

21.4.24 am

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Date: 21 April 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning, a warm welcome to the service this morning and a special welcome to those who are visiting with us. It's good to have some visiting with us this morning as well and if you're able to stay at the end, there's tea and there's coffee served. Peggy's on the teas and coffee so there's likely good cakes as well.
- So please stay behind, it's good to enjoy fellowship together if we're able. So evening service is tonight at 6pm and I'll lead the first part of that service briefly and then hand over to the organisation Solus.
- So Solus is an organisation, you've got details there on the screen, they seek to try and engage and reach out with the gospel message, especially in contexts where there may be questions about scepticism or cynicism and there was events on Friday and Saturday in Lewis.
- The YF, some of the YF went over on Friday night and they heard a talk and were able to ask questions. So one of the speakers is coming tonight, Steve is his name and we've not met him before but be encouraged to come along.
- He'll share God's word with us, he'll speak a little bit about the ministry of Solus. There'll probably be the chance to have questions and answers as well and he'll speak to the YF afterwards.
- [1 : 2 7] So that's this evening, be encouraged to come out to the service this evening if you're able. In the course of the week as usual, you've got the normal things, ladies fellowship tomorrow evening, little fishes Tuesday morning, road to recovery Tuesday evening.
- The prayer meeting on Wednesday, in person and on Zoom. This next weekend, I'll be over in South U.S.
- South U.S. is now vacant so we all have to give a Sunday from time to time to give supplies. So I'm over in South U.S. next Sunday. The service in the morning will be taken by Scott, Scott McLeod, and he'll be coming over with Fiona and the family.
- So make him feel at home. You always do. People, when they come to visit here, always remark on the welcome. So it'll be good to get the chance to hear Scott preach and meet with him and meet the family as well in advance of their coming later in the year.
- So that's in the morning service. Evening service will be taken by Hamish Taylor. It's a Gaelic service. And there's a fellowship in the evening where we'll hear from Stuart Weir from CARE Scotland.
- [2 : 3 8] Anthony will lead that fellowship. Anthony's very involved in that kind of work that CARE are engaged with. And so be encouraged to note these services and come along also.
- I think the final thing, other than you can note the church cleaners there, is to say a word of thanks to those who helped on Friday at Jam and Connect.
- They finished last weekend and they'll finish until September, October time, as we have done over the last few years. So we had an end of term barbecue. A lot of people helped.

Some helped to cook and to tidy. Some helped to eat burgers. Whatever you did, thank you for being there and thank you for helping. Pray for the children as they go through the summer season as well.

There's a lot going on over the summer. And so although we won't see them here on a Friday afternoon, continue to pray for them and to remember them at this time.

[3 : 42] And Rooted, I think, just carries on as... Rooted is finished as well, but YF will continue through the course of the year. So you can be thankful for that.

These, I think, are all the intimations. So let's begin this time of worship. Let's sing to God's praise. We'll sing from Mission Praise 275. And the words are on the screen.

The well-known hymn, I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest. Lay down the weary water.

One lay down, my head upon my breast. I give to Jesus as I was, weary and warm and strong.

I found Him in my resting place. And He has made me glad.

[5 : 12] I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely am.

The living water. Thirsty one stood down and drink and live.

I came to Jesus and I drank of God thy giving stream. My thirst was quenched.

My thirst was quenched, my soul revived. And now I live in hell. I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.

Look unto me, thy board shall rise. And all thy days be bright.

[6 : 19] I look to Jesus and I've found Been in my star, my sun.

And in that light of life I'll walk Till travelling days are done.

Let's bow our heads and let's unite our hearts as we come to God in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day. And we thank you for the, we thank you for the gospel message that we have heard, that we've heard sang in the first hymn that we've had this morning.

We thank you that as we, as we unite this morning, we unite in the name of Jesus. And we thank you that in the gospel we hear the Lord Jesus saying, come to me.

[7 : 22] All who are weary, all who are burdened, all who are sad, all who are tired. And I will give you rest. We thank you that the message that we focus on in Christianity is not a message that says that we have to try hard to keep a set of rules.

We thank you that we haven't been left with a burden that weighs heavily upon us where we are restricted by and bound by a law. And given the threat that if we don't do well enough, that we will not be accepted.

We know, Lord, that we can never abide by your laws. We see the commandments in scripture and they speak to us of your perfection, of your nature. But we know, Lord, that as we look in the mirror of your law, we fall and we fail.

We fall short in so many ways. We sin. And Lord, we confess that sin as you instruct us to. But we thank you that as we confess our sin, as we think about the things we've said and the things that we've done, as we think about the times that we've been silent when we should have spoken, as we think about the times that we should have acted when we remained at a distance, we know that we have sinned.

And Lord, we pray that you would forgive us, that you would cleanse us in the blood of Jesus and that we would know that we are forgiven because of all that he has done.

[8 : 54] Your word teaches us that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. But we thank you that as we come together this morning, we gather around the cross of Calvary and we see the blood that was shed.

And we thank you that because Jesus died, because his blood was shed, as we come to him, as we ask for cleansing, that blood is powerful and is able to wash our hearts clean.

We are able to be purified from all unrighteousness. So cleanse us, Lord, we pray. And more than that, we pray that you would clothe us in the righteousness of Jesus.

We thank you that at the cross there is that great exchange that the scholars talk of, where our sin is transferred to Jesus and his righteousness, his perfection is given to us.

We thank you for the wonder of the doctrine of grace, that amazing grace, that when we are deserving of punishment, the punishment is taken away from us.

[9 : 57] Jesus takes it. And we thank you that his righteousness and the blessing, the forgiveness, the eternal life that is within him is given to us the moment that we believe.

So we thank you for the gospel. We thank you for the free offer of the gospel. We thank you that whoever believes in Jesus will not perish, but have everlasting life.

We thank you that whoever comes to Jesus will never be turned away, will never be rejected, but will be received. And we thank you that when we come to Jesus, we are given grace, we are given help, we are given strength, we are given peace, we are given rest for our souls.

A rest which we begin to taste in this world and a rest which carries us through death into life that's everlasting, eternal peace, eternal rest.

We thank you for the comfort that gives. always we are conscious, Lord, of those who are grieving. And this week again, Lord, we can think in our minds of those whose hearts are sore.

[11 : 04] And we pray for them, Lord. We ask that you would meet with them, that you would comfort them. We are always conscious of those who are weary, who are heavy laden, those who are battling with illness, with sickness, with the passing years and the infirmity that that brings.

We ask, Lord, that you would minister to them. And Lord, you know our hearts, you know how distracted we can be. You know the anxiety that sometimes we wrestle with in the dark hours.

We thank you that we can take everything, all that bothers us, all that troubles us, to Jesus. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

So Lord, we carry all that troubles us to you. And we carry to you also those that we are burdened for. We pray for our families. We pray for those who are going through hard times.

We pray for those who are far from you. Those who have no interest in the things of God. We ask, Lord, that you would touch their hearts. And Lord, as we carry them to you in prayer, we pray that you would minister to them.

[12 : 18] And that you would meet them at the point of their need. As we pray that you would meet us at the point of our need. We pray for our nation. The nation that you have placed us within.

And we acknowledge, Lord, that we are far from you. There is much in the way of darkness in this place. We thank you for the light of the gospel. We thank you for organizations like SOLAS who seek to reach out and engage with people who may have many questions.

We thank you for the skills, for the gifts that you give the people in that organization. And we ask, Lord, that as they serve you and as they come to speak with us tonight, that you would bless them, that you would use them, that you would help them, Lord, as they seek to be salt and light in this place.

Pray for those that you have set over us, as you have instructed us to. We ask that they would be humbled and that they and we would look to Jesus, the one who is able to give to us wisdom.

And we pray for a world that continues to groan. We read in Romans of a world that groans under the weight of sin. And as we see starvation, as we see hostility, as we see war, as we see so much that seems to be unnecessary suffering, we ask, Lord, that you would be at work in your world.

[13 : 39] And we thank you that we have the promise that Jesus not only lived in this world, that righteous life, he not only died on the cross to take away our sin, but he rose from the dead and promised that after ascending to heaven, he would return and make good all that sin has made bad.

So help us, we pray, to be ready for the day when Jesus returns or calls us home. And we thank you that we are made ready as we look in faith to him as we believe and receive the grace that is offered to us in the gospel.

Hear our prayers, take away our sin, we ask, in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? how are you all today good good anything doing today no no news no news well when I was coming in this morning I had something with me and I brought it with me so I could show you but it was causing some concern to those who were seeing me at the door I brought these DJ said he's brought snacks today how long are we going to be in for do you know what these are you ever seen them before never seen them before does anybody know what they are I didn't think wait until I turn to the old people for a minute have you seen these before I remember these when I was about a year age these things were in the shops all the time and I didn't think they still existed until I went to look for them and I was surprised to see that they still make them you could still buy them so do you know what they are any ideas they're crisps they're crisps yeah and I'm going to open one pack tell me you want to try one well you were first up with your hand then you can have one you can have one as well and who else one more two more you can all have one go on just as well it's not cool the timer you don't have to have one you can have one so try one tell me about them what are they like really what are they like they're like nothing that's a perfect answer hadn't thought about that one but that is a perfect answer they're like nothing what do you mean they're like nothing what do you they taste like nothing well I think that's all I need to say really about that these crisps they are crisps they're potatoes they're being fried so are they crispy they are quite crispy yeah they're quite crispy and they're just like are they just do they kind of feel like any other normal crisps they do yeah and they crunch like any other normal crisps but flavour not a bit of flavour they are just like nothing now then in this packet well you couldn't maybe see it at first there's this wee thing here do you know what that is it's salt it's salt yeah surprising you that but that's what it is it's salt so if I take this and I open it what do I do with it

I put it in my pocket no what do I do with it just shake it in the bag so I'll shake it like that so I'll pour it in then close the bag yeah so I'll pour it in and then I'll kind of do that with the bag give it a shake around upside down round and round who wants to try a crisp now?

what do I do with it what do I do with it what do I do with it what do I do with it what do I do with it so what are they like now Ben not Ben Salty does that make them does that make it better they taste better now now they taste good now they taste like crisps that you actually want to eat so I know what the doctors might say but they taste lovely now they're now that they're sprinkled and they have the salt in them and it's all around when you have a crisp it's got flavour doesn't it it tastes good listen to what Jesus said

[19 : 46] Jesus when he was speaking to the disciples and we're going to be coming to this with the older ones today you know what he said our lives are to be like he said our lives are to be salty our lives are to be like salt he actually said to his disciples in Matthew chapter 5 you are the salt you are the salt of the earth what do you think that means it's quite hard to understand what do you what do you think that means Fraser yes we're supposed to make the earth better the salt made these crisps better didn't it definitely definitely and if we are Christians Jesus makes the world a lot better doesn't he he makes everything better and he wants us to make a difference and to make things better what else what do you think else what else does that mean he gives us flavour so just like these crisps are given flavour

Jesus wants us to have a flavour about our lives what kind of flavour should our lives have do you think what should our lives taste like salty not bitter I thought about that that's a good point not bitter but salty and what kind of flavour really really simply what kind of flavour do you think our life should have the flavour of Jesus what was Jesus like burning flavour flavour yeah the flavour of Jesus and Jesus what was he like he was was he grumpy no he was kind wasn't he and was he patient and he was good and he was forgiving and did he try and help people he always tried to help people and so in our lives

Jesus wants us to be like him and in our lives as well Jesus wants us to tell people about him so not only in the things that you say but in the way that you live you and I are to have the flavour of Jesus about us so when you go to school tomorrow when you go to nursery or school tomorrow think about think about the places you're going a bit like a bag of crisps with no flavour and Jesus wants you to go in and he wants you to bring his flavour into the places that we go so let's pray and let's ask him to help us with that Lord we thank you for today and we thank you for your word we thank you for the pictures Jesus that you use to help us to understand the way that you want us to be you've said to us that we are we are the salt of the earth we're to be the salt of the earth and we pray that we would have the flavour of Jesus about us we pray that you would help us to be kind we pray that you would help us to be good help us to be gentle help us to care for each other and help us when we get the chance to tell people about Jesus we pray that our lives would taste a bit different to other lives and that people would wonder what makes us different and that you would give us the courage to be able to tell people about Jesus we thank you that every blessing that comes to us comes from Jesus and we ask that you would use us to point people

Lord Jesus to yourself whether in school whether at work whether at home wherever we are help us to remember that we are the salt of the earth if we are trusting in Jesus and help all of us to be trusting in you Lord Jesus and we ask this in your name and for your sake Amen we'll sing now and we'll sing the hymn on the screen Mission Praise 1164 Come O Fount of Every Blessing Choose my heart to sing your praise Scavins of mercy never ceasing Call for songs of loudest praise songs of God's abundant treasure songs by angels tongues of awe songs that tell the bloodless pleasure of my Lord's unchanging love

I remember God's great mercy by his help I've safely come and I know he will not fail me but will surely bring me home Jesus taught me when a stranger wandering far away wandering far away from God and to rescue me from danger shed for me his precious blood through God's grace I am his desert daily I this love renew let that grace Lord like a feather find my wandering heart to you prone to wonder

[26 : 05] Lord I feel it prone to live it Lord I love take my heart oh take and seal it seal it from your course above okay boys and girls if you head to Sunday school let's pray for them as they go it's nice to see Ben having been promoted from the side to the front and centre so pray for them as they go to Sunday school and let's turn our Bibles now to Matthew chapter 5 Matthew chapter 5 we'll focus on verses 13 to 16 but we'll read the whole of the chapter we'll read from verse 1 of the chapter just to remind us of the context where we've been

Matthew chapter 5 and at verse 1 this is God's word seeing the crowds Jesus went up on the mountain and when he sat down his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth and taught them saying blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs And persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

[28 : 53] In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Amen.

And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing now from Psalm 34. Psalm 34, singing from verse 8 to verse 10.

It's just two stanzas. I'll read the verses in English. We'll sing in Gaelic. And we remain seated to sing in Gaelic. Taste and see that God is good. Who trusts in him is blessed.

Fear God, his saints. None that in fear shall be with want oppressed. The lion's young may hungry be, and they may lack their food. But they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

These two verses we sing to God's praise in Gaelic. For the Lord shall not lack any good. For the Lord shall not lack any good.

[29 : 57] For the Lord shall not lack any good. For the Lord shall not lack any good.

For the Lord shall not lack any good.

For the Lord shall not lack any good.

For the Lord shall not lack any good.

For the Lord shall not lack any good.

[32 : 31] For the Lord shall not lack any good. If you could turn back in your Bibles now, please, to Matthew chapter 5.

And let's pray as we focus on this passage. Lord, we thank you for the promise in the psalm that we've sang, that those who truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

And we thank you that we are able to seek you as we open your word. So we pray that as we read and as we think for a short while about these words of Jesus, this sermon on the mount as it's known.

We pray that you would open our minds, that you would illuminate our minds, that you would touch our hearts. And that you would help us, Lord, as we meditate upon this, to hear your voice, to hear the voice of Jesus say, come unto me.

And we pray that you would give us faith, that each one of us would come to Jesus, whether it's for the first time. Or whether it's for the first time in a long time. Or whether it's for the tenth time today.

[34 : 02] We thank you that we have this continual call to come to Jesus. And we thank you for the blessing that is promised as we come to him. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. As the year goes on, and as we move from late spring into the direction of summer, hopefully there'll be less of this.

But at this time of year, through winter into early spring, we tend to be plagued with coughs and colds and sniffs and sneezes.

Year on year, this is just a thing that we struggle with. Whatever it is, this is the struggle. And there's one peculiar thing that we do or we say when someone sneezes.

What is it? Bless you. Why is that? There's various theories on the reasons behind that.

[35 : 13] But one theory which is offered by a guy called Bill Chandler. I don't know who he is, but he was reported in the Guardian newspaper as saying this.

It says, It was believed that sneezing was the way for the body to rid itself of the devil's evil influences. The act of blessing a person subsequent to a sneeze was meant to act as a safeguard against the devil's evil influences returning.

So says Bill Chandler. It all seems a bit superstitious. And as we study God's word, we can say quite clearly that the Bible doesn't teach that we can free ourselves from the devil's evil influence by sneezing.

There's no text that we can hang that on. The Bible doesn't teach anywhere that we can know God's blessing through sneezing. But the Bible does teach that it is possible, in fact, it's necessary for us to be blessed.

To come to know God's blessing. And as Jesus begins the sermon on the mount as we know it, he makes clear that we can be blessed as we come to him.

[36 : 38] As we listen to him. And as we trust in him. Three points this morning. We'll spend more time on the third point. But just to get ourselves back into the passage.

The first point we note here is that blessing is to be received. The second thing we can highlight is that blessing is to be rejoiced in. Having received blessing, if we have received blessing, there should be joy that we experience and that is evident in our lives.

And the final thing is that when we have received blessing, it brings a responsibility onto us. A privilege but a responsibility nonetheless that we are to live in a certain way.

So first of all, blessing is to be received. And we've got that message even through the hymns that we've sang this morning. We sang just a moment ago, Come thou fount of every blessing.

Now who is the fount? Who is the fountain of every blessing? It's an answer that the question, it's a question that I could ask to the children and they would readily give me the answer that Jesus is the fountain of every blessing.

[37 : 54] And only Jesus is the fount of every blessing. We think about it, there are some products that we can get only from one place.

Harris Tweed Jackets, there's always a few in the congregation week by week. And you can only get Harris Tweed Jackets in one place. They can't be manufactured anywhere in the world.

They come from a certain area from here. Or essence of Harris candles. I don't think they could be manufactured any place. They have to be manufactured and produced in one particular place.

They're designed, they're made here. And the blessing of God, salvation for our souls, forgiveness of our sin, salvation for our souls.

The promise of eternal life. There's only one way. There's only one name. There's only one fount.

[39 : 03] There's only one place through whom that blessing flows. And it's Jesus. As Matthew wrote his gospel, there were religious leaders who were working hard to try to get God's blessing.

Many of them were well-intentioned in the first instance. They held the scriptures and the commandments in a high place. But they were trying to keep these commandments in order to win God's favor.

And they'd taken the Ten Commandments and they'd added an extra 613 commandments around the Ten Commandments that were having to be worked through to try to receive the approval of God.

And when God the Son stood before them, they did nothing but clash with him. Because blessing cannot be earned. We cannot work towards earning God's blessing.

Blessing cannot be bought. We can't trade with God to procure his blessing. Blessing can only be received by coming to Jesus.

[40 : 24] And so we read in verse 1 that Jesus' disciples came to him. And the very simple question that I want to ask that I repeatedly ask is have you come to Jesus yet?

It's great to come to church. This church or any other church but the blessing of God is not transmitted to us through these chairs or through some pews or through our name on some denominational row.

the blessing of God salvation for our souls the forgiveness of sin is only received by grace as we come to Jesus.

So have we come to Jesus and said to him will you forgive me for my sin? Will you give to me eternal life? will you give to me the blessing of God?

Will you take from me the curse that my sin has caused? Blessing is to be received. You come to Jesus yet and asked for and received that blessing.

[41 : 54] The second thing is that blessing is to be rejoiced in. when we studied this or when we began to look at this passage two weeks ago or three weeks ago perhaps we noted that to be blessed is to be happy.

To be blessed is to have a joy of heart that comes from having come to know the Lord. We come to Jesus and we are blessed and when we are blessed we have joy.

There is a soul happiness that is given to us and it makes sense that that would be the case. Some of us watch football on television and we're coming towards the end of the football season and when we're coming to this point in the football season we see the intense joy of teams when they win the league cup or when they avoid relegation.

There's such incredible intense joy when there's progress to the next stage or when they avoid some desperate failure and it's just football.

I love football but it's just a few men or women kicking a ball of leather around a pitch. Think about this when we know that we have victory in Jesus when we know that our sins are forgiven when we have assurance that we have a place in heaven.

[43 : 46] When we are sure that eternity is now going to be in our experience safety and not suffering there's surely happiness of heart.

It says in verse 12 rejoice and be glad. the Christian life bless you the Christian life is not a trouble free life.

It's not a life where we can walk along with a kind of slightly giddy grin from dawn till dusk. The Christian life is a life that is hard in many ways.

Jesus makes very clear in verses 2-12 that there's much that is troublesome if we are to follow him. But the Christian life is a life where we can and we should experience blessing.

Nine times in just the one little section we have the word blessing. And even when there is trouble and even when there is persecution the paradox is that there's actually a greater measure of blessing.

[45 : 15] So blessing is to be received but having received blessing blessing is something that we are to rejoice in.

I want to just ask the question for a moment how is it that we perhaps seem to experience so little of this? How is it that sometimes when people look at our lives they don't see an overflowing joy and a tangible sense of being people who know God's blessing?

I think the reason that we experience such a small measure of this is because we take so little time to meditate upon what it means to be blessed.

This is the Lord's day. It's a day that's been set aside. It's a gift to us. where we are called to be still and know God.

This is a day where we have been given the privilege of sitting with God's word open and thinking about who God is and what he has done for us and what he promises to do for us.

[46 : 55] and yet speaking personally, I know that it's hard, even for one day, to just meditate upon who God is and what he's done for us.

We're so distracted. There's so many buzzes and bleeps and alarms and calls upon our time that we don't take much time to actually meditate upon what it means for us to be blessed.

So, even for the next minute, let's just think about this. Think for a moment about how hopeless we would be without Jesus.

I don't do this enough, but think with me for a moment just about how hopeless things would be if it wasn't for Jesus.

Think for a moment about how bleak our lives and our eternity would be if it wasn't for the blessing that flows from him. If there was no Jesus, if there was no gospel message, our sin would be with us forever.

[48 : 20] And the burden of guilt that we feel would get heavier as the years pass and we sin more. And we'd have nowhere to go to have that burden lifted.

If it wasn't for Jesus and the blessing that is offered in and through him, the sting of death could never be removed. If it wasn't for Jesus and the blessing that is offered in him, when we die, the torment of hell would be unending.

Because that's who we would be to pay for our sins. If it wasn't for Jesus, we would be forever under the curse of sin.

But how different for the believer? How different for the person here today who is a Christian? The curse of sin is taken away from us.

Jesus took it into his body on the tree. And for the believer, the blessing of God is gifted to us. For the believer, our sins are forgiven.

[49 : 42] We are cleansed by the blood of the lamb. For the believer, death is crushed. And those who have gone on ahead of us, who are in Christ, as much as we miss them, as much as we are grieved because of their absence, we know that they are safe.

They have eternal life. How many reasons do we have to be thankful?

If day by day we were to actually take time and meditate on how blessed we are if we are in Christ, our lives would overflow with praise and rejoicing.

And we would be able to say with a hymn writer who we will sing with at the end, and can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? Died he for me?

Who caused his pain for me? Who him to death pursued amazing love? How can it be that thou my God should die for me?

[51 : 00] Blessing is to be rejoiced in. Blessing is to be received. And the final thing is that blessing brings responsibility. Sometimes we hear it said, rightly so, that if we're Christians, we are blessed to be a blessing.

blessing isn't simply a gift that we receive and rejoice in. It's a gift that we have a responsibility to share. So what does Jesus teach us here in these verses?

What are our responsibilities? If we are Christians, if we have received the blessing of God, what should our lives be like? Well, there's two things. Our lives should be salty, as the children help us to think through.

And our lives should be shiny, or should be bright. So first of all, our lives should be salty. And it's such a simple picture, but it's such an instructive picture for us.

It's an expanded children's talk, really, which is how Jesus taught. He took simple pictures, and he put them before the people. And he says to the disciples who are gathered around him in verse 13, you are the salt of the earth.

[52 : 21] So what does that mean? Well, to understand that, we need to think about the properties of salt. There are various properties of salt that were particularly striking back in that day, but we still get them today.

The first thing is salt has flavor. Salt is distinctive. And you know when your meal is no salt, just as the kids.

with their wee pallets, they knew instantly when these awful crisps had no salt. They're just, as little Finlay said, they're just nothing. Salt is the difference between making amazing potatoes and bland, tasteless potatoes.

Salt can make a soup or break a soup. Salt on chips or salt on crisps is transformative. We can have a steak, the best of meat, but without salt, there's just no joy in it.

Salt gives flavor. It takes the flavor out of food. So salt has flavor and the Christian life, the blessed life, should be distinctive.

[53 : 39] This is a truth for the young ones, it's a truth for the older ones. our lives, if we are Christians, should have the flavor of Jesus about them.

We sang just a moment ago, oh, taste and see that God is good, and it's through the blessed life that the world should be able to taste something of the goodness of God.

It's through the blessed life that the world should be able to taste something of the grace of Jesus. Speaking to someone this week who had been helped by another person, they were talking about how much this person had helped them and how well they thought of him.

And they asked me the question, he's not a Christian, is he? That's what Jesus is talking about. He was a Christian. Christian. That's what Jesus is talking about.

It's through the blessed life that the world should be able to taste something of the grace of Jesus. Paul in Colossians chapter 4 verse 6 says, let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt.

[55 : 04] There's a challenge and an opportunity in a wee place especially. Salt, it has flavour.

The second thing about salt is salt preserves. This generation, we don't know so much of that. We buy meat and we stick it in the fridge.

And there's all kinds of chemicals that are on it to try to preserve it for longer, but not so many years ago, and certainly at the time that Jesus spoke, there were no fridges. So salt was used to preserve meat and fish.

I still have the horrors of salt herring and nests, the trauma of childhood years, but that's how the fish was preserved, that's how the meat was preserved.

Without the salt, the flesh would decay and there'd be nothing to eat. So salt in that place at that time, and even in more recent times, salt was literally a lifesaver.

[56 : 06] And in one sense, the Christian is to be a lifesaver, a soul preserver. Now, we can't do that in and of ourselves, but we can be involved in that by telling people about Jesus.

Jesus. When did you last tell somebody about Jesus? Not about church, but when did you and I last have a conversation with a normal person outside these four walls where we have spoken to them about Jesus?

Jesus. The only one who can keep our souls forever. The only one who can preserve us eternally. When we think about it, there are so many words that are spoken and shared on social media and they cause decay.

There are so many conversations that are whispered in gossip in a wee place and they cause breakdown and they cause trouble. the Christian, the one who knows the blessing of God through the things that we say and the way that we live, we are to point people to Jesus.

He is the life giver. He is the one who is, as it says in Psalm 121, able to keep our souls, to preserve our souls forever.

[57 : 37] salt preserves, salt that has flavor. The next thing about salt is salt purifies. And again, if we roll back the years to an age where medicine wasn't so well developed, if a wound was open and exposed, the way that that wound would be treated and stopped from being infected was by applying salt to it.

So a face grimace there at the remembrance of that. Salt is applied to push back the infection.

And at the cultural level, that's also part of the calling of the Christian. In a society that is decaying, it's so evident to see, in a society that is infected by the evil of sin at every level, we are to apply the purifying salt of the word of God.

Will that always be welcomed? Will we stand up and we speak up and we say this is what God says, this is how God speaks into this situation? No, it won't always be welcomed.

God's word of God. Just the salt in a wound stings and provokes a reaction, God's word sometimes stings.

[59 : 15] And it may cause us to be persecuted for Jesus sake. But the paradox, the mystery is that even in persecution, even when we face opposition, there is blessing, there is rejoicing, even in that, as it says in verse 11 and 12.

So Jesus speaking to his disciples, he says, you're the salt of the earth. that's your purpose. That's your calling.

Now is it possible to be a Christian and not be salty? Well, yes, for a period it is possible. And Jesus addresses that in verse 13.

He says, if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

So it's possible to be a Christian and to lose our taste, to stop being salty. We sang just a few moments ago, we are prone to wander.

[60 : 49] And when we wander from the Lord, and when we wander from the truth of his word, the further we wander, the less salty we become.

Our lives lose the taste of Jesus. But to live that way is to waste our lives. to live an unsalty Christian life is to live without purpose.

It's to be a nothing, as we firmly say. No flavor, nothing, no taste, impact, no impact in the world.

Yeah, we make a few pounds, we do a few wee jobs, no lasting impact. to live unsalty Christian lives is to live without purpose.

And if any of us are this morning in that place, as all of us can be at times, we need to repent, confess it, and ask the Lord to restore us, to make us salty again.

[62 : 22] Salt has flavor, salt preserves, salt purifies. The last thing about salt is it's to be out. Salt does no good when it's in the salt cellar, on the table, closed up.

Or salt does no good in the wee sachet that's unopened inside the bag of crisps. Salt needs to be out, shaken about, as Michael said.

And that's our calling. If we are Christians, we are to be out. Alistair Begg talks about the us four no more close the door syndrome.

Christians gathered up in a wee holy huddle, lock all the doors. The world's a scary place. We don't want to be out there. Jesus says, that's not your calling to be asked for no more.

Close the door. Open the door and get out there. Jesus prays in John 17, not that we'll be out of the world, but that we'll be in the world. We'll be in it, but not of it.

[63 : 33] John Stott says this, so many of us who claim to follow Jesus stay in our elegant little ecclesiastical salt cellars instead of getting rubbed into the community.

Of course he says it's good to come to church so long as you don't do it too often. We should be out in the world. Jesus came into the world and that's what he sends us.

We've got stuff on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. If we're in church every day of the week and we're never out in the world, we're not doing what Jesus has called us to do. Most of us are not in danger of veering into that area.

But we come in and worship to be with the Lord. And then we go out to our workplaces, to all the areas in the community that Jesus has given us the opportunity to be in so that we'll have an impact for his sake.

And usually when the church loses its impact it's for one of two reasons. It's either because we're in the world but we've lost our saltiness.

[64 : 56] It's we've moved away from the Bible. We're not talking about Jesus anymore. That's one extreme. That's one thing. We're in the football team.

We're out in all these places. We're connected with a thousand different people but nobody ever hears or senses anything of Jesus about us. There's no salt about us. That's one extreme.

Or we can be super salty as a church and full of the Bible but we're locked up in our churches. We're hiding from the world.

Jesus calls us to be out in the world, to be salt. Blessing is to be received.

Jesus says come to me. And we are blessed as we come to him in faith, as we trust in him, as we believe in him.

[66 : 01] Blessing brings rejoicing. As we think about who God is and what has been done for us in Christ, in order that we will be blessed and not cursed, our hearts, if we get it, will burst with joy.

and with hearts that are full, blessing brings responsibility. You're the salt of the earth, says Jesus.

So get out into the earth, get rubbed in, have an impact for Jesus' sake. the light of the world is the next section, and we'll park that up, and we'll deal with that on Wednesday evening.

So be encouraged to come out on Wednesday and we'll think about the next section. Let's pray. Amen. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, and we feel the encouragement of it as we think about the blessing that is freely given to us in Christ.

We thank you, Father, that you sent your son into this world. We thank you that he lived and died and rose so that we could be offered salvation, eternal life. We pray that there be no one here who hears that invitation, who hears Jesus call them to come to him and stays back at a distance and remains under the curse of sin.

[67 : 39] We pray that each one of us would know the blessing of being in Christ. We pray that we would know the joy of meditating upon all that you have done for us.

We have so many reasons to be thankful. We have so many reasons to praise you. Our hearts as we meditate upon who you are, what you've done for us, and where we would be if it were not for the gospel.

Our hearts are full as we meditate upon the truth of the blessing of being in Christ. Help us to do that, we pray. Forgive us for how distracted, how conflicted we are in our thinking, how easy we find it to be dragged into the things of this world that would block our vision of Jesus.

spirits. And yet we pray that having spent time looking at the face of Jesus and knowing the blessing of being in him, we pray that we would go out, that we would take seriously the responsibility that you've placed upon us to have the flavor of Jesus about our lives.

Help us to be salty. Help us to be courageous. Help us in the things that we say, the grace that seasons our conversations, and in the way that we live, to show and tell people around us something of the wonder and the glory of Jesus.

[69 : 08] We pray that our lives would not be nothing, but our lives would make an impact for Jesus' sake, for the glory of the Father, for the salvation of souls.

And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude Mission Praise at 33.

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood. NING! Uncanny be that I should gain An interest in the Savior's blood Died he for me who does this way For he who lived to death pursued Amazing love, how can it be That Thou, my God, should strive for me

Amazing love, how can it be That Thou, my God, should strive for me Tis mystery all the immortal times Through God explore this strange design In being the first of set rise To stand the death of love divine Tis mercy all that earth adore Let angels' minds inquire no more Tis mercy all that earth adore

Let angels' minds inquire no more He left his father's throne above So free, so infinite disgrace And he himself for all but love I'm blessed for all the helpless grace Tis mercy all, immense and free For all my God, it flounder'd be Tis mercy all, immense and free For all my God, it flounder'd be

[72 : 39] Lord, my grace and spirit, thee Fast bowed in sin and nature's night Thy night defused a quaking rain I know, O production flamed with light My chains fell off, my heart was free I rose when forth and followed thee My chains fell off, my heart was free My rose when forth and followed thee No condemnation now I dread Jesus, I know, and him is mine

Alive in him, my living yet And loved in righteousness divine Bold I approach the eternal throne And clean the ground through Christ my own Bold I approach the eternal throne And clean the ground through Christ my own And I 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