

11.9.22 pm

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Date: 11 September 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening. Just one notice and that's to remind you that there's a sheet out in the vestibule for those who are able to help with the Food for the Fellowship next weekend.

So if you're able to help with that you can indicate that there. And for those who are visiting with us, I can see a couple of visiting faces that are familiar, faces from days gone by.

And it's good to have you with us and we pray God's blessing. On the service this evening. We're going to begin by singing the first two stanzas of Psalm 1 in Gaelic.

That man hath perfect blessedness, he walketh not 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.

We'll sing these two verses of this psalm in Gaelic and then after that E&A; will lead us in prayer in Gaelic, please. I bel Walketh Off Thank you.

[1 : 3 5] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[4 : 0 5] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[8 : 0 5] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll sing again to God's praise. Amen. The Ancient of Days, the nation's rage, kingdoms rise and fall, there is still one king reigning over all.

[1 1 : 1 0] A great reminder of the constancy of the reign of God in changing times. So let's stand and sing to God's praise in just a moment.

The Ancient of Days, the nation's rage, kingdoms rise and fall, there is still one king reigning over all.

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

And above him and before him all of time in his hands, for his role he shall remain and ever stand.

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

[12 : 34] Though the dread of night overwhelms my soul, he is here with me, I am not alone.

All his love is sure, and he knows my name, for my God is the Ancient of Days.

None above him and before him and before him all of time in his hands, for his role he shall remain and ever stand.

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

Though I may not see what the future brings, I will watch and wait for the Savior King.

[13 : 46] Then by joy complete, standing face to face in the presence of the Ancient of Days.

And above him and before him and before him all of time in his hands, for his role he shall remain and ever stand.

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

For my God is the Ancient of Days. If you could turn now in your Bibles, please, to Genesis chapter 14.

Genesis chapter 14. I'll also just say that there's a few of us who are going to go straight from the service tonight to Graver to the church over there.

[15 : 09] They're having a testimony evening, and it is a man called Murdo MacLennan, who's Morag's uncle, who's giving us his testimony. So I know there's probably a couple of cars worth of people who are hoping to go over.

If you'd like to, maybe just go to the wee room next door, and we can figure out how we can get there. So that's also a message to you to say that I need to be finished by 7 o'clock.

So be encouraged. Genesis chapter 14. Abram rescues Lot. At this time, Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellessar, Cerdal-Emer king of Elam, and Tyro king of Goim went to war against Bira king of Sodom, Bersha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Adma, Shimebar king of Zeboim, and the king of Bila, that is Zoar.

All these latter kings joined forces in the valley of Sidim, the salt sea. For 12 years, they had been subject to Cerdal-Emer, but in the 13th year, they rebelled.

In the 14th year, Cerdal-Emer and the king's allied with him went out and defeated the Rephites in Ashtaroth, Karnaim, the Zuites in Ham, the Emities in Shave, Kiriathiam, and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran, near the desert.

[16 : 46] Then they turned back and went to En Mishphah, that is Kaddish, and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites, who were living in Hazazon-Tamar.

Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Adma, the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bila, that is Zoar, marched out and drew up against, drew up their battle lines in the valley of Sidim, against Cerdal-Emer, king of Elam, Tyro king of Goim, Amraphel king of Shinar, Ariok king of Ellessar, four kings against five.

Now the valley of Sidim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them, and the rest fled to the hills. The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food.

Then they went away. They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot, and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom. One who had escaped came, and reported this to Abram the Hebrew.

Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre, the Amorite, a brother of Eschol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men, born of his household, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

[18 : 07] During the night, Abram divided his men to attack them, and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. He recovered all the goods, and brought back his relative Lot, and his possessions, together with the woman, and the other people.

After Abram returning from defeat in Cerdal-Emer, and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom, came out to meet him, in the valley of Shaveh, that is the king's valley. Then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine.

He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, Blessed be Abram, by God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. The king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the people, and keep the goods for yourself. But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have raised my hand to the Lord God Most High, creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath, that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread, or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, I made Abram rich.

I will accept nothing, but what my men have eaten, and the share that belongs to the men who went with me, to Anar, Eshol, and Mamre. Let them have their share.

[19 : 31] Amen. And may God bless that being of his word to us. We're going to sing again, now to God's praise, Mission Praise 379, the words on the screen, Jesus shall reign.

Jesus, Jesus shall reign, where'er the sun, Thus his successive journeys run, His kingdom slogs from shore to shore, Till one shall rise, and set no more.

To him shall endless weary aid, And Christmas long to curl his head, His name my sweet refuge shall rise, With every morning sacrifice, He will not dwell, Of every tongue, Dwell on his love, With sweetest song, And in the voices shall proclaim, The very blessings of God.

The very blessings of God is given, Blessings of God, Where'er he reigns, The Christian is to lose his chains, The weary fight, The weary fight, The eternal rest, And all the sons of what are rest, Let every future rise, And bring the highest honor to our King, In your church be sent, With souls again, On earth we meet,

The love come in. Let's pray for a moment as we come back to God's word.

[22 : 52] Our Heavenly Father, we thank you once more for this evening, for this your day. This gift that you've given us where we are instructed to stop work and to find rest in you.

And we thank you that the truth is that we can find rest in no other place but you. We thank you that Jesus promises that all who come to him will find rest.

And we thank you that we have that call this evening. A call that we so often go back to as we hear Jesus say, Come unto me, all who are weary, all who are burdened, all who feel the weight of sin, all who feel the weight of the struggles of this world.

And I, says Jesus, will give you rest. So we pray, Lord, that we would know the experience of that rest in these moments and in our lives. We thank you, Lord, that although there is much turbulence in this world and in our nation and in our individual lives, we thank you that you are the God who is constant.

And we thank you that we can sing the truth about who you are in these hymns. Though the nations rage and kingdoms rise and fall. We thank you that there is still one God who reigns over all.

[24 : 17] And we thank you that we can call you our Father. And when we can call you our Father, we know that we have no reason to fret and to stress and to be anxious.

Because the one who loves us and the one who cares for us is in sovereign control of all things. So help us, we pray, to trust you. Help us, we pray, to take all the things that bother us and at times make us feel waves of anxiety.

Help us to bring them all to you, knowing that you do care for us. And we pray for those who are in need of a special touch this evening. We pray for those who are grieving.

We think of those in the community here who have lost loved ones in past weeks. And we bring them to you in prayer. We pray for Anisean MacDonald as well, who's ministered with us on occasions in the past, having lost a son suddenly and at a young age.

We pray that he would know your comfort, that himself and Millie, as they come to terms with us and the wider family, would know the peace of God. That they would know the comfort of God.

[25 : 30] That they would know that you are with them. We bring them to you and we ask that you would give them strength for the days ahead. We pray for those who are dealing with difficult medical situations.

For those who have had challenging prognosis over past days and are trying to work out how to manage that over the course of time.

We think of Mackenzie and Dean and little baby Nancy. And as they try to manage the condition that she has.

And as they likely feel the weight of that, the anxiety of that, we pray that they would know the peace of God once more that passes all understanding.

We know that you are a God who is able to do more than we can ask or think. And so we pray for little baby Nancy. We ask, Lord, that if it's your will that you would take this challenge away, this condition away, that you would give her health, that you would give her strength.

[26 : 35] But we know, Lord, that in this world, sometimes there are things that we have to wrestle with for many years. And we pray that as we do so, and with Mackenzie and Ian and Nancy, Lord, as they go forward into the future, we pray that you would give them strength, that you would give them grace sufficient for each day.

Help them, help us to trust you. We pray for the communion weekend as well, as we look forward to it. We pray for the Reverend Dolan as he takes the Gaelic service and Ian McCritchie.

And as they prepare, Lord, and as they prepare to come and open your word with us, we pray that you would guide them and lead them. Lay a word upon their hearts and open our hearts that we would hear, that we would receive all that you have to say to us.

We pray for some whose hearts may be awakened and who are hearing the call of Jesus to repent and to believe and to profess faith in Christ.

And we ask, Lord, that you would strive with them over these days. We pray, Lord, that those who are yours would come forward and say that they are yours.

[27 : 54] Lord, that they, that each of us who belong to Jesus would not be ashamed to say that Jesus is our Lord and our Saviour. And so for those who are hearing that call, that command of Jesus, do this in remembrance of me.

Give them the courage, we pray, to do this for the first time. And for others, perhaps whose hearts are not yet awakened, who don't yet see the need of Jesus and who don't yet feel the weight of sin.

We pray that you would be working in these hearts as you worked in the hearts of all who believe. Lord, that you would open eyes, that you would unblock ears, that you would strive in the power of the Holy Spirit.

So we pray for this weekend. And we ask, Lord, that you would be at work. And we pray that the enemy of our souls would be bound, that he would not be able to cause damage and distraction over these days.

So we commit the weekend to you. We commit ourselves to you. And we ask, Lord, that you would open your word to us now. We pray for Stuart as well, as he preaches in Scalpy tonight.

[29 : 03] We pray for Gordon as he speaks in Carloway. And wherever your word is opened, and wherever your people who are called by you are preaching, we ask that you would add your blessing, Lord, that you would speak.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. If you could have the passage that we read open in front of you, that would be helpful. Genesis 14.

There was a man called J.B. Phillips, who I've mentioned a few times over the years.

He's written a paraphrase of the New Testament, which can be helpful to look at when we're trying to get a grasp of some of the texts. And he also wrote a little book. I think it was in the 70s.

And the title of the book really encapsulated the message of the book. And the title of the book was, Your God is Too Small. Your God is Too Small.

[30 : 04] He highlighted and he addressed a problem that we often struggle with. And it's the problem of perspective. You could probably add to that and say, our problems are too big.

The challenges that we see in this world are too big. And sometimes as we look in the mirror and we see ourselves, we are too big. And our God is too small.

And it's a problem that, if we're honest, we would have to confess that we do struggle with. And even when we think about the way that we handle things, when difficult things happen in our lives, very often the first thing we try to do is fix them.

And fix them ourselves. And if that doesn't work, and we hit a wall as we try to manage the problems that come into our lives, if we can't fix them ourselves, then we start to look around us for the help of other people.

And if they can't help us, what do we do? When all else fails, what do we do? Well, we come to God and we pray.

[31 : 22] And it's all in the wrong order. Now, why do we do that? We do that because our God is too small. The God that we sometimes see in our mind's eye is too small.

And yet, as Genesis chapter 14 here begins, the lesson that we are being taught, the corrective lesson that we are being taught, is that our God is not small.

And if we think that, we have to be rebuked. We have to be corrected. Our God is not small. He is not a local God with limited reach and limited influence.

He is the God who, as we sing, His kingdom stretches from shore to shore. I'm trying to remember the name of the man who said it, but I'm reminded of the quote of the theologian who pointed out that there isn't an inch in this world that God does not reign over.

His kingdom stretches from shore to shore. Remember Eric Liddell? As he left the shores of Scotland where he ran for God's glory and made for China to preach the gospel, that was the hymn.

[32 : 57] We can see him in the scene in the film as he heads away in the train and he's got his head out the window. He's leading the people in that hymn, singing about the truth that the God that he is serving, his kingdom stretches from shore to shore.

And that's part of the lesson that Abram is learning in Genesis 14. God is not small. He is the God of the universe.

And there's three points in the time that we have tonight. The first point is God sees. The God that we worship, the God that Abram was worshipping, he's the God who sees.

And the second thing we'll see is that he's the God who saves. God saves. And the last thing we see in the chapter is that he's the God who sanctifies, he works within us.

So the first thing is that God sees. And if you scan from verses 1 to verse 12 of chapter 14, you will have already noticed that there's a whole load of names that we don't recognize and there's a whole lot of places listed that we don't know.

[34 : 18] and it's a bit like reading a dense broadsheet newspaper giving an in-depth article of the politics of faraway lands that we've barely heard of.

You know, we struggle to get through the detail of such an article and in this passage here in the first 12 verses we have a very dense report of what was going on in that place at that time.

There's international politics that's been addressed. There's leadership battles. There's coalitions. There's conflicts. There's turmoil in that place. And as we read through it and as I struggle to get my tongue around all the words in the section, we might ask the question, why do we need to know this?

Why have we got to kind of labor through all these names and places? What's the point of this? Why does God the Holy Spirit inspire Moses to include all this detail?

What is it that we have to learn through this? I think there's two things that we can note here. The first thing is that God sees all the powerful rulers of this world and what they're doing.

[35 : 42] and the second thing under this heading is that God sees his people, the individuals. So the first thing is God sees the powerful rulers of this world and let your eyes scan over verses 1 down to verse 11 and I'm not going to attempt to read it all again.

But in that section we have a historical record of a war between the kings of various cities.

and if you read the commentaries the commentators will tell us that the historians have done their research and the archaeologists have excavated these areas and there's a whole load of evidence that's apart from the Bible that verifies that everything that's in this little section is historically true.

So for the person who struggles to have confidence in the Bible there's just a little side note here. Everything that's written in these first 11 verses has been verified by non-biblical and historical sources.

The archaeologists have gone in there they have said everything that's here we can see it. So we have that record that historical record of what was going on and the big picture is that there was a battle between two military alliances one alliance look at verses 8 and 9 has five kings and the other alliance has four kings and they go head to head and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were part of the five king alliance but it's clear here that they were defeated you'd expect them to win because they have the advantage numerically but they're defeated so there's this battle there's this clash and we're told here that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and they're going to feature later as the text goes on they were defeated and all these kings who are listed they don't know God they have no awareness of God they have no particular interest in

[38 : 13] God they're not thinking about God as they go forth in these self-exalting campaigns but the point I think that we're to get in this section is that God knows them and God sees them and every detail of this conflict is known by God and he says to Moses write it down record it and I suppose it's a reminder of what we say though the nations rage and kingdoms rise and fall there is still one God who is ruling over all not just the people who are interested in him not just the people who have a reverence for God but the people who have no interest the people who have no awareness the people who are absolutely consumed with self

God sees them there's not a soul in this place or outside this building or on this island or in this nation or in any nation that God does not know God sees he saw what was going on back then and he still sees what is going on today everything everywhere every conflict every battle God sees you know we're always reading about wars we're always seeing reports on the television about wars and there are war crimes that may never come to a court in this world there are atrocities and persecutions that may never be recorded and kept in some office in a government building they may even be covered up to try and protect those who are the aggressors but the point is that God has everything recorded and where there is no repentance where evil men continue on an evil course then when they appear before God ultimately they'll have to answer for everything that God saw that they did to all these names

God knows them all these places God identifies them all the conflict God sees you know when we read about Putin or Kim Jong-un they may seem to us to be people who are held to account by no one in this world but a day is coming where they will stand before the king of kings and they and all of us will have to answer for the way that we've lived our lives we need to be ready for that day we need to be ready to meet with the God who sees everything so God he sees the powerful rulers of the world he sees the political battles that are ongoing but the second thing to note here is that God sees his people the individuals because we go from verse 11 where there's all this dense record of names and people and places and then in verse 12 it's as if the camera goes from the huge picture to the very sharp focus on one man it says they also carried off

Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions since he was living in Sodom and the amazing thing here is that the God who sees all things the God who oversees the universe he also sees his own people individually he misses nothing of the details of the lives of his own people and we can assume that in this battle that there were many people who were carried off but one name is highlighted Abram's nephew Lot and so again our attention is drawn to Lot he teaches us many things and we can see at this point Lot is in trouble he's been back sliding and we see over the course of these chapters the slide into

Sodom in Genesis 13 and verse 10 we're told that Lot as he's making this decision about where he'll go he looks towards Sodom there's a sense of that lustful look towards that rich place and all the things that he can have there and then we're told two verses later in Genesis 13 and verse 12 he pitched his tents near Sodom Sodom that's where we left them last but now as we pick back up in Genesis 14 as we see Lot in verse 12 he's not looking towards Sodom he's not living near Sodom he's right in the middle of it he was living in Sodom and so Lot is caught up in the conflict in Sodom he's captured he's carried off he's in trouble and we have a picture here of spiritual backsliding we have a picture here of how we can slide into the world and how we can so very quickly slide away from the

[44 : 52] Lord Warren Weerspe the commentator says saints Christians are rarely captured by the world suddenly they enter into the place of danger by degrees and we see that with Lot he's he's looking where he shouldn't be and he's pitching his tent close to the place of danger and then he's right in the heart of that place of danger and he's in the middle of all kinds of trouble and yet the encouraging thing here is that that God sees this man has fallen but as Jesus said there's not a sparrow that falls and there's certainly not a child of God that falls that God does not see so

God sees that's the first point he sees the big picture all the political rulers the the the somebody's in this world and he sees the individuals his own individual people the second thing is that God saves look at verse 13 one who had escaped came and reported this to Abraham the Hebrew so we have a an escapee here he was in captivity but he manages to get out and he he goes to Abraham and he reports to Abraham that his nephew Lot is in danger and difficulty and I think that that warrants us just hitting the pause button for a minute because you know we have a lesson here you know we see one who who was in danger and who is now saved who has an awareness and a burden for those who are still in danger and are not saved so this person who has been saved but is aware of those who are still in the place of danger he doesn't say nothing about that he cares enough to say something about that so he goes to

Abraham and he tells him that his nephew Lot is in that dangerous place and he needs to be saved and I think there's a challenge there for you and I especially when we think about the back slider you know we may be aware of people who used to be in the place of worship morning and evening who would never miss going to a prayer meeting who would be first in the line for a fellowship and who were so full of zeal for the things of God but over time they seemed to have drifted they seemed to be fading and falling back now what do you do in that situation well the easy thing to do especially in our culture is to do nothing and to say well you know really this is none of my business I don't want to cause any offence I don't want to be intrusive we say nothing but the loving thing is to say something and not to everybody else but to them in order to seek to bring them back and perhaps before we say anything to them we have to say a lot to the

God who cares for them and then we go Warren Wiersbe again says a worldly Christian is truly fortunate if he has a dedicated loved one praying for him we have that kind of picture here one who is safe seeing the plight of one who is still in danger and reaching out to them through Abraham pardon you verse 13 now Abraham was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite a brother of Eshal and Anar all of whom were allied with Abraham so we see here in verse 13 Abraham he is still in the right place remember he wandered for a while but he is still in the right place he is in the place where God led him and because he is in the right place because he is doing the right thing God is able to use him in the saving of

Lot so when Abraham verse 14 heard that his relative had been taken captive he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan during the night Abraham divided his men to attack them and he routed them pursuing them as far as Hoboth north of Damascus he recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions together with the woman and the other people so what happens here well Abraham having heard now about Lot's danger immediately he goes to him he doesn't waste a moment he goes to him he seeks out Lot and Abraham he saves Lot together with the woman and the other people that are in the place of danger here and again we have a picture here of spiritual realities because we need to see that not only did this happen in history but this is a spirituality that is happening in the present tense there are people all around us who are in danger and we can become numb to that there are people all around us who in a sense are living in Sodom they're captured by sin and they don't even know it and there are some who have wandered from the

[51 : 20] God that they once loved and they are now in a place of danger and there are others who have never heard about this God who so loved them that he sent his son into the world to save them that's the reality of the world that we are in that's the reality of the work that we have been called to our calling our work is to be like Abram who immediately reached out to his nephew and many others seeking to take them out of the place of danger and release them from the chains now in this instance God saved Lot through Abram but in our case God saves us through the ancestor through the line of

Abraham that leads all the way to Jesus Jesus is the one who came from heaven and earth from heaven to earth to seek and to save sinners like us Jesus Jesus is the one as we thought about this morning who went to the cross to break the chains of sin to release us from sin and to take us into that place of eternal freedom it's Jesus who saves and Jesus is also the one who commissions us to be involved in this work of salvation it's not just my calling it's everyone's calling to tell people about the danger of sin and to tell people about the salvation that is offered to people in and through

Jesus God sees and God saves and God sanctifies and we'll spend a little time on Wednesday evening thinking about the final point so let's sing as we conclude from Mission Praise 1164 come O fount of every blessing took my heart to sing your praise streams of mercy never ceasing Lord for songs of loudest praise songs of

God and the treasure sung on the in the love songs that tell about the pleasure of my heart's unchanging life song I remember God's mercy by his help I safely come and I know he will not fail me but will surely bring me home Jesus told me with a stranger one to follow with our Lord and to rescue me from danger shed for me his precious blood through

God's grace I am his better daily I this thought renewed let the grace store like a better I my wandering heart to you go to wander Lord I feel it go to me that God I am take my heart to take and see it see it from you God 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 now and forever more Amen