

PM Hebrews 11:8-16 Strangers and Exiles/Pilgrims

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Date: 30 August 2020

Preacher: Rev Robert Dale

[0 : 00] Welcome to you all to our evening service. Welcome to our visitors. In case anyone didn't meet them this morning, this is Richard and Helen Peck, who are friends of ours from Norfolk.

A couple of notices. Wednesday evening is our monthly missionary prayer meeting at 7 o'clock. We're meeting in the lower hall, and the meeting will be led by David Kenyon.

Following our annual congregational meeting last Wednesday, an original signed copy is now available for inspection on the side table as you go out.

Next Sunday, the minister, 11 and 6, is Mr. Alan Thompson, who attends Dow and Vale Free Church. I think we've all got used now to the system whereby we exit at the end, starting with the back row.

Normally, Norman has ushered you out. rather than doing that as if we were in school, we're going to trust you now to leave from the back after I've left the room, then if Robert and Margaret begin the exodus, and then others also would move out afterwards.

[1 : 37] going to begin our worship this evening by hearing a psalm being sung.

We're going to hear Psalm 84, verses 1 to 7. The tune is St. Leonard's. Then they sing praise version.

There's a particular reason for choosing this psalm. I'll read a few verses from it. It begins, A little later down in verse 5, it continues, Blessed are those whose strength in you, those who have a pilgrim's mind.

And you'll see as we continue with worship this evening that that is the theme throughout, the idea that we are pilgrims. So, Psalm 84, verses 1 to 7.

How delightful thy earth dwellings, O almighty God to me, For your courts my soul is yearning, In your house I long to be, Heart and flesh dry out alone, For the true and living God.

[3 : 22] Even sparrows find their dwelling, And the swallow builds a nest, Hear your altar, Lord almighty, River of strength may have rest, Blessed is he, Is your love all, We are ever-raising God.

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, Those who have a pilgrim's mind, Whose from autumn, Great's refreshment, Swings in make-out's veil they find, Strength in peace, Strength in peace, Thine unworthy, O offer way to God.

Let's join together in prayer. Our gracious God and our Father, It is indeed our supreme delight, To come into your presence, To come spiritually into the courts, Of the living God, To refresh ourselves, In those everlasting fountains, Which flow from our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you, We thank you, That you are the God and Father, Of all who believe. We thank you, That you are the God of all the earth, Our great creator, Redeemer, And judge.

We thank you, That you are the God and Father, Of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is your perfect likeness. We thank you, We thank you, We thank you, For that great gospel, Of Jesus Christ, Prepared before the foundation, Of the world, That through the blood, Of the everlasting covenant, Multitudes worldwide, Should be saved forever.

[5 : 49] And we thank you, That we find ourselves, Amongst those elect, Who have been chosen, For so great a salvation. Lord, How good it is, To know, That our good shepherd, Is leading us, Through this world.

How good it is, To know, That our sins, Though many, Are forgiven, In him. And we freely, Confess our sinfulness, Before you.

At the outset, Of this service, We admit before you, That we have, Sinned, In thought, Mind, And deed. We have done, Those things we, Ought not to have done, And left undone, Those things we, Ought to have done.

But we thank you, That there is, Bountiful forgiveness, With you. Plentiful redemption. So that sinners, Though we are, We can come freely, And come again, And again, And be cleansed, By that precious blood, By that precious blood, We thank you too, For the Holy Spirit, Promised to us, The spirit of holiness, Who leads us, In the ways of Christ, The spirit of heaven, Who leads us upward, From this world, Into that world, Which is to come.

Help us, To have, A pilgrim mind, We pray, Lord, For your blessings, Upon the church here, We have had, Difficult times, In this past year, But Lord, We trust you, For the future, We thank you, For our interim moderator, For Kenny MacLeod, We thank you, For his ministry, To us this morning, And we pray, That you will, Provide for us, A minister, After your own heart, And elders, After your own heart also, Thank you for the elders, We have, Thank you for the faithful work, That they do, And we pray, That you will bless them, Abundantly, We bring Norman and Sheila, Particularly before you, With the stress, Of a house move, In this coming week, But Lord, We pray, That in all of our ways,

[8 : 18] You would be with us, In all the stresses, And strains, Of this life, We pray, Father, That we might yet see, Days of revival, Here in this town, It has been so, Very, Very long, Since there has been, Any great moving, Of your spirit, Here in Dumfries, That we long, That this might be, Our experience, Even in this generation, And we pray, More widely, Lord, For the churches of God, Throughout Scotland, Throughout the UK, Throughout the world, Thank you for our friends, Here from Norfolk, And we pray for the church, At Great Ellingham, That there might be, Continued blessing, Upon that church, We thank you, For all those many people, Who are serving you, In missionary work, Thank you, That the gospel, Has gone forth, Into all the earth, And is still going forth, As the population,

Of the world, Continues to rise, As the needs, Remain, As great as ever, Thank you, That there are those, Who are willing, To make great sacrifices, To make Christ known, Grant that there will be many, Brought into your kingdom, Look kindly, Lord, Upon those who are persecuted, For the faith, Grant, Lord, That they may be strong, Courageous to stand firm, That they may love Christ, Even to the death, If need be, And Lord, Help us to be armed, With that same spirit, Ourselves, For who knows, What the future might hold for us, We pray for our government, And ask you to restrain them, From proposed laws, That would limit the churches, Still further, Give them wisdom, With regard to the present, Coronavirus, Grant Lord, That godly laws, May be passed,

In our land, We commit ourselves, In our more personal lives, To you also, Each one of us, Will face all kinds of, Challenges, In the coming days, Help us to meet, Those challenges, Joyfully, Knowing that the Lord, Is with us, And knowing that, Every day, Is a fresh opportunity, To glorify, Our God, Where there are those, That are suffering, With ill health, At this present time, Do strengthen them, And grant healing, We pray, Where there are those, Who are struggling, With temptation, And sin, Help them to stand, Firm in Christ, Where there are those, Who are struggling, With doubt, Lord, We pray, That you will give them, Firm faith, In the Lord Jesus Christ, Grant your presence, Especially, In the various families, Of the church, Thank you Lord, For the babies, For the young children, That are in our congregation,

And we pray, That each family, May know your, Blessings, Surrounding them, Draw near, And grant your blessings, Surrounding us now, As we read from your word, And consider what it has to say to us, Speak to us by your spirit, We pray, For we ask all, In the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

Amen. We're going to hear from the word of God now, Two short readings, The first is from the Old Testament, In Genesis chapter 12, In the light of the pilgrimage theme, I'm sure you can guess already, What passage this is, Genesis chapter 12, And reading the first nine verses, Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country, And your kindred, And your father's house, To the land that I will show you, And I will make of you, A great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great, So that you will be a blessing, I will bless those who bless you,

[12 : 46] And him who dishonors you, I will curse, And in you, All the families of the earth, Shall be blessed, So Abraham went, As the Lord had told him, And Lot went with him, Abraham was 75 years old, When he departed from Haran, And Abraham took Sarai, His wife, And Lot, His brother's son, And all their possessions, That they had gathered, And the people, That they had acquired, In Haran, And they set out, To go, To the land of Canaan, Abraham passed, Through the land, To the place, At Shechem, To the oak of Moreh, At that time, The Canaanites, Were in the land, Then the Lord, Appeared to Abraham, And said, To your offspring, I will give this land, So he built there, An altar to the Lord, Who had appeared to him,

From there, He moved to the hill country, On the east of Bethel, And pitched his tent, With Bethel on the west, And Ai on the east, And there he built an altar, To the Lord, And called upon the name, Of the Lord, And Abraham journeyed on, Still going, Towards the Negev, And now, Our second reading, From the New Testament, Is from Hebrews 11, We're reading from verse 8, Down to verse 16, Hebrews 11, And verse 8, By faith, Abraham obeyed, When he was called,

To go out, To a place, That he was to receive, As an inheritance, And he went out, Not knowing, Where he was going, By faith, He went to live, In the land of promise, As in a foreign land, Living in tents, With Isaac and Jacob, Heirs with him, Of the same promise, For he was looking forward, To the city, That has foundations, Whose designer, And builder, Is God, By faith, Sarah herself, Received power, To conceive, Even when she was past the age, Since she considered him faithful, Who had promised, Therefore, From one man, And him as good as dead, Were born descendants, As many as the stars of heaven, And as many as the innumerable grains, Of sand, By the seashore,

These all died in faith, Not having received the things promised, But having seen them, And greeted them from afar, And having acknowledged, That they were strangers, And exiles on the earth, For people who speak thus, Make it clear, That they are seeking a homeland, If they had been thinking, Of that land, From which they had gone out, They would have had opportunity, To return, But as it is, They desire, A better country, That is, A heavenly one, Therefore, God is not ashamed, To be called their God, For he has prepared for them, A city, We'll look at that passage, In a few moments time, But before that, We're going to hear, From Psalm 107, Verses 3 to 9,

To the tune, Newington, Amen. For our child's hunger in their face, their soul bests them rest.

[17 : 40] They cry unto the Lord, and He then flees from their distress.

They also in a way to hold that right is he they cried.

But they might do a safety goal wherein they might abide.

For either soul that morning is, that will be satisfied.

With goodness he the hungry soul that will have under thee.

[18 : 52] I think some of you do have your own psalm books with you, but others don't.

So it may perhaps be worth just mentioning what those words were. It isn't always easy to make them out as we listen, is it? But it speaks there of thanking the Lord for all His goodness.

And it speaks of how He saved them from their enemies and brought them from the lands. From east and west, from north and south, safe from oppressing hands.

Some wandered in the desert wastes, not finding any way to reach a city where they might obtain a place to stay. Their life and strength were ebbing fast in thirst and emptiness.

Then in despair they sought the Lord, who saved them from distress. So it is that same pilgrim theme again. The Lord leading them to a safe city.

[20 : 03] Well I'd like you to turn with me now to Hebrews chapter 11. And we are going to look at the whole of that passage which I read.

But in particular at verse 13. These all died in faith. Not having received the things promised.

But having seen them and greeted them from afar. And having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

One of the many books that I read during the lockdown. Was the Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers.

Which is a first hand account by the men and women who sailed in the Mayflower in 1620. Sailing from Plymouth to New England.

[21 : 13] Where they founded a new colony which has become the modern America. This year, next week in fact, is the 400th anniversary of that voyage.

The story is a fascinating one. In the 17th century, the law required everyone in England to worship in the Church of England.

And according to the rites of the prayer book. Now there were some who were unhappy with this. And some of them began to meet secretly in separate congregations.

Worshipping in the way that they believed the Bible required them to do. They were persecuted. And some of them fled to Holland.

Now one of those groups. Men and women who had come from Lincolnshire and from Nottinghamshire. And had fled for refuge to Leiden in Holland.

[22 : 31] Began to feel after a while that Holland wasn't really the place for them to stay. And they formed the idea of emigrating to America.

There were already colonies in America. Virginia already existed. But their thought was to plant a new colony. Where they could worship God freely.

So they obtained the necessary charter from the king. That was essential.

Permitting them to start a new colony. And they set out in July 1620 from Holland. Originally there were two ships.

The Mayflower and the Speedwell. But the Speedwell didn't Speedwell. It sprang a leak. And they had to abandon it at Plymouth.

[23 : 31] Finally 102 pilgrims set sail from Plymouth in the Mayflower. On September 6th 1620. 400 years ago next week. After a stormy voyage of 65 days. During which two people died.

They finally sighted Cape Cod on November 9th. That wasn't the end of their troubles.

The early years were difficult. Half of them died during the first winter. But gradually with persistence. And much hard work.

And it has to be said. Much help from the Native Americans. They managed to establish a small settlement. Rather remarkably.

[24 : 32] They met a Native American. By the name of Squanto. Who addressed them in English. And it turned out. Incredibly. That he had lived.

In London. And spoke English fluently. And was able to translate for them. But above all.

I'm sure they would say. It wasn't Squanto. It wasn't their own hard work. That had enabled them. To establish this new colony. It was God. They trusted in God.

And God blessed them. Abundantly. Now they didn't call themselves. The Pilgrim Fathers. That name was given to them later.

But one of their early leaders. A man called William Bradford. Did use the word Pilgrims. And he did so in reference. To our text here. In Hebrews 11.

[25 : 31] In the Geneva Bible. Which he would have used. It's translated. All these died in faith. And received not the promises.

But saw them afar off. Believed them. And received them thankfully. And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims.

On the earth. The authorised version. Also translates it as. Strangers and pilgrims. So does the New King James version.

Which I generally use. Privately. Now I was due to preach. In Norwich. Next week.

And I had planned to speak on this text. Knowing that it was the anniversary. Of the sailing of the Mayflower. And I was planning to speak there. On how Christians are strangers and pilgrims.

[26 : 33] That meeting was cancelled. Of course. Because of the virus. But I thought. Well. I'll still preach on that. Here at Dumfries. But then when I sat down on Monday.

To prepare a sermon. I discovered to my horror. That the ESV. Doesn't use the word pilgrim. Did you notice here.

It says. Strangers and exiles. So I went scurrying back to the Greek. Found out that the word that is used.

Is. Parapodemos. Meaning literally. A resident foreigner. Well. That is what Abraham.

Isaac. And Jacob. And Jacob. Were. Living in tents. As resident foreigners. In the land of Canaan. It's also what the pilgrim fathers were.

[27 : 34] Living in their little huts. In the land that had previously belonged. To the Native Americans. And it is also what we are.

Citizens of heaven. Living in this world. In the world. But not of it. The word pilgrims.

Is however. Fully justified. Because there is a journey. Involved. Abraham had travelled.

From Ur. To Canaan. The pilgrim fathers. Had travelled. From Plymouth. To New England.

And we are travelling. From this world. To heaven. Some of you will have read.

[28 : 32] John Bunyan's famous book. The Pilgrim's Progress. Written in 1678. Not so very long after. The sailing of the Mayflower. The full title is.

The Pilgrim's Progress. From this world. To that which is to come. We are on a journey. I want to focus tonight.

On that thought. That as Christians. We are only passing through. This present world. On our way.

To a better country. We will look first. At Abraham. Isaac. And Jacob. And then at ourselves. Considering what great promises.

We have. And how we ought to live. In the light of them. First of all though. Let's notice the background.

[29 : 35] The letter to the Hebrews. Was written. As an encouragement. To discouraged. To discouraged. Christians. The main theme.

Is Christ himself. As I said. When I was. Preaching here. A few weeks ago. Jesus Christ. Is the same. Yesterday. And today.

And forever. How can you possibly. Think of giving up. When you have. So wonderful. A savior. But here in.

Hebrews 11. He takes. A slightly different tack. And reminds us. Instead of the. Great. Men and women. Of faith. In times past.

These are sometimes. Called the heroes. Of faith. But we mustn't. Think of them. As. Superheroes. They had their faults.

[30 : 32] But they also. Had faith. And that faith. Enabled them. To do. Great things. In chapter 12.

He speaks of them. As a great cloud. Of witnesses. And that is the real point. They are. Witnesses. Bearing testimony. To the faithfulness.

Of God. Effectively. Effectively. They are all saying. To us. We believed in God. And he never let us down. You believe in him too.

Hold fast. To the way of faith. And God will never. Let you down either. We could. We could. If we wish.

Add to the long list. Of heroes. Of the faith. In Hebrews 11. Other heroes. Of faith. Through history. And among them. Would be. The pilgrim fathers.

[31 : 31] They were. Ordinary people. I doubt. Very much. If most of us. Could name. A single one. Of them. Except perhaps. William Bradford.

If you remember. That I mentioned him. Just now. They weren't famous people. They weren't great people. In the eyes of the world. But they were men.

And women. Of faith. And in the strength. Of that faith. They founded. A nation. Now the spotlight.

In our text. Is on. The patriarchs. Abraham. Isaac. And Jacob. And Sarah. I want us now. To look at. Their experience. Abraham's. First. Great. Act of faith. Involved.

[32 : 30] Leaving. Ur. Of the Chaldees. Ur. Was. A great city. A cultivated city. But also.

A pagan city. But Abraham. Left. Not. Just. Because. He wanted to. Not. Just. Because. He was. Shocked.

With the paganism. Not. Just. Because. He was. Looking. For a better life. Somewhere else. But. Because. God. Told him to. God.

Had said to him. As we read. In Genesis 12. Go from your country. And your kindred. And your father's house. To a land. That I will show you. And I will make of you.

A great nation. And I will bless you. And make your name great. So that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you. I will curse.

[33 : 24] And in you. All the families. Of the earth. Will be blessed. Abraham. Believed God.

And that faith of his. Expressed itself. In. Obedience. As true faith. Always does. He went out.

As it says here. In Hebrews 11. Not knowing where he was going. But simply. Trusting in God. Now you might have expected.

That the story would pretty much end there. He obeyed God. He went to the land. And God fulfilled all the promises. And he lived happily ever after. But you know it doesn't end like that.

The promises were not immediately fulfilled. The promises were not immediately fulfilled. Yes he came to the land. Just as God had promised. But for a long time.

[34 : 26] He and Sarah were living there. On their own. Where are all these descendants? There were no descendants. For years and years.

Not a single child. And yet Abraham. Remained faithful. Living in tents. As it says here. In the promised land.

There was never any question. Of him returning to Ur of the Chaldees. God had made him a promise. And he would stick with it. He would stay there.

In the land of Canaan. Even if he had to live in tents there. As he waited for God. To fulfill his word. In due course.

Isaac and Jacob were born. But they too lived in tents. Patiently waiting. For God to fulfill his promise.

[35 : 26] The birth of Isaac. Was of course itself a miracle. Sarah. Herself showing faith this time. Even though she was past the age.

She believed God. The author passes tactfully. Over the various hiccups along the way. The hesitations. The disastrous mistake with Hagar.

They got there in the end. And looking back. From 2000 years later. The author here could say. That Abraham. Abraham. Did become.

The father. Of a great multitude. But not all the promises. Were fulfilled. In their lifetime. That is the point.

They were still. Looking forward. In faith. Especially. That great promise. To Abraham. That the world. Would be blessed.

[36 : 25] Through him. That wasn't fulfilled. In his lifetime. That as we know. Was only fulfilled. In our Lord. Jesus Christ.

These all. Died in faith. It says. Not having seen. The promises fulfilled. They only saw them. From afar.

They believed them. And they trusted. That God. Would fulfill his word. Now it's clear. That they were looking. For much more.

Than just the land. Of Canaan. As he says. In verse 10. Abraham. Looked for a city. Which has foundations. And again. In verse 16.

They looked for. A better country. That is. A heavenly one. For now. They acknowledge. That they were strangers. And exiles.

[37 : 24] Or pilgrims. On the earth. Possibly. He has in mind. There. Genesis 47. Where. Jacob.

Is brought. Before. Pharaoh. Pharaoh. Asks him. How old are you? And he replies.

In the authorized version. The days. Of the years. Of my pilgrimage. Are 130 years. Few. And evil. Have been. The days.

Of the years. Of the years. Of my life. And have not attained. Unto the days. Of the years. Of the life. Of my fathers. In the days. Of my pilgrimage. 130 years old.

And he still felt. He'd only lived. A short time. But when he speaks. Those words. He's confessing. That both he. And his fathers.

[38 : 18] Had all been pilgrims. On their way. To a better country. Grateful though they were. For the land of Canaan.

They looked for. Something better than that. They were looking for heaven. And therefore he says.

God is not ashamed. To be called their God. For he has prepared. For them. A city. That was the experience.

Of Abraham. Isaac. And Jacob. Faithfully looking. To the future. For the fulfillment. Of God's promise. And could we not say.

That the same was true. Also of the pilgrim fathers. Many of them. Remember died. In the first year. But they too. Died in faith.

[39 : 16] Not just believing. That a new colony. Would be established. But believing. That God. Would bring them. To that heavenly. City. Which is promised.

To all who trust. In Christ. But what of ourselves. That's the important thing.

Isn't it? Well God has given to us. Promises. In which. We must trust. And we too.

Are called. To both. Live. And die. In faith. In one sense.

We could say. That we have inherited. Abraham's promises. Paul says. In Galatians. 3.29. If you are Christ's. You. Are.

[40 : 08] Abraham's. Offspring. Heirs. According. To promise. Abraham. Abraham. Abraham. Abraham. Abraham. Is not. Only.

The father. Of the Jews. He is. The father. Of all. The faithful. Paul says. So. In Romans. Chapter 4. He is the father.

Of all. Who believe. He says. Whether Jews. Or Gentiles. Hebrews. 11. Goes on. To speak. Of Abraham. Offering up.

Isaac. Believing. That God. Could raise him. From the dead. And Paul says. In Romans 4. That we have. The same faith. Believing.

In God. Who has. In fact. Raised. Jesus. From the dead. So. How do we. Inherit. The promises. That were given.

[41 : 02] To Abraham. Well. Obviously. Not. In the land. Of Canaan. We don't. Live there. And we have. No intention. Of going there. Obviously.

Not. In having. A multitude. Of descendants. We're doing. Our best. Here in this church. We have. Quite a few babies. More on the way. But I don't.

Think. They're going to be. As the sand. Of the sea. For multitude. But rather. We. Inherit. That. Worldwide.

Blessing. That was promised. To Abraham. That is fulfilled. Through Christ. In a sense.

We could say. The promise. Was Christ. Because every other. Promise. Flows. Through Christ. As Paul says. All the promises.

[41 : 56] Of God. Are yes. And amen. In him. Now think about. The promises. That we have.

In Christ. There are so many. Of them. Aren't there? Think just. Of those great. I am. In John's. In John's gospel.

Every one of them. Has a promise. Attached to it. I am. The bread of life. Whoever comes to me. Shall not hunger.

And whoever believes in me. Shall not thirst. Christ. I am. The light of the world. Whoever follows me. Will not walk in darkness.

But will have. The light of life. Do you see a pattern here? A statement about Christ. I am. Followed by a promise. Because of what I am.

[42 : 54] You will inherit. This great blessing. I am the door. If anyone enters by me. He will be saved. And will go in and out. And find pasture.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd. Lays down his life. For the sheep. Therefore you will be saved. By trusting in me.

I am the resurrection. And the life. Whoever believes in me. Though he die. Yet shall he live. And everyone who lives. And believes in me. Shall never die. I am the way.

And the truth. And the life. No one comes to the father. Except through me. Implying that all who. Do come through Christ. Will. Come to the father. I am the vine.

You are the branches. Whoever abides in me. And I in him. He it is. Who bears much fruit. Promise after promise. If that were the whole bible.

[43 : 58] Even that surely. Would be enough for us. But there are so many more promises. If we had time. We could continue all night.

Couldn't we? With the promises of God. In Christ Jesus. Or consider his invitations. Come to me. All who labor.

And are heavy laden. And I will give you rest. All that the father gives me. Will come to me. And whoever comes to me. I will never cast out.

If anyone thirsts. Let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me. As the scripture has said. Out of his heart. Will flow rivers of living water. Promise after promise.

The great promise of Christ. Is of course. The gospel itself. For God so loved the world. That he gave his only son. That whoever believes in him.

[44 : 56] Should not perish. But have eternal life. In that one promise. Are contained all of the others. So that Peter can say. God has granted to us.

All things that pertain. To life. And godliness. Now some of these promises. Are fulfilled now. And some of you can testify.

How they have been fulfilled. In your own life. Already. Eternal life. Begins now. But it continues forever. And there is so much more.

Still to come. Jesus speaks of a future. Resurrection. This is the will of the father.

He says. That everyone who looks on the son. And believes in him. Should have eternal life. And I will raise him up. At the last day. And he speaks of future glory.

[45 : 57] He will return. And he will usher in. An eternal kingdom. The book of Revelation. Speaks of this. Speaks of a new heaven. And a new earth.

It speaks of a holy city. New Jerusalem. Coming down from heaven. God has prepared for them. A city. He has prepared that city for us as well.

The new Jerusalem. Towards which we are traveling. Glorious promises. Promises for us to hold on to.

But how should they affect our lives. Well. First.

And obviously. We must live by faith. Trusting. In those promises. Promise itself is of no use at all.

[46 : 56] Unless you trust in it. It remains just words on paper. Unless you personally believe it. That is the main point.

Of the book of Hebrews. If you have never trusted. In Christ before. Now is the time to do so.

For some. That might mean a dramatic change. Like Abraham. Leaving Ur of the Chaldees. Turning your back on your past life. And starting afresh.

For others. It might be a quieter matter. Like Isaac. Simply embracing. The faith of his father. But either way.

You must believe. If you want to be saved. You yourself. Must become. A pilgrim. And if you have already begun.

[47 : 57] As most of you have. Keep. Going. We live in very discouraging times. There are so few Christians around.

Our faith is mocked. By so many people. There are times when doubts. Enter into all of our minds. But keep.

Going. On the strength. Of God's promises. Don't. Give up. You have. These most astonishing. Promises. That are yours.

In Christ. Both for this life. And for the life. To come. Don't even. Think. Of going back. Into the world. Why would you ever. Want to do that.

And don't even. Think. Of standing still. Of just. Resting. On what you have attained. So far. Keep. Going. Keep going.

[48 : 54] Absolutely. Keep going. Imagine if Jacob. Had said. I don't want to live here. In Canaan. With my granddad. I'd rather go.

To the big city. That would have been. The end of Israel. Wouldn't it? With disastrous. Consequences. How important.

It was. To. For him. To remain. Faithful. Or imagine. If the pilgrim. Fathers. Had said. This is a hard life. I'm catching. The next ship.

Back home. That might have been. The end of America. Death. But no. They kept going. And so must we.

Secondly. We must live. As strangers. And exiles. Here on the earth. We belong to heaven. Paul actually says so.

[49 : 56] In Philippians 3.20. Our citizenship. Is in heaven. We ought therefore. To take very lightly. Both the pleasures. And the troubles.

Of this present world. We're not indifferent. To the things of this world. Of course not. We enjoy the pleasures.

Of this world. And rightly so. God made the world. And he himself said. It was good. Despite the fall.

There still remains. Much that is good. Family life. Food and drink. Beautiful scenery. Beautiful music. These are all good.

Innocent things. That we can. Enjoy. Abraham himself. Enjoyed great wealth. In this world. He had.

[50 : 54] He had. Huge herds of cattle. There in the land of Canaan. The pilgrim fathers. Enjoyed the new land. That they settled into. They loved that land.

And they sought in every way. The prosperity of the land. Paul says. That God has given us. Richly. All things.

To enjoy. We're also not indifferent. To the hardships. Of this world. Abraham suffered.

When there was famine. In the land of Canaan. Isaac. Mourned. When his father died. Jacob knew fear. When his life. Was under threat.

The pilgrim fathers. Suffered. When there was famine. In New England. In the early years. And we too.

[51 : 49] Suffer all kinds of troubles. Don't we? We feel those things. We feel them. In our own lives. And we care about them. In others. And rightly so.

Being pilgrims. And strangers. Doesn't mean. That we don't care. About this world. Far from it. Christians. Ought to care. We ought to be doing. Our best. To help.

Alleviate. Suffering. And to help those. Who are in any kind. Of trouble. But these things. Shouldn't dominate. Our lives.

The world. Lives for pleasure. Because that's. All it knows. The world. Is obsessed. With its troubles. They're obsessed.

With their own health. They're obsessed. With money. Because that's. All they know. We know something. Higher than that.

[52 : 47] And these things. Shouldn't dominate. Our lives. All of these things. Both good and bad.

Are temporary. And our hearts. Should be set on. Eternal things. The psalmist says. If riches increase.

Do not set your heart. On them. Don't make money. The big thing. In your life. The good things. Of this life. Will pass away.

Likewise. The bad things. Paul says. These light afflictions. Are but for a moment. He's speaking there.

Of persecution. And imprisonment. He's speaking of troubles. Far worse. That any of us. Have ever experienced. But for Paul. These were just. Passing troubles. He was looking.

[53 : 43] For something better. He was looking. For that city. That has foundations. And a few. Brief sufferings. Now. Were of no great moment.

To him. Paul says. In Colossians. If then. You have been raised. With Christ. Seek the things. That are above. Where Christ is.

Seated at the right hand. Of God. Set your mind. On things above. Not on things. On the earth. Finally.

We must live. As ambassadors. Of heaven. The world. Is watching. And we want them.

To get a good impression. Not a good impression. Of us. That doesn't matter. What they think of us. But a good impression. Of our Lord. And a good impression.

[54 : 41] Of that heavenly country. To which we belong. We want them. Also. To follow Christ. We want them. Also. To travel with us. Seeking the heavenly city.

Peter says. Therefore. Beloved. I urge you. As sojourners. And exiles. Or strangers. And pilgrims. In some translations.

To abstain. From the passions. Of the flesh. Which war. Against your soul. Keep your conduct. Honorable. Among the Gentiles. In other words.

Both for your own sake. And for theirs. Live holy lives. And walk in love. Walk in love.

As the children of God. As fellow pilgrims. As the emigre community. As it were. As the children of God. As the children of God. You know. Where a number of.

[55 : 41] Immigrants. Have gathered together. In one place. In this country. They stick together. As a community. Don't they? Sometimes people feel unsettled. By that. But you can understand.

Why they do it. They're in a strange country. And it's nice to be. Amongst those people. Who share their culture. Their background. Their language. It should be actually.

The same for us. Though we do. Mix with the whole world. And should. In order to bring them. To Christ. These brothers and sisters.

These are our fellow. Citizens of heaven. And we love to be. Amongst those brothers. And sisters. We love to be. Amongst those people.

Who speak the same. Heavenly language. Who love the same. Heavenly Lord. Who love the same. Heavenly literature. That we do. The Bible. Who have the same.

[56 : 40] Spiritual culture. The same. Moral values. These are the people. We love to be with. And people seeing that.

Will realize. That we have something special. By this. Jesus says. Shall all men know. That you are my disciples. If you love. One another.

Yes. It's wonderful. If we love the people. Of the world. We should love everyone. But it's the fact. That we love one another. That people will notice. That we have something.

Very special. That we are a community. That's how it should be. In Dumfries. Free Church of Scotland. Isn't it? That's how it should be. Amongst all Christians.

We want to make an impact. Upon this town. People should be. Looking in upon us. And saying. Here is a little community. Small though it is. We'd like to be part of that.

[57 : 39] Because they love one another. So much. We are so very few. In the world. Aren't we? We Christians. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Were a very small community. In the land of Canaan. The Pilgrim Fathers. Were a very small community. At first. In New England. Christians are only.

A small community. In the whole of Scotland. We need. To stick together. We need. To support. One another. Well may the Lord.

Help us. In our own generation. To live as. Strangers and exiles. To live as pilgrims. And may our hearts. Always.

Be set on heaven. Amen. Our final item of praise. Tonight. Is a great.

[58 : 38] Pilgrim. Hymn. Guide me. O thou great. Jehovah. Pilgrim through this. Barren land. Guide me.

O the great. Jehovah. Pilgrim through this. Barren land. I am.

telling me. Rei of heaven. jehovah.

Open now the crystal mountain, where's the healing stream done?

Let the fiery valley pillar lead me on my journey through.

[59 : 53] Strong deliver, strong deliver, he does still my strength and shield.

When I tread the hurt of joy, in my hands shall be satisfied.

Death of death and death destruction, and he's in the kingdom's side.

Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to thee.

I will ever give to thee. Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore.

[61 : 13] Amen.