

# 18th October 2020 pm

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Date: 18 October 2020

Preacher: Donnie Macleod

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good evening and welcome to our evening service for those that are watching online, for those that are listening on the telephone. It's good for us to be able to come together and to worship God. As intimated this morning, our service this evening is taken by Mr Donnie McLeod, Superintendent for the North Area of the Faith Mission and again we're grateful to Donnie and both himself and Lewis as they recorded services during their time here with us earlier in the year. So we pray that you will indeed be blessed as we come together and we're going to start our worship singing in Psalm 32. Psalm 32 from the beginning of the psalm down to the verse marked five. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgressions he hath done whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the
- Lord imputeth not to sin and in whose spirit there is no guile nor fraud is found therein. Down to I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses said I and of my sin thou freely didst forgive forgive the iniquity. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done all the transgression he hath done all the transgression he hath done whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin and the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin.
- And in whose spirit there is no guile and in whose spirit there is no guile nor fraud is found therein.
- When as I did refrain my speech and silent was my tongue my bones then waxed old because My bones then waxed old because I wrote it all day long. For upon me both day and night thine hand did heavy lie.
- So that my moisture turn it is so that my moisture turn it is So that my moisture turn it is in summer's drought thereby.
- [ 3 : 5 1 ]     I there upon have unto thee my sin acknowledged I there upon have unto thee my sin acknowledged And likewise my sin acknowledged And likewise mine iniquity And likewise mine iniquity I have not covered it I will confess unto the Lord My trespasses said I And of my sinNINGNING!
- NING!NING!NING!NINGNINGNING! that we can come before you once again this evening.
- That we can come into this time of worship and that we can acknowledge that you are indeed our Lord and our God. That you are high and lifted up.
- And as we come into this act of worship, we pray that we would indeed still our hearts before you. That we would acknowledge that we are sinners in need of a Saviour.
- As we have sung Heavenly Father this evening, that we would indeed each one of us know that blessedness that is available in coming before you and confessing our sins.
- [ 5 : 5 8 ]     So may you indeed bless this time of worship before us. That as Donnie comes and he breaks down your word, that Heavenly Father each one of us, as we listen, would be able to apply that word to our own lives.

Not thinking how relevant it may be for the person on our left or on our right. But Heavenly Father, that we would recognise that each time we come to your word, each time that we listen to it preached, that it is a message that is directly for ourselves.

So please, we pray, help us to be still before you. Help us in our time of worship to know that you are God.

That we can just draw aside from the things of the world and that we can focus on you. Oh, Heavenly Father, we know that there are so many at this time that have many worries and many cares.

When we see the virus of COVID so close to us, we pray, Heavenly Father, that you would indeed be close to each one of us and that we would draw close to you.

[ 7 : 10 ] That we would not be found turning aside to the things of the world that we so often trusted in in times past. For Heavenly Father, you are indeed our only trust.

Only in you can we find true peace. Only in you can we find true help. And we thank you that as we come and as we read your word this night, that, Heavenly Father, we know that your word teaches us, that you tell us to ask, to seek and to know, to come to you because your arms are wide open and that you will give us rest, that you will give us peace.

So help us, Heavenly Father, to draw aside from the things of the world, to draw close to you and indeed, Heavenly Father, to call upon you that the worries, that the cares that we have will indeed, Heavenly Father, be at your feet and that you will carry them for us.

We continue, Heavenly Father, this night and this time of worship thanking you for the work that you have called Donnie to in the faith mission. We pray that you would indeed continue to bless him.

We thank you for the time of blessing that we had while himself and Lewis came and shared with us during the outreach mission through the open ears. And we pray, Heavenly Father, that the many that came out at the different meetings, that seeds would have indeed been sown into hearts, that many would have been challenged to recognize, Heavenly Father, that without you we are nothing and that we are indeed sinners in need of a saviour.

[ 9 : 00 ] So continue to bless them in their work. We pray again for our friend and brother Gordon Thompson who has so often shared fellowship with us. We thank you for him and we pray that your hand would be stayed upon him and the work that you have called him to do there with the faith mission.

As an evangelist going out and sharing your message. And Heavenly Father, that he would know your blessing upon him, that he may indeed be a blessing to others.

So guide us this night. Help us to focus, Heavenly Father, on your word and what you are saying to us. And forgive us, we pray thee, for our many sins, for our many shortcomings.

In Jesus' precious name. Amen. Well, it's always a privilege to come to North Harris Free Church and I appreciate the opportunity to share in your worship this evening.

It's very different to what it would normally be. The church would normally be full of people but it's still a privilege to be able to relay the truth of God's word in this way for such a time as this.

[ 10 : 09 ] So we're going to read from God's word this evening from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 reading from verse 11 to the end of the chapter.

2 Corinthians chapter 5 at verse 11. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God and I hope it is known also to your conscience.

We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart.

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God. If we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore, all have died.

And he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but live for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[ 11 : 27 ] From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and give us the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God for our sake.

He made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[ 12 : 42 ] Amen. And we pray that God would bless the reading of his own word to us. Let's pray before we turn and look at this passage together.

Lord, we thank you for your precious word. We thank you that we have your word. You have given it to us. It's a living word. And we pray that as we study it together we might know the help and the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

We're always reminded that without you we can do nothing. We need your help to speak. We need your help to listen. And we ask that you would open our hearts that we would receive the word of God.

Receive it with joy into our hearts. And that we might those who are your own people watching this tonight they might be encouraged and strengthened and challenged even to walk closely with you as your servants as your witnesses.

And so we ask oh Lord that you would graciously come to us and draw us close to you. We thank you for the promise in your word that when we draw near to God that God will draw near to us.

[ 14 : 05 ] We ask that we would know this to be so true and we pray for your blessing upon all that stand here week by week and we ask for the word as it goes forth not just here but throughout these islands and throughout the highlands and islands and throughout our land.

We pray for a day of God's power to sweep through our land once again and that you would get all the praise and all the glory as we seek your forgiveness we give thanks in Jesus name Amen.

I want to look this evening with God's help particularly perhaps at this passage thinking about the subject of reconciliation and the fact that we're told here in verse 20 therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us.

I want to think a little bit first of all about this message that we as Christ's ambassadors have the privilege and the opportunity and the responsibility of sharing with others.

If we're unfortunate enough to fall out with someone it's never a very good experience and that might have happened to you it mightn't have been any fault of your own or so you might think that so you would expect the person that had fallen out with you to come back to you at some stage and apologize and try and put the situation right to initiate a reconciliation and there is of course a knownness on us as God's people as believers in Christ to make the first move to do that whether we feel that we're in the right or in the wrong it would be scriptural to do that and of course God has shown this wonderful example to us in his word we're told in Matthew chapter 5 so if you are offering your gift at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you leave your gift there before the altar and go first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift

[ 16 : 37 ] I say that just to bring us to the place of our relationship with God or our lack of relationship with God we're told that naturally we know that there's nothing about us that would cause us to set our gaze upon God there's nothing about us naturally as we're born in sin the Bible tells us we're shaped in iniquity in that state there's nothing that would cause us naturally to look to God in that state we've turned our backs on God we're far from him we're in a hopeless sinful lost and broken condition but it's in that condition that God looked upon us in love it's in that condition that he sent his son into the world his own son

Jesus to die on the cross so that that hopeless lost and broken condition could be restored there could be reconciliation and we're told in this passage that all this is from God we didn't initiate it we didn't make the first move yes it's all from God even while we walked away from God even while we rebelled in our state of brokenness and lostness and to the extent of sin the Bible tells us that we're deceitful above all things and desperately wicked we can even hardly grasp what that means but it's in that condition that God looked in love towards us and he sent his son we're told in 1

John chapter 4 we love because he first loved us and you know that's just a wonderful truth and that truth should be such an encouragement to all who believe and it's good for us to just to think about what we once were and to think about what God has done for us and it's all of God in our hopeless condition God came and God broke into that and we sensed his drawing we sensed his love and we were enabled to come to him the one that has his arms outstretched to welcome us to receive us when we come and it's all of him it's never pleasant when people fall out

I have fallen out with people I'm sure a lot of the time it's been my fault too and it's never pleasant it's never pleasant to go on like that isn't it always just such a relief when we have to put pride away to the side and we just have to go whether it's totally our fault or whether there's fault on both sides it doesn't matter when we just have to go and we say look I'm sorry this is it's not right between us we need to put it right you know that's what God is waiting for that's why he sent his own son Jesus so that we could come to him because outside of Christ our relationship is not right it's broken and it needs to be restored we have to come and say I'm sorry

I'm sorry for all of my sin please forgive me and be my savior see he made the first move what a wonderful message we have to proclaim in the last verse of that passage we read this is what we read for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God I want to look secondly at the messenger we're told in verse 20 therefore we are ambassadors for Christ God making his appeal through us we are ambassadors for Christ there will be a particular calling on ministers of the gospel as ambassadors but there is no doubt that if we claim tonight to be a child of

[ 21 : 54 ] God we are an ambassador for God in verse 15 it reads and he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him but for him we live for him and I want us to think about that just for a few moments the fact that we are ambassadors for Christ what kind of ambassadors are we I looked up the dictionary for the meaning of the word ambassador and the description that was given was very challenging it said permanent representative so we're never off duty we're never off duty when we're in private when we're on our own we're never off duty when we're in the home when we're amongst!

family or friends sometimes in our own homes it can be the most difficult times sometimes to be a permanent representative for Christ but that's what he says we are Christ's ambassadors in our workplace also in the world because the word looks on we're noticed and we should be noticed because we should be different when we belong to Jesus Jesus lives in us we belong to him and he belongs to us surely our prayer and our longing and our desire would be that it's Jesus that would shine through that people would see him and not so much of us I wonder if a video is made

I'm standing in front of a camera just now and a video is being made of this sermon so everything I say will be recorded it will be there for whoever wants to listen to it but that camera can't tell my thoughts that camera doesn't see me when I am away from it in my own home if there was a video made about my life based on my life as an ambassador for Christ wonder would I be keen for people to see it definitely not no I would not be but you see that's the challenge that's the challenge of God's word we are Christ's ambassadors permanent representatives it doesn't matter where we are we're representing the one who came into this world and who died on the cross and who saved us from our sins and of course the qualifications of an ambassador is a receiving of the message we spoke about earlier on therefore if anyone is in

Christ it's believing in Christ trusting in Christ and knowing the reality of Jesus Christ coming into our lives and we're told that in that we are new creations that the old has passed away behold the new has come all this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and give us the ministry of reconciliation reconciliation he reconciled us to himself he did it like in Psalm 40 we read that he inclined his ear he lifted me out of that mud and mire that fearful place and he set my feet on the rock and he put a new song in my heart see it's all of God that change must take place that exchange and it's so wonderful and to think that

Jesus Christ in his love died on the cross to take my sin to take your sin but not just that he'll take all the sin from our lives to wash it and cleanse it that it will be remembered no more but we are given his righteousness we are made right in God's sight through faith through trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and this is significant it's life changing it's life transforming and when we think about that surely for anyone listening tonight that you have never experienced this life transforming a power of the Lord Jesus Christ think about someone that's willing to come and forgive us take away the wrong and give us what's right and pure and perfect to give us himself surely that's a transaction that you don't want to walk away from you don't want to turn your back on and it's all from

[ 27 : 36 ] God we need to receive it it's a gift and it happens at the cross we are his ambassadors and he's making his appeal through us I just want to think about as ambassadors our lives our lives when we come to Jesus Christ our lives are changed we're new creations we're no longer the same we belong to him as Christ's ambassadors so we need to live the life and of course it's all from God and it's not just all from God when that transaction takes place that's the first step of coming to him to know forgiveness for our sins at the cross where we're forgiven that's the first step but as we go on it's still all from God because we need to live lives for him and we cannot do that of ourselves but the wonderful thing is we're not just saved and abandoned but we have a teacher who is with us who leads us and helps us and will never leave us and the psalmist said in

Psalm 101 about our lives that need to be blameless lives he says I will ponder the way that is blameless oh when will you come to me he says I will walk with integrity of heart within my house he was thinking about walking with integrity of heart within his own house perhaps away from the public view but oh we can't let the guard down and it's so easy and it happens I'm sure it's happened to you it's certainly happened to me though that God would see it's all from God we need God's help to go on and if things are not right in our own personal lives in our own experience if we're not living that life we will never be completely blameless we won't be perfect on this side of eternity but that must always be the goal we must never settle for anything that's second best we should know that it's in

Christ that we walk it's in Christ that we live and we look to him for strength and if our personal lives are not right our consciences are not clear then our work as Christ's ambassadors will not be as effective as it should be and as it could be as further on in that same psalm in psalm 101 at verse 6 he says they that may dwell with I will look with favour on the faithful in the land they that may dwell with me and then he says this he who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me he who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me in other words that there would be nothing about us that somebody could point the finger and say well look at him or look at her the psalmist was saying it's the one that walks the blameless life this is the one that will minister to me and that's very challenging and this is the challenge that came from this passage to my own heart thinking thinking about myself as an ambassador for

Christ you think about yourself if you know him you are an ambassador for Christ never of duty seeking to follow him and just finally and very briefly we looked a little bit about the message of reconciliation how us were far away from God in sin and hopeless and without any natural sense of ever looking towards God God stepped in in love and if we love him today it's because he first loved us that message of reconciliation it's there and the invitation is to come to him and then we thought a little bit about the messenger the ambassador living that life that he has called us to live walking worthy of the calling to which he has called us and through serving him and what did the apostle write then in

God's word he says we implore you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God it wasn't just the fact that this message had become real in his own life in the life of the apostles the disciples it wasn't just that it was real to them but because it was real to them then their heart was poured out towards others that the world around them that people would come to know this wonderful saviour that had become so near and so precious to them they weren't just going about sharing the message they were certainly doing that but with a heart with a longing with a very sincere and determined way that others would come to know this wonderful saviour that in sin and brokenness and despair broke into that situation and brought about reconciliation you know and that's so true we're living in a world today and there's a lot of brokenness there's a lot of people today and their lives are in a mess maybe someone's watching this and you're sitting thinking well that's just me you feel

[ 34 : 21 ] I'm if you had to describe yourself you might describe yourself as being very very far away from God just in a mess and not knowing where to turn well there's only one to turn to you and this is the one who has already made the first move this is the one who has already done everything necessary for you and your relationship with him to be restored to be reconciled to him and indeed that is the calling that is the that was the work of the the disciples in the Bible here in this passage he said we implore you we beg you we make that even emotional appeal in the right sense of the word emotional because they knew that for those people who were broken and their relationship was a broken relationship needed needed to be restored and only through that we can know peace only through our relationship being restored to

God can we know forgiveness can we know worth a life that is worth the living as the hymn says because he lives I can face tomorrow why would you face tomorrow broken still in sin still lost and without hope when you can come to Jesus put your trust in him so that relationship could be restored you can be reconciled to God the one who gave his son for you who died for you so that you could be forgiven you could live life with a purpose with a meaning that you can go through every day every hour every moment not alone but with Jesus following him the perfect teacher the perfect guide the one who understands don't stay outside of

Christ but come trust in him follow him know him you know you can then see and know the reality of that wonderful verse for those who are in Christ they're new creatures that the old has gone the new has come and it's all from him and he's always willing waiting for you to come if you have never ever come to him let's pray lord we thank you thank you for your word thank you for this passage thank you for the gospel the message that you came to restore that broken relationship that we all once had to make it right and to make it new to make it a living relationship with

Christ thank you that you came for us while we were helpless and hopeless and lost in sin and despair you came and you will lift us you will save us and set us free and we thank you help us for all who are your own people that we would live the life that we would be your ambassadors that we might have the privilege of sincerely and honestly with a spring in our steps trusting fully in the Lord reach out to others and tell this glorious message that we might see many coming and putting their trust in Jesus so thank you for this message thank you for your love we pray that you would bless these thoughts to us in

Jesus precious name Amen God sent his son they called him Jesus he came to love heal and forgive he lived and died to buy my pardon an empty grave is there to prove my saviour lives because he lives I can face tomorrow because he lives all fear is gone because I know I know he holds the future and life is worth living just because he lives how sweet to hold a newborn baby and feel the pride and joy he gives but greater still the calm assurance this child can face uncertain days because he lives because he lives

[ 40 : 32 ] I can face tomorrow because he lives all fear is gone because I know I know he holds the future and life is worth living just because he lives and then one day I'll cross the river I'll fight life's final war with pain and then as death gives way to victory I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know he lives because he lives I can face tomorrow because he lives all fear is gone because

I know I know he holds the future and life is worth the living just because he lives now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy to God our Saviour who alone is wise be glory and majesty dominion and power both now and ever more Amen