

# 11.6.23 am

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Date: 11 June 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]      Good morning, a warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see all of you. Good to see quite a few visitors or people here for the first time today. And you're especially welcome if you're here for the first time or if you're visiting.
- There's tea and there's coffee at the end of the service. And if you're able to stay behind, it would be great to see as many as possible, stay behind and get the chance to enjoy fellowship together.
- The notices have been on the screen before the service. I won't go through them all. I'll just highlight a couple of these notices. First to say that the evening service is at six. Slightly different tonight for the evening service as we've done the past two or three summers, June into July.
- There are various people who share testimony. And this evening, Kenny Kuna, as we know him, is going to come forward and share testimony as part of the service.
- Kenny came and met with the elders on Wednesday night and he's going to profess his faith in the evening service and he's going to share a word of testimony.
- [ 1 : 1 0 ]      So I'll have a mini message. I promise you it will be a mini message. And Kuna will have a maxi testimony. So we'll look forward to that. So be encouraged to come out this evening.
- I don't need to tell you that a lot of people decide not to come out in the evening, but it would be good to see people out in the evening. And this is a great opportunity to maybe ask people who wouldn't normally come to church to come.
- Stuart was telling me yesterday, a sermon will typically get about 120 or 130 people watching it. A testimony will get almost 2,000. Don't think we can handle 2,000. And I think he was trying to encourage me by telling me that.
- But it would be good to see as many as possible. And we're thankful to the Lord for his work that we'll hear of in Kuna's life.
- The Kirk session will meet tomorrow at half past six. We can make note of that, please. In the course of the week, there are various things which happen week by week. And you've had the chance to go through that. I won't go through them all.
- [ 2 : 1 5 ]      So, Wednesday evening, prayer meeting will be in person and on Zoom. But we're going to have Asia Link, the man Bill Ferguson from Asia Link, the presbytery, have organised for him to go around various places.
- So, we'll have Park and South Harris with us on Wednesday evening. So, be encouraged to come along to the prayer meeting. Next weekend, we have the outreach weekend.
- So, we have services or events Friday through to Sunday. Friday night, there will be a men's curry night with a testimony that will be shared by Neil Lachey.
- That will start at half past eight. The reason it's about late is there's a football match on before that. So, the hope is that we'll go from the football over here and we'll have some curry and hear of God's work in Neil's life.

So, if you're able to help with that, there will be a sheet at the door. And if you're able to donate a curry or come along and help, then please let me know and it would be good to get that organised.

[ 3 : 28 ] Next Saturday, we'll have the barbecue, a congregational, well, a community barbecue, really. Congregation, but we can ask people from out with the congregation to come along to that barbecue.

And at the end of us having the food, we'll have a short time of fellowship. And Neil will share an evangelistic message on that evening. So, please do come to that and ask people to come along.

Sunday morning, we'll have a morning service, which will have communion preparation within it as we approach the Lord's table. Sunday evening, we'll have the service with the sacrament being celebrated in the service.

And then a fellowship with Neil's testimony at the end of that. So, please note these services. It's great to see Kuna coming forward.

There is space for more. So, if there are those who are trusting the Lord, but have never professed faith and have never come to the Lord's table, then please be encouraged to come and speak to myself or one of the elders any time between now and then.

[ 4 : 38 ] Or also, the opportunity will be there to come forward over the course of that weekend. A couple more things. A thank you from the McSween family.

£778 was raised for pancreatic cancer research at Rachel's funeral. So, thank you for those who donated. There's an event on the 23rd of June at half past seven.

It marks 50 years in ministry for the Reverend Rory Morrison, who was so powerfully used here in the congregation before I was here, and over the course of time as well.

And it also marks 40 years of ministry, of James MacDonald's ministry. So, that's 23rd of June. You can make a note of that and be encouraged to go. So, Blytheswood have an appeal for clothes, bedding, shoes, new bandages for their work, with a lorry due to collect items in Stornaby, 24th of June.

And there's more details for that. And foyer or speak to Amman, who's somewhere here. And, where is Amman? There you go. Speak to Amman.

[ 5 : 47 ] He can give you some guidance on that. Summer Holiday Club. The kids spoke last weekend and said they really want it. If it's going to happen, we need some volunteers. So, please meet briefly in the Sunday schoolroom after the service.

And if we have enough volunteers, we'll make plans to go ahead with the Holiday Club this year. And for the barbecue next Saturday, Team 3 are on duty.

There's a sign-up sheet at the door for food donations. And I think these are all the intimations. And I think they've just about got time to have a service now. So, let's still our hearts and let's worship God.

And before we do that, let's pray. Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you. We thank you for this day.

We thank you that this is your day. We thank you that we are found this morning in your house. And you have promised that you will meet with us, that you will be with us. As we come in the name of Jesus.

[ 6 : 52 ] And we pray now that you would still our hearts. That you would declutter our minds. We're conscious that even in terms of the life of the church, there can be so much going on.

That we can sometimes take our eyes off the Lord Jesus. And so we pray that you would help us to lift our eyes from ground level.



[ 13 : 23 ] If that was the case, we would never have any assurance. We thank you that the work of salvation is completed, it's finished. The Savior died and rose again, triumphant over the grave. He pleads our cause at God's right hand, omnipotent to save. So save us, we pray. Give us the joy of your salvation and help us, Lord, to live as those who know that we are saved. Help us to live with that determination to reach out to others who are lost, to tell them that there is a Savior who will receive them as they come to him. So we pray, Lord, for this weekend, next weekend, as we're thinking of this and planning it. We pray for the men's curry night. We pray for the barbecue on Saturday. We pray for the services on your day. And we ask, Lord, that you would give us opportunity, that you would give us courage to reach out to people who are still strangers to Jesus, that we may give them every encouragement with our words and through our lives, that they would come and hear the good news of the gospel. And Lord, that in the power of the Holy Spirit, you would touch their hearts, open eyes, unblock ears, seek and save souls, we pray. Pray for tonight. We thank you for Kenny and for your work in his life. We thank you for his willingness to stand before the congregation and profess that his faith is in Jesus. We thank you for the testimony that he is preparing to share. And we ask, Lord, that you would bless him, protect him, Lord, as the enemy will seek to take a swipe at him.

And enable him, Lord, we pray, to speak in such a way that the Lord Jesus has lifted up and many would be drawn to him. So we ask, Lord, that you would be at work in the congregation as we seek to reach out. Be at work, Lord, we pray through us in all the normal conversations as we think about our workplace, as we think about our homes, as we think about the different places that we move and the relationships we have with people. If we are yours, Lord, we pray that you would help us to redeem the time and make the most of every opportunity that we have to speak of Jesus.

We're conscious that there are many around the world who have no such opportunity, many who are pressed down, who are persecuted, whose lives would be taken if they were to point others to Jesus. Strengthen them, we pray. Uphold them, we pray, and help us in this place where we have freedom to make the most of that freedom for the sake of Jesus. We ask, Lord, that you would be with those who may be wrestling at this time, hearing the call of the Lord Jesus to come forward and sit at the table for the first time, perhaps. Some who may have trusted you in recent months, some who may have trusted you many years ago, and who still hesitate to come forward and profess faith. We thank you that the call of Jesus is a clear one. It's a command, do this in remembrance of me. Take the bread, take the wine, and remember my death, said Jesus, until I come. So for any who are yours but who are still in the shadows, we ask that you would give them the courage to step forward and say with the hymn writer, I'm not ashamed to own my Lord or to defend his cause. We pray, Lord, for those who are struggling this morning, for those who are grieving. We are conscious week by week of those who are grieving. We pray for Donald and for Katrina. We pray on for Mary and Harris House.

And we ask, Lord, that you would be near to them, that you would comfort them and others as well as we think of them, those who are grieving. We pray for the Reverend Innesian, who has spoken with us and preached over communion weekends in the past, having lost his wife, Millie. We ask, Lord, that as he prepares for the funeral in Stornoway this Thursday, that you would comfort him and Shona and Donald and that they would know your strength and your protection over these coming days.

Okay, for those who are ill, some in hospital, some at home, we ask that your hand of healing would be upon them where that's your will and that your grace, which sustains us through every trial, would be given day by day to those who are struggling at this time. Pray for those who battle with addictions. And again, Lord, we ask that they would look to Jesus, the one who is able to break these chains and give life that is abundant and full of purpose. So hear our prayers. We ask that you guide us as we seek to worship you. We pray for the children. We thank you as we see them and as we hear them. We ask that in their early years, they would remember their creator. They would trust Jesus as their savior. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? How are you all today? All good, yeah? Looking forward to summer holidays? They're not far away now. How many weeks? Two or three weeks, is it? Good stuff. I've got a picture for you today and it's on the screen. Tell me, what's that? What is that? It's a bin. What kind of a bin is it?

[ 19 : 45 ] It's a bin. It's a bin bin, yeah. It's a purple bin. It's a purple bin. A bin with a purple sticker on it. And no hot ashes. I don't know if these stickers are still on it, but it says non-recyclable waste. So it's a bin. And why do you think I'm showing you a picture of a bin? I'll tell you why.

If you were a bit older, you would know exactly why. And the murmuring over this direction is telling me that people know why. It used to be very straightforward in life.

It used to be that every second Wednesday, the bin would be emptied. You'd put it down at the bottom of the drive. One non-recyclable, one recyclable. It would go down empty. It would go down full and it would come back up the drive empty. That was every second Wednesday.

You just had to remember every second Wednesday. Now, when did the bins get emptied? I have no idea. I think you need a degree in statistics to figure out when the bins get emptied. I was told one bin gets emptied every nine weeks. I've got no hope of that bin ever being emptied.

And I don't know. I put that bin down there on Wednesday. It sat until Saturday. And on Saturday, I just gave in and thought, I better take it back up the road. It's still full. Poor Janangus is getting called out every hour of the day and night to empty bins because I think we're all going to have a bonfire in our garden before too long. We don't know when bins get emptied. So that's why I'm showing you a bin. Our bin is full.

[ 21 : 23 ] And hopefully sometime it will get emptied. If anybody knows when, please come and tell me. But at the second, it's confusing. So I got an amen from the back there.

First one here. At the moment, it's a bit confusing. So what we're seeing is there's rubbish building up in our bins. There's rubbish building up in our houses. We're not sure how to get the rubbish taken away. Now, that's our houses and that's our bins. What about our hearts?

Do our hearts ever fill up with rubbish? Yeah, our hearts have got... My heart is a heart that has sin in it. And the Bible tells us that's the way our hearts have been since Adam and Eve listened to the devil instead of to the Lord. And ever since then, we've all got sin. And sometimes we're conscious of the things we do. Sometimes there's things that we've gone and said it and we wish we hadn't said it.

It might have been the word that we used. It might have been just the way that we spoke to somebody. And we think to ourselves, that wasn't the right thing to do. That was a sin. And it's like a weight almost that's in our heart. Sometimes we do things and we know they were the wrong things to do.

And we're conscious that our hearts have got rubbish. They've got sin in them. When I was eight, I stole something. Don't look so shocked, Emily.

[ 23 : 10 ] Well, I'll tell you this story. It was in Lewis, yeah. That's why he said you stole something. Anyway, when I was eight, I can still remember so clearly, I stole something. And the second I did it, I was walking away with it. I knew it was wrong. And for two years, it was like rubbish that was in my heart.

It was like a sin. And it was there. And it felt heavy. And I didn't know what to do. I'm not telling you what I stole. I'll tell you another day. It was an action man boiler suit.

But for two years, I knew that there was sin, there was rubbish in my heart. And I didn't do anything about it. Now, how do we get the rubbish out of our hearts?

We pray. We ask Jesus, don't we? We pray. We pray.

We pray. And when can we pray? Do you want to? Anytime. We don't have to wait for a special day.

[ 24 : 48 ] We don't have to wait in a line. We don't ever speak to God like we do in a phone call and find the line is engaged. Whenever we call him, whenever we ask God's forgiveness, any time of the day or night, even right now, sitting on the floor, we pray, God hears, and he promises he'll take our sin away.

But more than that, he promises that he'll fill up our lives. You know, we get our bins emptied. Then they go back up the hill and there's nothing in them.

It's not like the bin men give to us a whole lot of money and goodies and all this good stuff. But when we ask Jesus to take our sin away, he takes all the rubbish away. But he gives us amazing things.

What does he give us? He gives us peace. He gives us joy. He gives us life. He gives us millions of promises.

We can go through the Bible. It's like a treasure chest and we don't have to look at it for five minutes to find amazing promises. They're like duos. And God gives us all these things.

[ 26 : 04 ] He doesn't just take our sin away. But he gives us himself. And he gives us his love. And he gives us his peace. And he gives us all his promises.

And all we have to do is wherever we are, bow our heads, speak from our hearts and pray. So let's do that even just now, will we?

Lord God, we thank you that you love us. Even though we're sinners, even though we know that our hearts fill up with all kinds of rubbish, we thank you that you have promised that there's no rubbish that's too dirty.

There's nothing that's too too bad that would cause you to not listen to our prayers. And so we pray, Lord Jesus, even now, that as we think about the sin in our hearts, that we pray that you would take it away.

We thank you, Jesus, that you came to the cross and you paid the price. You took our sin from us to yourself. And when we pray and ask of forgiveness, you promise that you will cleanse our hearts and your blood and you will give to us amazing things as we try to follow you.

[ 27 : 25 ] We thank you that when we're trusting in Jesus, when we're saved, we have peace that starts in this world and goes on forever. We thank you that we have life all the way through this world and even life that carries us through death and to heaven.

We thank you that we have joy that the world cannot take away. We thank you, Lord, that we have you as the friend that sticks closer than a brother, the one who always is with us.

So help us, we pray, to believe and to call on your name each day and help us, whether we're very young or whether we're older, to keep coming to you for cleansing and keep coming to you so that we would walk close with you.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now the hymn on the screen. Our sins, they are many is the chorus, but his mercy is more.

So we'll stand to sing to God's praise in just a moment. Amen. God could remember no wrongs we have done On this, you don't know when he counts not their son Thrown into a sea with our cause or more sure Our sins, they are many His mercy is more Praise the Lord His mercy is more Stronger than darkness You have remorn Our sins, they are many His mercy is more

[ 29 : 24 ] Praise the Lord His mercy good Is more His mercy Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more.

Praise the Lord, His mercy is more. Stronger the darkness, new every morning.

Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more. What riches of kindness He relished on us.

His blood was the payment, His life was the cost. We stood in a debt we could never afford.

Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

[ 30 : 46 ] Stronger the darkness, new every morning. Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more.

Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. His mercy is more. Stronger the darkness, new every morning.

Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more. Okay boys and girls, should you head to Sunday school please?

[illegible]

1 Peter chapter 3.

[ 32:26 ] And we will read from verse 18 to the end of the chapter.

Amen. May God bless that reading of his word and give us understanding as we come to it. We're going to sing again now to God's praise.

We sing from Psalm 16. The last two stanzas of Psalm 16. Psalm which is fulfilled as we see Jesus resurrected.

Psalm 16. I'll read verses 10 and 11 in English. We sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing as we sing in Gaelic. Because my soul engraved to dwell shall not be left by thee.

Nor will thou guilt thine holy one corruption to see. Thou wilt me show the path of life of joys that is full store. Before thy face at thy right hand are pleasures evermore.





And Martin Luther is one of the best known names in Christian history. He was an amazing theologian, one of the best Bible scholars of all time.

And this is what he said about the verses that we're about to study. He said, I quote, a wonderful text is this and a more obscure passage perhaps than any other in the New Testament.

So that I do not know for certainty what Peter means. So that's Martin Luther. As Martin Luther studied this section, he was confused.

So if Luther was confused, you can safely assume that I was more confused than Luther over the past few days. And there are some things in this section that are very hard to understand.

[ 43 : 06 ] And there are some things in this letter and in this section that are clear. And that's always the way with the things of God. There are many things about God's character and even his work that we just can't understand.

We might take hold of them by faith. We might accept them. But we can't really understand them. We even think about the fact that God is eternal.

He has no beginning. And he will have no end. Now we believe that. We confess that as part of the faith that we adhere to.

But it's beyond our understanding. We cannot compute that God has no beginning and he will have no end. We read in the Bible very clearly that God is Trinity.

He's triune. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three persons, but one God. We just can't process that. Or think about the creation.

[ 44 : 28 ] This world was brought into being from the word of God. God spoke and out of nothing came everything.

We just don't have the capacity in our finite minds to be able to grasp that. So we have to take hold of it by faith.

It's all we can do. There are many who won't. There are many who will, in a state of arrogance, say, because I can't believe it, because I can't understand it, it can't be true, but that would be to make us higher than God.

And that's just arrogance. It's rebellion at the base level. So, some things about God, some of the verses that we read in the Bible, we just can't understand.

But when it comes to salvation, when it comes to how we can be saved from sin, when it comes to the serious eternal issue of how we can escape hell and be assured of a place in heaven, the Bible is very clear.

[ 45 : 43 ] It's so clear that the children can understand it without any great difficulty. They tell us week by week that we have salvation. They understand. that we are sinners.

Jesus is the Savior. We just have to believe. We just have to ask for salvation. And he gives it to us if we ask in faith. So, as we come to this passage today, I want to begin with what is relatively clear.

And that's in verse 18. And the first heading is the work of Jesus. Peter in verse 18, he speaks about the work of Jesus.

And Peter, as the Holy Spirit inspires him, writes, for Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body, but made alive by the Spirit.

Now, there's a lot packed into that verse. We're used to listening to politicians who seem to use many, many words, but they seem to say very little.

[ 46 : 56 ] But Peter's the opposite of that. He uses just a few words in this verse, but he packs the gospel into it. So, we ask Peter the question, well, what is the gospel?

Then we get the answer in this verse, the gospel is the good news about Jesus. So, what's the good news, Peter? Well, he begins, the good news is that Christ died for our sins.

So, why was that good news for Peter? Well, because Peter was a sinner. And Peter knew that he was a sinner. And as we go through the gospels, as we have done, we can see various examples where it's very clear that Peter is a sinner.

So, Peter is saying the good news is that Jesus died for me, a sinner. And some may ask, well, that might be good news for Peter, but how is it good news for me?

And so, Peter goes on. And he says, Christ died for sins once for all. He extends this so that it's not just for him.

[ 48 : 08 ] This is for everyone. Jesus didn't just die for Peter. He died for us, says Peter. If we have any sense of clarity in our own hearts, we know that we're sinners.

I'd be surprised if there's anyone in this room who thinks that they are sinless. Of course, there are degrees of sin. I think all of us in this room would accept that our hearts are not perfect.

We are not wholly pure. We are sinners. And Peter is saying, because you're a sinner, Christ died for you.

he died once for all. Christ died for all who will come to him.

Not just for some. He doesn't push any away. John 6 tells us that. But Jesus says to us, Matthew chapter 11, come to me, come to me, all who are weary, all who are burdened by the weight of sin.

[ 49 : 20 ] I will give you rest. And Peter's telling us that Christ died once for all. He died for all who will come, and he died for all our sin. So I can think about a sin when I was eight years old, as I swiped an action man boiler suit.

And I can think of a million sins between then and now. And Peter is telling me the good news is that Christ died once for all these sins, past, present, and the future once.

This is the work of Jesus. Christ died for sins. once for all. He died for us.

We're going to sing at the end of the service these words that take us to the cross where Jesus is doing this work. And in the hymn it says, bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place.

Condemned he stood. And that's what Peter is preaching here. He's telling us Jesus took our place. The righteous, he says, for the unrighteous.

[ 50 : 46 ] Jesus was the righteous one. Consistently, always. Peter, me, all of us, we are the unrighteous ones.

And on the cross, Jesus took our place. He was our substitute. Sometimes we see that in life.

We see one person taking the place of another. I watched the game down at the park there yesterday. And we saw various substitutes come on.

One person comes off, another one takes his place. Didn't make much difference to the game yesterday, but we understand the idea of a substitute.

I read an article just a few days ago about a rock star who was fined a thousand pounds for speeding in a car registered to his name. The thing is, he can't drive, so he wasn't sitting in the driver's seat, but he paid the fine.

[ 51 : 50 ] He took the place of the person who was driving. And on the cross, that's what Jesus did. He paid the penalty for our sin. The penalty was death. He took our place.

Peter says he was put to death in the body. And Peter's telling us that Jesus' death was not in vain. He says it was to bring you to God. Have you come to God yet?

For those who are still at a distance from God, it's not because of, it's not because of God that you're at a distance.

It's because of you. Peter is making clear that the work of Jesus is such that he has done everything to bring you to God.

You and I, we simply have to believe and come. So Jesus, he died for sins.

[ 53 : 08 ] He died once for all. The righteous for the unrighteous were in verse 18. He was put to death in the body to pay the wages of our sin.

To bring us to God. So that the barrier of sin has now been removed. But death was not the end for Jesus.

Peter goes on to say in verse 18, he was made alive by the Spirit. And the good news is that all who believe in Jesus are also made alive by the Spirit.

There are some in the room even this morning who are half alive. Yes, we've got physical breath in our lungs. Yes, we know what we're doing tomorrow morning.

We've got tasks to do. But all the while there's something deep within saying, what's the point? Why am I here? What's the purpose behind this?

[ 54 : 16 ] See, without Christ, without salvation, salvation, we're only half alive. And Peter is saying that because Jesus was made alive by the Spirit, that life that we see in him is given to us when we believe.

It's a life that goes all the way through this world. It's a life that takes us through death into heaven. And so Peter says to us, this is the good news.

The work of salvation is done. Jesus died and rose so that sinners can be saved, so that the unrighteous can be made righteous, so that those who were lost and far from God can be brought to God and it's all because of the finished work of Jesus.

So that's the first point. The second point is we have here a warning from Jesus.

This takes us through from 18 and to 19 and 20. So we have the gospel concentrated into verse 18, the work of Jesus. Jesus. Then we have secondly here what I think is a warning from Jesus.

[ 55 : 51 ] Peter says, he, Jesus, was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water. And if you're still awake, some are, some aren't, these are the verses that bamboozled Luther.

And these are the verses that still bamboozle some of the commentators today and there's no agreed majority view on what this actually means. And I could spend the next 20 minutes giving you 16 different theories on what people have said about this but I don't think that would be the best use of our time.

So what I want to do is just put over what I think is the most persuasive theory. And if you want to speak to me about that at the end, come and speak to me and I'll give you the alternatives.

And what I think this is, is a warning from Jesus. Through Peter, it's a warning from Jesus. And the warning comes from the story of Noah.

[ 57 : 12 ] And we have the story of Noah in Genesis 6 and 7. I'm not going to go there just now. But we know the story from Sunday school days and the story we see in Noah. And he's building an ark in the middle of a desert, which looked like madness.

Why was he doing it? Because God told him this is what he had to do. Why was he having to build this ark? Because God told him that the flood of God's judgment was coming. But God was making it possible through this ark for people to be saved.

So for a hundred years, Noah is involved in this building project. Noah is building this ark and with every hammer blow to the ark, it's a sermon that's going out.

The people in the community are seeing this man who's doing what seems to be a ridiculous thing. But when they speak to the man, he's saying, I'm doing this because God has told me to do this. There's judgment coming, but you can be saved.

So for a hundred years, God waited patiently as Noah built the ark and he preached salvation. Now, did the people respond?

[ 58 : 26 ] Well, the answer in almost exclusive terms is no, the people didn't respond. they just thought he was a madman. He preached this message and they dismissed him.

They laughed at Noah. They didn't repent. They didn't believe. And then when the rains fell and the waters rose, the tragedy was that only eight people were in the ark.

And everyone else was lost. God passed. So that's the story that Peter refers to in these verses.

And so how does verse 19 and 20 connect with the story of Noah? Let's ask the question first of all, verse 19, who on earth are the spirits in prison that Peter is talking about?

And I believe that the spirits in prison are the spirits of the people who would not go into the ark. They are the, as verse 20 puts it, the ones who disobeyed God long ago and who are now in the prison of a lost eternity.

[ 59 : 49 ] So when then did Jesus preach to them? Well, I think you can make an argument that Jesus preached to them through the spirit in the days of Noah.

The spirit of the pre-incarnate Christ was speaking through Noah. as he told the people, this is why I'm building the ark.

It's so that you can be saved. Yes, Noah was speaking, but Jesus was speaking through Noah, but the people didn't listen. The people were lost.

And now they are described, I think, by Peter as spirits who are in prison. of people who disobeyed God long ago.

So that's my understanding. I'm not 100% sure, I'm probably not even 70% sure, but that's the best I can do. And it's a warning for us through Peter from Jesus.

[ 61 : 11 ] And if we want to just simplify this to the point of personal application for us today, let's think back again to Noah and the ark.

The ark is a picture of Jesus. And he is still preaching to us through this letter that Peter penned.

And the truth of the message that Peter is putting over is that if we believe in Jesus, we will be safe. Just as those eight in the ark were safe, if we believe in Jesus, we will be free eternally.

But if we don't believe in him, our spirits when we die will go to that prison of a lost eternity.

So this is a warning from Jesus. We see the work of Jesus. We see what he's done to save us. That's the positive, but we also need the negative.

[ 62 : 21 ] There's a warning for those who just ignore it. We dismiss it. We just ridicule the message of the gospel.

And it's a necessary warning because we don't have to look far to see many, many people who are living their lives just like the people in Noah's day. They're getting on with business, they're getting on with relationships, they're getting on with everything else, but they're not giving any thought to what's beyond this world.

There are some people even in this room today. And Jesus is patiently reaching out to you. and he is calling you to be saved.

He is telling you, he's telling us about the work that he has done to make salvation possible. But up until now, there are some who in their disobedience just won't listen.

Too busy. he's got work to do. He's got life to go on with. I'd rather be on Instagram.

[ 63 : 45 ] So this is a warning from Jesus. For those back then, it's a warning from Jesus for us to repent and to believe whilst there is still time.

The work of Jesus, the warning that comes from Jesus. The third point is the water that points us to Jesus.

And we're going from one complicated thing to another, but I'm going to simplify it down to as simple a point as I can in the next two or three minutes. Peter says in verse 20 in it, that's the ark, only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water.

This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also. Not the removal of dirt from the body, but the pledge of a good conscience towards God. And what we know from the whole of scripture is that God is patient with us.

He knows that we are slow to understand, and so he speaks to us in pictures, and now God, through Peter, uses the picture of baptism, and again, it's the same message. He's showing us through pictures what it means to be saved.

[ 65 : 00 ] David Strain, one of the commentators, says, how does baptism save us? It saves us the same way the ark saved Noah.

You've got to believe that there is an ark of safety into which we may flee to be rescued from the flood of judgment that is coming. The ark is the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism, he says, is a picture, a proclamation to us of a way of escape in the cleansing blood of Christ.

So the water of baptism, again, it's pointing us to Jesus. It's pointing us to the salvation that there is in Jesus. And the irony is, and the tragedy is, that baptism is an issue that can cause great confusion and a whole lot of division.

There's thousands of books that have been written about when we should be baptized, should it be as children or should it be as adults, or how should we be baptized, should we be down in the loch or should we be fully immersed in a bath at the front or should we be sprinkling water from a font at the beginning of the service.

There's PhDs that have been written and all that stuff. And in all the debate, we often lose sight of the one that baptism points us to it, and it's Jesus. And Peter, in referring to baptism, is once more pointing us to Jesus.

[ 66 : 25 ] If you and I want to have a good conscience towards God, the thing that I lacked when I was eight years old with an action man boiler suit in my hand, if we want to have a good conscience towards God, if we want to have hearts that are cleansed from the stain of sin, if we are to be saved, we need Jesus.

That's the point. So if I can take these verses at the most simple and clear level, the water of baptism is pointing us to Jesus.

There's no magic in the water. There's no saving power in the sprinkling or the dipping or the splashing or whatever. these things are signs and symbols, just as the bread and the wine that we will take in our hands in a week's time, they are signs.

And they are signs that point us to Jesus. I was out, I was going to say jogging, I would think jogging is a bit of a stretch to describe what I do.

If you've seen me on the road, I was out plodding the other day. And I was out west Tarbird and as I was coming back towards here, there was a cyclist and he had got off his bike and he was sitting down with a nice packed lunch and he was enjoying the view of nothing.

[ 68 : 02 ] Sitting under a metal sign just before we got into Tarbird. And I felt like saying to him, why are you stopping under a sign?

You can't actually see anything apart from an embankment that's blocking the view of the loch. Why have you stopped there? It's a sign that's pointing you to the place where there's a bit of population, that there's nice places in Tarbird that you can enjoy your lunch in.

Don't stop at the signpost, it's pointing you forwards. And the sign of baptism, the water that Peter speaks of, points us to Jesus.

So we can agree on that. There might be confusion on some of the details, but that's the main point. The water points us to Jesus.

We sing the hymn often, my faith looks up to thee. Thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour Divine. So there's the work of Jesus, there's the warning from Jesus, there's the water that points us to Jesus, and finally, very briefly, there is the way of life that's offered through Jesus.

[ 69 : 19 ] And Peter goes on in verse 21 into 22, he talks about, it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven, and is at God's right hand with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him.

So Peter here, as he finishes this section, he's focused on the resurrection. He's seeing in his mind's eye, the resurrected Jesus.

And I don't think Peter ever lost that sense of wonder, that sense of awe, that Jesus was risen. I mean, think about Peter's life.

We can track his progress all the way through his spiritual life. We see Peter in the Gospels, and from the moment that Jesus called him, he loved Jesus. And he's close to Jesus, he's listening to Jesus, he's hanging on his words as he preaches and teaches.

And as Jesus performs the miracles, Peter is there and his heart is thrilled. Peter's wearing his heart on his sleeve as he follows Jesus. So when Jesus begins to speak about the cross and about suffering and about dying, Peter doesn't like what he hears.

[ 70 : 42 ] And Peter tries to dissuade Jesus from going to the cross, but Jesus would not be taken off course. That's why he came. Jesus came to die.

And on Good Friday, having denied Jesus, Peter at a distance watched Jesus die. And it broke his heart.

But early on Sunday morning, the news broke that Jesus, who was dead, had risen.

And within hours, what Peter heard with his ears, he saw with his eyes, he saw with his eyes that Christ was risen.

And he appeared to him. And he spoke with him. And the truth of the resurrection made all the difference to Peter. the truth of the resurrection meant that everything that Jesus had said to Peter was true.

[ 71 : 59 ] It meant that he really could save. It meant that he really could promise life. And not just life to Peter, but life to us all.

And so Peter finishes this section again by simply pointing us to Jesus. Jesus who died.

The righteous for the unrighteous. Jesus who rose. ascended into heaven.

Who sits, says Peter, at God's right hand. Who has all angels and authorities and powers in submission to him. And who offers us life.

Abundant life. Eternal life. Resurrection life. And how do we receive it? Simply by believing in him.

[ 73 : 12 ] Turning from sin. And asking him to be our savior. Let's pray.

Heavenly father, we thank you for your word again. And we pray that what is clear, the message of the gospel, the truth of salvation, we pray that you would press it in to our minds, that you would touch our hearts with it.

We pray that we would be a people who are looking in faith to Jesus. We pray that we would be trusting in the finished work of Jesus. We pray for any who are still lost, that they would take the warning from Jesus to repent and believe whilst there is time.

And we ask, Lord, that we would have that same sense of being thrilled by the resurrection of Jesus. We thank you that because of the resurrection, everything that Jesus said is true.

We thank you that the sacrifice that Jesus made in his body on the tree for us as he went to be our substitute, we thank you that the resurrection shouts across all of history that that sacrifice is accepted and that all who believe in him are saved.

[ 74 : 50 ] so may none of us, we pray, walk out of here like those lost spirits which have now no opportunity as they are locked into a lost eternity.

Whilst we have time, whilst we have ears to hear, give us, Lord, we pray, faith to understand and believe and be saved.

We pray that as we sing the final praise, we may be able to say that Jesus is our saviour and we worship him, we say hallelujah because of him and all that he has done for us.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to finish Mission Praise 458. Man of sorrows, what the name for the son of God who came ruined silliness to proclaim, hallelujah, what a saviour.

. . Amen. What a Savior.

[ 76 : 33 ] They in shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood, sealed my pardon with His blood.

Alleluia, what a Savior. Guilty, violent, helpless we, spotless Lamb of God was He.

Full atonement, giant feet, alleluia, what a Savior.

Lifted up was He to die, it is finished was His cry.

Now in heaven, exalted high, alleluia, what a Savior.

[ 77 : 54 ] When He comes, our glorious King, all His sons come to pray.

Then a new new song we'll sing. Alleluia, what a Savior.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore. Amen. Amen. Thank you.