun but you know my friends

Jesus will never deceive you if you believe in him and you trust in him with your whole heart his promise to you in John chapter 14 verse 2 he says in my father's house there are many mansions if I go and prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and I will receive you to myself so that where I am you also may be what a wonderful promise and Jesus never breaks his promise the hymn writer puts it so beautifully when he was saying turn your eyes upon

Jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of this earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace and you're probably thinking what a dark picture that man is painting tonight that is nothing but doom and gloom but the word of God is not all doom and gloom there are those who have been wonderfully saved and none none more so than the apostle Paul himself who was once such a thorn in the side of the Christian church but when he was converted he became a chosen vessel to go work with the gospel of Jesus

Christ to all peoples and to all nations there was a woman with the issue of blood twelve years she had been going to see doctors and physicians of her time and she had spent all she had and she was not any better in fact she was worse than when she had begun but then she came to hear about this Jesus and his love and his saving grace and she thought to herself if I could only touch the hem of his garment and one day as Jesus was passing by he was going to heal Jesus' daughter and the throngs were compassing him around and this woman crept up behind him and she stretched out her hand touched the hem of his garment and the vigor of her youth was once again restored to her she knew that she was healed she knew by one touch that the master had healed her but horror of horror

Jesus turns round and looks straight at her and he says who touched me and she came trembling trembling and left before him and she told them all you see my friends there is a confession to be made and when you come to Jesus we confess our sins we ask his forgiveness and his mercy and he is not slow in doing his bit a confession to be made what a wonderful testimony this poor woman had the crowd who had listened to her testify also had

[28 : 20] Jesus benediction upon her daughter he says be of good comfort thy faith has healed thee go in peace wouldn't it be wonderful for yourself tonight if you are still outside the fold of Jesus Christ wouldn't it be wonderful for yourself if you heard Jesus blessed voice saying to you son daughter your sins which are many have been forgiven you go in peace poor Brian Bartimaeus sitting by the wayside begging and he heard that Jesus was passing by and he called out he was not ashamed to call out and the more he cried out the more the disciples tried to quieten him down but

Bartimaeus kept on crying out Jesus thou son of David have mercy upon me Jesus came to what would you have me do oh lord that I would receive my sight and Bartimaeus had his wish he received his sight the lame man at the pool of Siloam he was healed he was able to walk again Zacchaeus that rogue tax collector was told in his house when he said to the Lord I repay anything that I have taken by deceit I paid back four fold and Jesus said salvation has come to this house today the thief on the cross with

Jesus he was saved at the 11th hour oh my friends don't believe it that lit don't leave it until the last minute now is the accepted time but this thief was saved we could always say with his last breath Jesus said to him today you will be with me in paradise but you know my friends the most wonderful thing of all is that we as Christians have been saved and I so often wonder it's a wonder to me that the Lord Jesus ever looked the way I was a poor hell deserving sinner who did nothing to deserve God's grace and mercy love and there are many in here to testify the same thing

Jesus is saying to which one of us tonight especially those who are still loved with the Father he is saying now is the accepted time now is the day of salvation make it your priority my friend to come to Jesus in spirit and in truth coming to him confessing your sins seeking his forgiveness seeking his mercy cleansing and he will be more than glad to welcome you into his growing family and he will call you his son his daughter a story was told about an old woman walking down the steps of a

Boston Paris station she caught her heels in a crack on the steps and she fell and two burly police officers lifted her up and put her in a station wagon and took her to the hospital she was checked over and as the doctor checked her he said to the nurse standing beside him she will not live and the poor old lady heard these words and she said I've taken a small package into the hospital with me and in the package there is a picture of my boy he ran away from home some time ago and

[33 : 59] I have sold all my property and I've been looking for him here and there I've been going into hospitals I've been going to police stations but I have not found him and I would like you to give if you find him I would like you to give him this picture I would like you to tell him that there are two in this world who have never given up on him and there was a long pause and the doctor bent over her and he said to the nurse nurse she's going and the nurse bent down and she said mother can you tell me the name of the tomb so

I can tell your son and she looked up so feebly and the glow of heaven was already lighting up her face and she weakly said tell tell my precious boy that God and his mother never gave up on him do you know my friend God has never given up on you if you are still haven't made your peace with him God has never and never will give up on you are you tonight praying for your children for your grandchildren for your brother for your sister your husband your wife your friend never give up never give up most importantly of all are you praying for yourself are you asking

God to have mercy upon you to cleanse you from your sin and to make you his own child that he could call you his son his daughter he will answer in his own good time today is the day of salvation today is the accepted time let's pray our gracious God we thank you for your word and we pray Lord that you would help each one of us tonight those of us who are already in the fall that we would be found drawing even closer to thyself and we pray

Lord for those who are still up with that they would come to know you and put their trust and faith in you ■ may may sail the oceans of time at tiro leisure but Lord when the time comes for us to dock and if we make shipwreck before we dock O gracious God help us all to have you as the pilot of our souls on board ship so that we can dock safely in the harbour and to be safe with you forever O may it be so Lord for each one of us inside these walls and for all those that we love and care for O bless us Lord and go before us into this week that is opening up before us keep us safe Lord and keep us true to yourself and help us as we sing your praises in conclusion shine on us now the light of thy countenance and grant to us thy gracious peace the peace of God which passes all human understanding and leaves no sorrow in its wake hear us in our prayer pardon our sins accept us freely in Jesus name

Amen Yes God He is a Sarah He is a, the moon He is writing and puts people up to Him and So as the moon now He is just with those approached us he and he reviews Let's go and make sails you pay for as he says Yes and you couldhe the dream you will he Vit look However