

Living for God

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[0 : 00] Together is all ages. We don't mind noise. We love noise. We're a church family. But if you want to go somewhere quieter at all at any point during the service, there's a Christ room just in the back there. You can hear the service in their tea.

And this morning after our service, we have together a church picnic. That's going to be happening at Preston Park. So we'll stay and have teas and coffees as usual. And then we'll take our lunches to the park.

If you don't have food with you, it may well be people have food to share around all those shops nearby or in the middle of Brighton, which is a blessing.

Friends, his name is Jamie. Some of you have been able to meet him this year in different ways. He was at Bible by the Beach. Some of you met him there. Some of you met him at my wedding, which is where this photo is taken. And Jamie is my best friend, one of my closest friends.

But let me tell you something. It's not a secret. There was a time when Jamie and I didn't know each other. There was a time when we weren't friends. But then, 24 years into life, I met him for the first time. And how we became friends was we started speaking to each other.

[1 : 29] We started asking each other questions. We started spending time with each other. And as that happened, we became friends. So Jamie and I weren't friends, but then we were. And we became friends through speaking to each other.

And this morning, we're thinking about a relationship that we have with someone else. We have a relationship with God. And the way we get to know God and the way God gets to know us is Him speaking to us in the Bible.

And we've heard about that. We've heard about the Bible, this book that we get a hold in our hands. We heard about that last week. It's a great thing that we get to read God's words when He speaks to us in them.

But this morning, we're going to think about how we get to speak to God. Because good relationships work when both people speak to one another. And our relationship with God works best when we hear Him speaking and when we speak to Him too.

And we can do that. So that's what we're thinking about this morning. And I think it's worth us pausing just for a moment and thinking about how amazing it is that we get to speak to God.

[2 : 56] Because, you know, God is not like us. God is amazing. I wonder, what do we know about God?

Here's some things that I thought of. He is just. He's full of justice. He is holy. There is no sin in Him. We sin.

But God doesn't. He is the creator. The creator of this whole world. He is love. He is the best love. He is love. He's eternal. He lives forever and ever and ever. He is king. He is king.

He rules this world. He is mighty. He is great. And you can add many, many more things to that list. God is amazing.

[3 : 52] God is amazing. God is amazing. God is amazing. God is amazing. And isn't it amazing then that we get to speak to Him in prayer? We get to speak to the king of the universe, the creator of this world.

God is amazing. We get to speak to Him in prayer. And Jesus here in this passage that Anya has read for us teaches us how to do that.

And He offers some advice to us, which I think we should listen to in verse 5 to 8 about how to pray and how not to pray. So, here's a prayer for you that I'm going to ask your feedback on.

Father God, thank you so much that you see me praying here and all these people in front of me see me pray to.

Amen. Is that a good prayer to pray? Why is that not a good prayer to pray? It's all about me. I'm doing it because I want you to see me pray.

[4 : 58] And Jesus says here, that's not right. That's not how to pray. He says, when you pray, don't be like people called the hypocrites.

There in verse 5. They love to pray standing on the street corners to be seen by others. They love to stand up and show people, look how great I am.

Look how amazing my knowledge of God is. That's not the right way to pray. You'd be better off going into your bedroom and closing the door, Jesus says, and praying in that way.

We don't pray so that others can see us and think, look how good they are. We're praying because we simply want to talk to God in prayer.

Now, it's good that we can gather as a church to pray. It was great that the Pearsons led us in prayer. It's great that we can have prayer meetings and pray with one another.

[6 : 04] But if we're doing those things so that others can think, wow, look how great they are, then we shouldn't be praying. If that's our motivation.

Jesus says pray because you want to speak to your Father. And you want to speak with others to your Father in heaven. That's what we want to do when we gather here.

We're just simply helping each other talk to God and joining in with that privilege. So Jesus gives us some advice on prayer there.

Don't be doing it so that lots of other people can see you and be impressed by you. Do it because you want to talk to God. Now, we're going to see two big things.

There's lots of things we can see in this passage, but we're going to see two big things. The first one is this. Who do we pray to? Then we'll sing a song, and then we'll think, what can we pray?

[7 : 05] What do we pray? So, who we pray to. And it's there in verse 9. Jesus says, this then is how you should pray.

Our Father. Jesus says, pray to our Father. Our Father. Now, hang on a minute.

We've thought about how great and awesome God is. He's the creator of the world. He's the king who rules it. And Jesus says, we can pray to him as our Father.

That's amazing. That means that we get to pray to someone who knows us by name. Who loves you as his own.

And who is ready to listen to you. See, praying to God is not like what I did some years ago.

[8 : 07] Does anyone know where this is? Oh, Samuel. Where's this? Number 10 Downing Street. And who lives at Number 10 Downing Street, Isaac?

Rishi Sunak. He's the prime minister at the moment. But back when I was in year 6 at school, it was Tony Blair.

And I wrote a letter to him in year 6 because me and my year were putting on a big school play. And we were asked to write a letter to someone famous and invite them to our school play to see if they would come.

So I sat there in my class and wrote a letter to Tony Blair, who was the prime minister who lived at this place. And I wrote a letter and I said, dear Tony Blair, we're having a school play.

It was a performance of Charlotte's Web. And it's happening at this day and at this time. We would love you to come as our special guest. And so I wrote on the envelope and we posted them.

[9 : 20] And a few weeks later, I got a reply. I came home from school to a letter which at the envelope said 10 Downing Street on it. And I was like, wow, the prime minister is going to come to my school play.

And so excitedly opened the letter. And it wasn't from the prime minister at all. It was someone who worked at this place, 10 Downing Street.

And it said, unfortunately, the prime minister is very busy. I'm sure if he had time, he would like to come, but he can't. In other words, the prime minister didn't read my letter, doesn't have time for me, probably doesn't know my name.

And I was very sad. But praying is not like me writing a letter to the prime minister. Praying is praying to someone who does know our name.

Who loves us. Who wants to listen to us. Who cares about everything you do, even being in year six and doing a school play.

[10 : 30] But that word father, I guess for some of us, will be a difficult word. For some of us, it's a great word.

We know our dads. We love our dads. They're like the best people. But some of us have really hard relationships with our dads. Some of us may not know if our dads actually love us.

Maybe we don't feel like we can talk to our dads. Maybe we don't even know our dads. But I want to assure you, from what we know about God in the Bible, he is the best father.

He's better than the best fathers here on earth. And he's so much better than those who are not good fathers. And he's a father who has such great love for his children.

It's important, I think, to think, who are God's children? Because it's not everybody. God's children are those who have come to know him through Jesus, his son.

[11 : 41] Jesus, his son, who's died on the cross for our sin. Died in our place so that we can know forgiveness from God the Father, who loves to forgive people like us, even though we do wrong things that he doesn't like.

And if we're trusting in Jesus to do that for us, we can be known as children of God. And here's a wonderful verse from the Bible, one of my favorites.

It says, See what great love the Father has lavished, the Father has poured on us, that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are.

That is what we are if we're trusting in Jesus to forgive us our sin. So who we get to pray to is our Father. And it says a bit more about our Father.

It says where he is. It says that he is our Father who is in heaven. Our Father is in heaven.

[12 : 48] Heaven is his home. Heaven is where he lives. He's everywhere, but he's in heaven.

Heaven is his home. And the thought that God is in heaven reminds us that God is on a throne in heaven.

Jesus said that in the chapter before this, in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 34. He says that heaven, it is God's throne.

And so when Jesus says our Father in heaven, it reminds us that our Father that we get to talk to in prayer if we're children of God, he is on a throne.

He is king. He's a king in heaven. And so get this, when we become children of God, we get to talk to the king of the world.

And we get to call him Father. It's a bit like what this guy here does. Who's this? Anyone know who this is? Samuel again, you know.

[13 : 57] Who is it? No. No. It's not Boris Johnson. No, it's not. Good work. It's someone in that kind of realm of things.

Bethany, do you know who it is? It is Prince William. Good job, Bethany. This is Prince William. And who's his dad? Does anyone know who Prince William's dad is?

Lillia. King Charles. It is. Prince William is one of two people in the world who get to pick up his phone and click call on dad and say, Hi, dad.

It's me. Everyone else in this room, everyone else in this country, we know him as the king of England. But he gets to talk to him as his dad.

And for us, when we're praying, I think we get to do better than Prince William. We don't just get to talk to the king of Great Britain.

[15 : 07] No, we get to talk to the king of the world, the king of the universe. And we get to say, Father. And we get to say, Father. And we can do that at any time, in any place.

We're invited to call the king of the universe, Father. Father. And we can know that he knows us by name.

He loves us as his own. And he is ready to listen to our prayers. We're going to see more. We're going to see about kind of what we can pray and the rest of this prayer in a moment.

But before we do that, we're going to sing again. We're going to sing this really lovely song about Jesus and about how we can come to him.

We can come to God, the Father, in prayer. We can come to Jesus too. Jesus who is strong and kind. So as Aaron leaves us, let's stand and sing together.

[16 : 09] Amen. Jesus who is strong and kind.

Jesus said that if I am weak, I should come to him. No one else can be my strength, I should come to him.

For the Lord is good and faithful. He will keep us day and night.

We can always run to Jesus. Jesus strong and kind.

Jesus said that if I fear, I should come to him.

[17 : 55] Jesus strong and kind. Jesus strong and kind. Jesus said that if I am lost, they will come to me.

And he showed me on that cross, he will come to me. For the Lord is good and faithful. He will keep us day and night. We can always come to Jesus.

Jesus strong and kind. So we have seen that we're invited to call the King of the Universe, our Father.

Father. And we can speak to him. And as we do, we know that he knows us by name. We're his children. He loves us as his own.

[19 : 11] And he's ready to listen to our every word. And so what can we talk to him about? Well, we can talk to him about anything and everything. But Jesus gives us some very helpful ways of praying and some helpful things to pray for.

And the first one is this. We can pray for God's name to be honored. That's what Jesus means when he says, pray our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Hallowed be your name. Pray that our Father's name would be honored. I want to tell you about a boy that I met this summer on the camp that I was helping on.

He bought a book on the bookstore. It was the second part of a series of novels that he's been reading. It was this book. And he was really excited that he could read it.

He loved the first one. Couldn't wait for the next one. And so he was excited to tell me that he was going to read that before I went to bed that night. The next day, he came up to me and said, Daniel, Daniel, you know this book that I bought?

[20 : 29] Well, look here on the back. And so I had a look. And he said, he pointed to one of the quotes on the back of the book. And he said, that's my dad.

That's my dad who said that. That's my dad on the back of the book. He was so proud that his dad's name was on that book. And I think that's a good picture of what we're doing when we're praying to our father in heaven and saying, hallowed be your name.

We're praying that our father's name would be honored. We're praying that people in this world would think about our God and say, wow, what a name.

We're praying that God would use us to show people that, you know, this creation around us, well, that's my father that's made that.

And you can know him. You can honor him as king. There's lots of people in the world that sadly don't do that. They use God's name as a swear word.

[21 : 43] They don't honor his name. But we can pray that God would be changing people's hearts so that people can honor him. So that we can see more and more people thinking, well, that's my father.

That's God. And I want to honor his name. So Jesus says, pray that God's name would be honored as we say, hallowed be your name.

Second thing that we can pray for, pray for God's kingdom to grow. Pray for God's kingdom to grow. That's what we're asking when we pray this line in verse 10, your kingdom come.

Your kingdom come. Would your kingdom grow? Jesus came to this world to preach the good news of the kingdom of God.

To preach the good news that people can become children of God, can know God who is in heaven as their father. And when Jesus says, pray your kingdom would come, we're praying that that kingdom would grow, that more people would bow their knee to King Jesus, that more people would know their sins forgiven.

[23 : 09] And I think this prayer and that first one, hallowed be your name, are good prayers for us to pray for this city that we live in, for the city of Brighton and Hove.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Please, Father, would your name be honored in Brighton and Hove, and would your kingdom grow, so that more people can come to know you, my Father.

So that more people can honor you, my Father. So hallowed be your name, praying that God's name would be honored, praying that God's kingdom would grow.

And next, we're asking for God's will to be done. It's what Jesus goes on to say, your kingdom come. Verse 10, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

You know what, your mums and dads, they know lots of things. They really do. But they don't know everything.

[24 : 14] And sometimes in life, you might come to them with a problem, and they might not know how to fix it. Or they might think they know how to fix it, but it might not work.

They don't always know what is best. They're going to try and help you. They love you. But they won't always know. But praying to God, we're praying to a Father who does know best.

And when we pray, your will be done, we can know that even if we think we really do know what's best, actually God really does know what's best.

He knows everything about the future. He knows exactly what's going to happen tomorrow. And so we can pray, your will be done.

And trust that God does know what is best. We pray to God then saying, I want your name to be honoured.

[25 : 21] I want your kingdom to grow. And I want your will, your way to be done, because you know what's best. And I trust you with that.

And those three things, they're all about God. And that's surprising. And that's surprising. That's surprising to me, because I know that when I pray, I'm very quick to say, Father in heaven, I pray this for myself, this, this.

I pray about them. And I don't stop to pray about God and his work in the world. I'm not very good at doing that straight away.

And I think that's probably true of all of us. But we're learning to pray. And as we're learning to pray, we need to hear what Jesus says. And Jesus starts this prayer by praying all about God's work in this world.

And so that would be a good way for us to start our prayers. Pray about God. Pray, praise God. Pray that his name would be honoured.

[26 : 28] His work would grow. His kingdom would grow. And that his will would be done. And then we can pray about ourselves and other people. Because Jesus does talk about that too.

So in verse 11, Jesus says, Give us today our daily bread. Now these next few things, I think they're all about the things we really need in life.

And he starts with food. And that really appeals to me. He starts with praying that we would have everything we need, including our daily food, our daily bread.

And bread is a symbol of a basic food that hopefully everybody should have. Certainly everybody needs food.

And bread's a good food to have. But Jesus is using that as a way for us to pray for everything.

[27 : 33] Trusting God that God would provide everything we need day by day. Our food, our shelter, everything we need.

Water. Because just like a good dad might provide for his family, for his children, everything that they need.

Clothes to wear, food on the table, a home to live in. So we can trust our heavenly Father to provide everything we need each day. And so when we pray to our Father, we can trust him for that.

And we can pray, please help me. Give me everything I need today. So our daily bread. Next, our sins to be forgiven.

Our sins to be forgiven. That's what Jesus says in verse 12. And forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.

[28 : 39] So Jesus doesn't actually use the word sins here. But that's what he's talking about. Because when we sin, it's like we owe a debt to God.

I was actually going to use Phil in this example, but Phil's not here. Phil is our pastor if you don't know who Phil is. But we'll use him anyway.

Now imagine Phil came to me one day and said, Daniel, I need five pounds. Can you lend me five pounds? And so I give Phil five pounds.

And he takes it away. He owes me a debt of five pounds. And I think Phil can pay five pounds back to me at some point. I'll trust him with that. But then he comes to me a few months later, after he's paid off that five pounds, and says, Daniel, I need to borrow a hundred pounds.

So I think, well, I think Phil can pay back a hundred pounds. So I give him a hundred pounds. And so that means he owes me a debt of a hundred pounds. And he manages to pay that off.

[29 : 47] But then he comes to me and says, Daniel, you're a generous guy. Can you give me ten million pounds? I didn't know I was that rich. But I give him ten million pounds to borrow.

And that means he now owes me a debt of ten million pounds. I'm not sure that Phil would be able to pay off ten million pounds. He might be able to, but he's not here to tell me whether he can or not. And so he now owes me a debt of ten million pounds. That's a lot of money. But don't worry, because I know that there's someone rich in Brighton.

Maybe he lives down the road. I don't know. But he owns Brighton Hove Football Club. And his name is Tony Bloom. And so he comes in the room. And he says, don't worry. Don't worry, Phil. I've got it. Here's a check of ten million pounds. I've paid it. There you go, Daniel. And that's what it's like to have our sins forgiven by God.

[30 : 49] Because each one of us, we sin and God hates sin. He's holy. He is pure. He is perfect. And he can't stand sin.

And so somehow we need our sin, our debt of sin sorted out. But we can't pay that. Because we sin and we can't do anything to erase that.

That's not an alarm, is it? Probably something outside, hopefully. But Jesus, on the cross, as he's paid for our sins, he has paid the debt.

He says, your sin, it's sorted. It's paid for because I have died for your sin. And that's amazing. And so when we pray, we can pray.

Father, give me all I need for every day. Forgive me, my sin. We need our sin forgiven. And Jesus sorts that. And so when we're praying that prayer, we can know that he has done that work to forgive us our debt.

[32 : 05] And as we're forgiven by God, it should be that we forgive those who sin against us as well. We're forgiven much. And finally, Jesus prays.

Jesus tells us that we can pray for protection from the evil one. That's what he says in verse 13.

Lead me, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Help me when I'm tempted. When I'm tempted to sin, to do wrong. Lead me not into temptation.

Now, God will never tempt us. He is not evil. He is good. But this is a prayer to ask him for help when we are tempted.

When we are tempted to say that lie. To be tempted to hit someone. Tempted to do something wrong.

And we can pray saying, help me not to sin.

[33 : 12] Help me not to do that. Protect me from the evil one. And we pray that to someone that we know is victorious over the evil one.

Someone we know who has been tempted but not sinned. And that's Jesus. And Jesus, on the cross, when he died for our sin, he was sorting something out that began right at the beginning of time.

When Adam and Eve were in that garden and the devil tempted Eve to eat that fruit. That one and only fruit from that tree that they were told not to eat from.

The devil tempted them. They fell into sin. Adam and Eve fell into sin. But Jesus was sorting that problem out. To defeat death and sin and the devil.

And so when we are praying, lead me not in temptation and deliver us from the evil one. We are praying to one who we know has won the victory over sin, death, the devil.

[34 : 30] It's a bit like there was a girl in the news this week from Brighton in the local news who's been competing at the European table tennis championships.

It's amazing. She's been learning to play table tennis at Brighton table tennis club. She hopes to be in the Paralympics one day. And you know what? She's been learning from the best.

She's been learning from a champion. She's been getting help from this guy. He's called Will Bailey. He's a Paralympian gold medalist in table tennis. And she's been getting help from him.

And when we pray, when we're tempted to sin, we're praying to one who's been victorious over sin. Who has never sinned. We're praying to a champion. And that's so exciting. So this morning, we've seen lots of things in this prayer.

[35 : 33] But the big two things that hopefully we've seen is who we pray to. We pray to our Father who is King of Heaven. And he helps us to know what to pray. To pray that God's name would be honoured.

Our Father's name would be honoured. His kingdom would grow. His will would be done because he knows best. Pray that he would provide all that we need in daily life.

Pray that he would forgive us our sin and protect us from the evil one. And this may or may not have been at the end of what Jesus taught.

[45 : 58] Remember Amy from last week? Yes? Well, Amy lives on Stanley Road. Okay? Yep, number 15, Stanley Road. She's a university student, and she's thinking about the gospel, which is fantastic, isn't it?

I've been around this area doing some evangelism, and this street is probably the most open to the gospel.

It's Stanley Road. And Amy has come back. She's not here tonight, but imagine her here. These might be similar to Daniel's last week.

I'm not too sure of Daniel's questions, but excuse me if they're the same, Daniel. You can answer them anyway. So Amy's here. Imagine. On Stanley Road.

How much will I suffer if I turn to Christ? What should I expect? What will I have to give up? Can I still go out with my university mates on Friday night?

[47 : 03] What about my relationship with Carl, her boyfriend? How will people treat me if I say I'm a Christian? What about my other leisure pursuits? Hang gliding, ultimate frisbee, hot yoga, and bonsai trees?

How will it affect them? So please, how would you answer Amy from Stanley Road in your groups? Discuss the questions.

Five minutes. I have one group here. You a group? You three? You four? And Steve, please. You four over the end.

Yep. One, two, three, four groups. Four groups. Four group. Thank you.

Thank you.

[48 : 51] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Yeah, I got the... that's a hard question because we can't tell her how much but we can say we are to expect suffering we're following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ who's suffered for us and he calls us to take up our cross and follow him but it will look different from Christian to Christian thank you can we go to this team could you answer another question please what will I have to give up so she says will she have to give up going out on Friday nights she might depend on what she does on a Friday night I suppose but she doesn't have to give up her friends in fact she can witness to her friends and it would be good to do that you know so to continue to go out with them although it will all depend on how much free time she's got now that she's going to be reading her Bible and coming to church and some of those things that she has she's expected to do great thank you this team another question please could you answer it anybody we started at the bottom yeah so we so was it what about my leisure pursuits we thought most of those seemed okay different Christians have different opinions on yoga we thought as long as it didn't get bogged too down in the sort of esoteric spiritual side it was more of an exercise based class it was fine but yeah same as the previous groups sort of talking about that certain if certain activities clashed with church or prayer meetings or something then you might have to curtail them yeah thank you mate and lastly did you just get any further okay that's fine great thank you for your responses because this this person

Amy she's hypothetical by the way could be could be on a sounding road couldn't she Amy is a hypothetical person by the way she's not real but she could be this sort of person on London no Stanley Road or London Road and she could be asking these questions about the Christian life so it's it's good for us to think about these things and we're going to now look at one Peter and hopefully Peter will perhaps answer some of these questions as well even though he's not here so let's read 1 Peter chapter 4 sorry 1 to 6 yeah so I've actually got the ESV because I was given this today apparently this is my Bible it was found in some bookshop sorry

[54 : 01] Anya's cellar so I'm back with my ESV so 1 Peter 4 reading from verse 1 to 6 since since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh arm yourselves with the same way of thinking for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God the time that is passed suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do living in sensuality passions drunkenness orgies drinking parties and lawless idolatry with respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and they malign you but they will give accounts to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead for this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead that though judged in the flesh the way people are they might live in the spirit the way God does may the Lord

bless his word so suffer for Christ like we were reading at the beginning of the service from 2 Peter verse 1 which we read

Christ suffered in the flesh arm yourselves with the same way of thinking links with if you look back verse 18 of chapter 3 for Christ also suffered once for sins the righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring us to God being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit Christ is our example of extreme suffering for us and Peter had witnessed Christ's sinless life yet Christ's life of suffering during his ministry the mocking the rejection the hatred the persecution and ultimately the cruel death on a Roman cross so Peter is going back to that theme of suffering he tells this fledgling church scattered through Asia

Minor did you see that to arm themselves or to equip themselves to make ready with the same attitude and we see the first gospel commitment here don't we from the first verses this is my first point be a person of resolve be a person of resolve for Amy to embrace the Christian life she first needs to think clearly as a Christian have a Christ-like attitude we see that did you see that the same way of thinking assure mental disposition that if she follows Christ she will need to walk the path of suffering whatever that may be and here in Britain in Brighton this is a rather strange concept isn't it suffering we want the comforts of this life and suffering is a taboo word isn't it really who wants to suffer we prefer a gospel in which

God gives us healthy bodies and bulging wallets however the life of Christ Jesus Christ challenges us because we look at him and we see that he had no home to lie his head down did he didn't drive a car he had no life of ease he was a stranger an exile a person familiar with suffering Peter is saying to us guys be a person of resolve be prepared think clearly through your union with Christ you will be united with him in suffering think the same way but verse one is rather strange isn't it what does it mean when he says in verse one has finished with sin did you see that in my version it says for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased!

from sin well what he is simply saying is that those who suffer for the gospel by their willingness demonstrate that they are done with sin after all the suffering they experience is a result of leaving off with sin then Peter tells the churches a second gospel commitment in verse 2 did you see that live live for the will of God live for the will of God which is contrasted with the first third gospel commitment do not live for the flesh in verse 2 in my version it says no longer for human passions well what does this mean if Amy was here perhaps you would say what does living for the will of God mean well we get a hint from chapter 1 verses 14 and 15

[60 : 21] Peter has already explained as children as obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance but as he who called you is holy you also be holy in all your conduct the will of God is to put off the old man the old self to say no to the passions of the flesh and pursue holiness to be sanctified be holy for I am holy says the Lord and this is not easy what is the will of God and also in chapter 2 let's read chapter 2 11 and 12 flick over beloved I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul keep your conduct among the gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers they may see your good deeds and glorify

God on the day of visitation the will of God is keeping our conduct honorable by doing good deeds as Christians and as we've been thinking about Daniel has been saying it's like the salmon swimming against the tide which leads us to the third gospel commitment do not live for human passions what is Peter saying well he's saying put sin in the rear view mirror enough is enough put it behind you Amy and he lists what the Gentiles do in verse 3 of chapter 4 living in sensuality passions drunkenness orgies drinking parties and lawless idolatry it is jolly tough isn't it to put the old man to bed especially in decadent

Brighton it's tough a lot of temptations and yeah not just going around Brighton but also on our TV screens on the internet and this list is very prevalent isn't it verse 3 to our culture for men in particular sensuality is a prevalent issue sex is the elephant in the room Peter says that in this matter it is time to clean up your home rise up and put to death these passions enough is enough and let me read a parable of the disastrous effects of not putting sin to death these desires it's an interesting parable this one which I've been got this from this commentary one springtime a duck was flying with his friends northward across

Europe during the flight he came down in a barn yard where there were tame ducks he enjoyed some of their corn he stayed for an hour and then for a day one week passed and before he knew it a month had gone by he loved the good food so he stayed all summer long one autumn day when

the same wild ducks were winging their way southward again they passed overhead and the duck on the ground heard their cries he was filled with a strange thrill and joy and he desired to fly with their once again with a great flapping of wings!

rose in the air to rejoin his old comrades in flight but he found that his good fare had made him so soft and heavy that he could not rise no higher than the eaves of the barn he dropped back again into the barnyard and said to himself quack quack oh well my life my have feasted too long on the pleasant fare of this world has to offer we too easily forget that time past was enough we forget that we are still far from home we haven't arrived at our destination yet sadly many go on day by day unfazed by the gospel thought that as we feed on the husks of this world we demonstrate that we think!

[65 : 39] the ducks and there is two personal costs you see that in the verses verse four with this with respect to this they are surprised at you they are surprised at you these non Christians there will be people in life family and friends who will be greatly surprised at our lifestyle if we live as a Christian why don't you come out tonight and get drunk why are you leaving so early come on stay for more why aren't using coarse language anymore come on don't be a kill joy come and have fun with us loosen up a little pursue pleasure they surprised us and you see what then happens you are maligned they malign you surprise then turns to heaping abuse on you surprise evokes misunderstanding and misunderstanding evokes a sense of being judged and when the world sees that it has been judged by our way of life those who are of it will condemn you as a life hater they will malign you again from this book

R.C. Sproul has a great anecdote from his book The Holiness of God perhaps some of you have read it I'd like to read that to you it's about President Ford and Billy Graham they're on the golf course and two PGA tour professionals are having a round of golf with them and he writes after the round of golf was finished one of the other pros came up to the golfer and asked hey what was it like playing with President and with Billy Graham the pro unleashed a torrent of cursing and a disgusted manner said I don't need Billy Graham stuffing religion down my throat with that he turned on his heel and stormed off heading for the practice tea his friend followed his friend said nothing he sat on the bench and watched after a few minutes the anger of the pro was spent he settled down his friend said quietly was

Billy a little rough on you out there the pro heaved an embarrassed sigh and said no he didn't even mention religion I just had a bad round sprong says astonishing Billy Graham is so identified with religion so associated with the things of God that his very presence is enough to smother the wicked man who flees when no man pursues Luther was right the pagan does tremble at the rustling of a leaf he feels the hound of heaven breathing down his neck he feels the crowded by holiness even if it is only made present by an imperfect partially sanctified human vessel and lastly oh hasn't come up on my it's not on the screen there's one final accounting in verse five and six he says but they will give an account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead for this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead that though judged in the flesh the way people are they might live in the spirit the way

God does Peter encourages the believers now the saints with the verdict of those who malign us judgment waits for you leave it to God they will get their comeuppance for their reckless lives living for their own passions verse 6 is rather difficult to understand but we must remember that Peter is talking to Christians whose loved ones have passed away in the faith and they have that question of what happens to believers when they die Peter wants to reassure his readers that those who have passed through the penalty of death although judged like all men are in the flesh they need not to worry about their future with God they will still live in the spirit the way God does so in summary we have nothing to fear brothers sisters as

Christians in Christ we are to embrace the way of suffering difficult though it may be in doing so we need these three gospel commitments firstly to be a person of resolve secondly do the will of God and three put off our human passions and we must realize that there are two costs that follow people will be surprised at us and they will malign us and at the end Peter reminds the church with that encouragement that there will be a final accounting!

[71 : 21] for everyone and those in Christ will live on in the spirit forever shall we pray let's bow our heads dear lords help us to truly embrace our calling to suffer in Christ may we receive it with open arms we know that everything we bear for you in this life will be nothing to compare with the glory we will share with you in heaven make us people of resolve in your precious name we pray amen

we're going to sing a song now which talks about servanthood and the next part of our meeting we're going to get into groups and discuss the question so let's sing from heaven you came let's stand peter writes the end of all things is at hand therefore be self controlled and sober minded for the sake of your prayers above all keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude!

of sins show hospitality to one another without grumbling as each has received a gift use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to him belong glory and dominion forever and ever Amen we could finish there but no we are going to answer some questions so please in your groups could we keep this passage in hands some questions for you to discuss from the text and then we'll perhaps have a concluding prayer perhaps feedback so the end of all things is at hand what does this mean and how does it change our perspective considering what we have been looking at two what imperatives does

Peter give to believers here in this passage 7 to 11 and what conditions does he add practically talk about these situations commands talk about these situations done well or done badly any examples so these situations practically what does it look like doing them well doing them badly any examples from church life ultimately number three what is the goal of these injunctions commands imperatives from the text and fourthly how long does God's glory and dominion last for from the text you've answered it already but you can answer in groups okay one two three four kingdom and what that looks like and trying to get charts out to plot out revelation but actually in the scriptures often discussions about the second coming are linked with holy living sanctified living yeah that's the imperative isn't it be self controlled and sober minded it's not about being pre millennial post millennial or amillennial it's about being self controlled and sober minded that's what Peter's saying isn't it yeah yeah so time is short brothers and sisters I mean amazing this was said what how many years ago thousands of years ago so one day is like ten thousand for the Lord is it something that says that in the Psalms so one day he's going to come back so we have to be sober minded and okay the second one what imperative does Peter give to believers and what conditions does he add perhaps someone else for another group practically what were these did you talk about that done well done badly any examples yeah

Maria okay so we thought the commands were to love one another deeply and to be hospitable not to grumble and to do any gifts that the Lord has given us use them for his glory and be sober minded so that we can pray and yeah and we talked about the love covering over lots of sins and I wondered and I could be totally wrong but I wondered if sometimes you know in life it's sort of you meet people and you know maybe you don't get on immediately or there's something about them that gets on your nerves I mean you don't say anything or anything like that or they do your head in and then and then

[77 : 30] Jesus reminds you that they are his and they're your sister or brother and immediately you know that they know Jesus and that actually that's not you know their hearts and the Holy Spirit within them is you love them you just do and and I wondered if that's what that meant but I wasn't sure yeah because it covers you know all of a sudden even though you think oh that person and then you just you know Jesus will remind you that you know that's one of my people I think it comes back you're you're I love that person thank you Julia yeah I just wondered if it might I think it does link and I think it doesn't not just with believers as well I think with non-believers I think you know it goes back to Christian conduct doesn't it how we react and interact with believers and non-believers because

I think even there it can cover a multitude of sins in the way we act with unbelievers yeah do you have something to say okay yeah good anything you want to say guys please pipe up yeah ultimately what is the goal of these injunctions from the text yeah that's right and everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ yeah going back actually to those injunctions I think it would be worthwhile just mulling over that particularly show hospitality to another without grumbling there's a lovely story I think it's in that book I read of I think it was a guy going over doing missions and he went to one country and it was a very poor country and the people who gave hospitality just had one bed it was a couple and the guy was invited to share their bed because they had bare resources so he slept on one side of the bed the husband slept on one and his wife slept on the other so it's three of them in the bed and when the missionary got changed the other two looked the other way and when the other two got changed the other guy looked the other way and he said it

was like the supreme sort of showing of hospitality that they even shared their bed with him and yeah that is amazing yeah anything else about those injunctions yeah

Jerome could you have the yeah just the thing about the oracles of God I was wondering when speaking speak where is it verse 11 verse 11 whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God that's in the ESV I wondered whether that was kind of more narrowly to do with those who have a preaching or teaching role like a minister but it was interesting in our discussion others thought it might have a much broader role and be for all of us in the church in the we do in some sense we're all speaking to one another we pray together I wondered if in your studies you yeah I think it did mention more specifically for elders for ministers that this refers to because it is a gift isn't it did it say a gift yeah not everybody has this gift do they

I mean we all speak but to have a preaching gift is quite special isn't it to have that given to you so I think that's what it does mean and it talks about servanthood doesn't it in that passage serving whether that's preaching or here it's talking about serving in other ways of the strength that God supplies I guess it's more practical isn't it teas and coffees yeah that's right so that it might be God glorifying yeah amen and it says to him be glory and dominion forever and ever amen it links doesn't it with the all things are at hands that God ultimately gets all the glory and his dominion and this goes on forever and ever so that's encouraging isn't it when we think of the world and the flesh and the allure of that and when we think clearly we realise that actually in Christ we have far far better don't we though it's difficult and we will suffer anything else you'd like to say before we finish no yeah should we finish there should we pray so it's anything before I pray you'd like to just mention as we go into another week we can all pray for each other we've got various diverse weeks as I look around some people are retired some people are working yeah some people are mums nans

CY club Corinne saying yeah CY tomorrow that'd be good to pray for them yeah a lot of meeting Tuesday yeah Joe Maureen yeah let's re-pray Heavenly Father we thank you for this text these injunctions to offer hospitality without grumbling to serve with the strength we have to serve Lord if we are to speak Lord we have that gift to do that by your grace and we thank you that things are near we don't know how long is left but we know that you will reign forever and ever and your dominion and your power will be seen one day by all and that we will enjoy that so please help us as we go into this next week

[84 : 51] Lord with this in mind because we realise that living as a Christian is tough we will get maligned and sidelines please help us through that and particularly this week we might be your ambassadors and have that heavenly perspective pray for those that are going back to work Lord that you would greatly encourage them and give them strength we pray for the children as they go to school that you would enable them Lord to live as Christians in a school environment we pray for the teachers Lord that are going back you would bless them and give them the strength we do think of those who are retired pray that you bless whatever they're doing this week and encourage them we think of nans and grands please help them perhaps looking after children we think of the ministry of this church and we pray you would bless as we meet around your word tomorrow with the young people and they would have great fun and yet also really enjoy the

Bible study that they might grow in the Lord Jesus Christ we lift up the lap meeting on Tuesday please restore Phil to good health to chair that we pray for the E&D; meeting that that would go well Lord that you would help us make good decisions for the church and we do pray those that are ill at the moment we think of Ian and pray that you would restore him to good health as well as Maureen Lord that you would if it be your will Lord your mercy that you bring her back home Lord into her flat Lord please help the doctors looking after her so be with us now as we travel back home in Jesus name Amen Amen