



the disciples were trying to push parents away, push mothers away, suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

[ 7 : 23 ] And we pray, then, that we might, indeed, be blessed of the Lord. We pray to bless all who have gathered here. We come with all our own individual feelings, our own different circumstances.

For some people, their hearts today might be happy. Things might be going really well in life. For other people, their hearts might be sad. They might be going through very difficult times, times of pain and hardship within their lives.

And so we pray, whatever the circumstances, whatever people are going through, that they will know the grace and the mercy and the peace of God. We pray, O Lord, to bless those who mourn. And we again think of the MacLeod family at this time, and we pray to bless them at this time of sorrow. And again, we remember the family over in Southloch, that tragedy where there's been such a difficult week.

And we pray to bless each and every one of them at this sore and sad time. And we remember, particularly Don Langes, who will be speaking tonight at the fellowship. And we pray to help him in light of this sad bereavement.

[ 8 : 34 ] We pray to bless all who are in need and all whose hearts are sore and sad. Pray to bless us as a nation. And we pray that we might be guided and led.

Pray for all those who have responsibility for us at different levels, whether it is in Westminster or in Holyrood or in our local council. We pray to give wisdom to all leadership.

We pray that we might be kept and protected as a nation. Because we know that there are many who would want to disrupt and to break up and to destroy. And so we pray, O Lord, that we may know your protection.

But help us, Lord, to look to Jesus. Help us, Lord, to remember that ultimately, our ultimate protection and safety and our refuge comes from the Lord.

That's what the psalm tells us. God is our refuge and our strength. And we pray that that is where we will focus, that we will remember that our Lord is the God of heaven and earth.

[ 9 : 33 ] We pray then to help us in our worship and that our ears will be open to the word and that our hearts will respond to it. Watch over us, we pray, and do us good and take away our sin in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. We're going to sing again. And this time it's in the, in the, sing Psalms.

It's the first section of the Psalm book. And Psalm 16. And we're going to sing from verse 6. Psalm number 16. And it's from verse 6.

That's on page 17. The tune is, Psalm 16, verse 6. The land allotted me is in a pleasant sight, and surely my inheritance to me is a delight.

I'll praise the Lord my God, whose counsel guides my choice. And even in the night, my heart recalls instructions' voice. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone.

[ 10 : 43 ] Because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown. Therefore my heart is glad. My tongue with joy will sing. My body too will rest secure in hope unwavering.

For you will not allow my soul and death to stay. Nor will you leave your Holy One to see the tombs decay. You have made known to me the path of life divine.

Bliss shall I know at your right hand. Joy from your face will shine. Psalm 16, verse 6 to the end.

The land allotted me. The land allotted me.

It's been a pleasant sight, and it's surely my inheritance.

To me it's not a delight. I praise the Lord my God, whose counsel guides my choice.

[ 11 : 59 ] And even in the night, my heart recalls instructions' voice.

Before me come to send me, I respect the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

Therefore my heart is glad. My tongue with joy will sing. My body too will rest secure in hope unwavering.

For you will not allow my soul and death to stay.

Nor will you leave your Holy One to see the tombs decay.

[ 13 : 16 ] You have made known to me the path of life divine.

Blessed shall I know at your right hand. Joy from your face will shine.

I want us now to turn to the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 28.

And then also in Mark's Gospel, chapter 16. So first of all, Matthew, chapter 28. And we're going to read the first ten verses there.

Now after the Sabbath, towards the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

[14:23] And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow.

And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here, for he has risen. As he said, Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.

And behold, he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples.

And behold, Jesus met them and said greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him. And Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.

[15:37] Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me. Then we turn to Mark's Gospel, chapter 16. And we read the first eight verses.

When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Salome, brought spices so that they might go and anoint him.

And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?

And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back. It was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

And he said to them, Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here.

[16:51] See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.

And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his holy word. We're going to sing again from the Scottish Psalter. And it's Psalm 107.

Psalm 107. And we're going to sing from verse 25 to verse 31. And the tune is Notting Hill. Psalm 107.

For he commands, and it's on page 384, For he commands, and forth in haste, the stormy tempest flies, which makes the sea with rolling waves aloft to swell and rise.

[18:02] They mount to heaven, then to the depths they do go down again. Their soul doth faint, and melt away with trouble and with pain. They reel and stagger like one drunk, at their woods' end they be.

Then they to God in trouble cry, who them from strates doth free. The storm is changed into a calm at his command and will, so that the waves which raged before now quiet are and still.

Then are they glad, because at rest and quiet now they be. So to the haven he then brings, which they desire to see. Oh, that men to the Lord would give.

Praise for his goodness then, and for his works of wonder done unto the sons of men. Psalm 107, 25 to 31.

Psalm 107, 25 to 31. Psalm 107, 25 to 31. Psalm 107, 25 to 31. For he commands and forfeit days, the joy be dead and restless rise.

[19:13] Wraiths, nil to sea with falling wings, a lot to swell the rise.

They bound to heaven and to the death, they do all done again.

There's a strong faith, a man of joy, with trouble and with pain.

There we must have heard like wonder, but there will send they be.

Then they do all in troubled pride, who left from streets of free.

[20:16] The storm is changed into a calm, and it's all at hand will, so that the waves which reached before, now quiet, dark, and still.

Then are they glad because at rest, and quiet now they be.

So to the heaven he then brings, which we desire to see.

O that then to the Lord who gives, praise for his goodness then, and for his words of wonder done, and to the sons of men.

Let's turn back just for a wee while to Matthew chapter 28. And I want us this morning very, very simply to think about what we call the great Easter story about Jesus rising from the dead.

[ 21 : 58 ] Because it's one of the most important things in the whole of the Christian faith, is the fact that Jesus has risen from the dead. So all we're going to do this morning is very simply to consider or to think about that story.

Now, I know we all have different, I suppose, favorite times of the year. Most people like the summer.

I know there's one or two people who like the winter, but most people like the season of the summer. You have long days. It's warm.

You have long holidays. It's got a lot of things going for it. But I also know there are some people who like the autumn.

And one of the reasons they like the autumn is because of the different colors from the trees. It's actually very, very beautiful. If you take a walk around the castle grounds when, say, end of September or so on, it's just all the different colors of the leaves, different shades of brown.

[ 23 : 09 ] I'm amazed at the different colors in nature. Sometimes how green the grass is and how brown the leaves become and so on. But one of the things I don't like at the later part of autumn is when all the leaves blow off the trees and the trees just become bare.

They just don't look nearly so nice as they do when they're covered with leaves. And then we come to the season of winter. And a lot of people don't like the winter because the days are now short and the mornings are cold when you have to get up.

And there are lots of things a lot of people don't like about the winter. Some people actually feel very sad in the dark of winter. I suppose the good things about winter is it's Christmas time, time of presents.

And a lot of people like to sit beside a fire when it's howling wind outside and they feel very snug and cozy beside the fire. But once Christmas has passed, a new year has passed, people look forward to the spring.

Because spring seems to be a time that speaks to us of new life. There are buds on the trees. You see little chicks eventually breaking through the shell.

[ 24 : 30 ] Lambs skipping in the field. All talking to us of new life. And it was at this time of year, in the springtime, that Jesus rose from the dead.

It was the real time of new life. It was an amazing weekend that took place, everything that took place from the Friday through to the Sunday was really the most amazing thing that has ever happened in the history of this world.

It happened 2,000 years ago. And 2,000 years ago, an amazing thing, or just a little more than 2,000 years ago, an amazing thing happened.

A baby, we all know the story, a baby was born in Bethlehem. And you know, the amazing thing about this baby was that although this baby was a new life, the person always lived before.

Now, if you can get your heads around that, you're cleverer than me. Because I can't. But I know it's true because the Bible tells us. In fact, the Bible tells us it's a mystery.

[ 25 : 44 ] And a mystery is something we can't work out. And that's what we're told, that great is a mystery. This is what it says. It's a big verse that says great is a mystery of godliness.

Christ, that's Jesus, who has come in the flesh, in our body. It's a mystery. But this is what happened. where God the Father said to God the Son, I want you to come into the world.

Not just to appear into the world, but I want you to take a body and to live in this world with all the people in the world.

And God the Son said, I want to do that. And this is what the amazing thing was. That in order to do that, the Son of God had to come and to take a body.

And so, Jesus was born just like any other baby was born into this world. And you know what I find so absolutely amazing?

[ 26 : 55 ] Is that baby Jesus had to learn to walk just like any other little baby has to learn to walk? And Jesus, who actually made everything, because that's what we're told, that he made everything.

He was involved in all the creation of this world, which means he was involved in making you and me. The Jesus who made the tongue in our mouth is the Jesus who, as a baby, had to learn to speak.

And these things, they're quite amazing. So Jesus grew up like any other little boy, exactly the same as any other young person, except there was one difference.

Do you know what that difference was? It was that he never, ever, ever did anything bad, said anything bad, or thought anything bad.

Now that is amazing. Now I look down here and I can see that you're all really good. Good boys and girls. But you know something?

[ 28 : 10 ] I know this. There's not one of you, however good you may be today and every day, and people at home will say you have no idea how good they are. Well, do you know this?

This is the other side. There's not one of you, but has thought a bad thought, has said something that's not right, and done something that's not right.

We all do, everybody. But this was the difference with Jesus. Never, ever, ever, ever did he do or say or think anything that was wrong.

And that was extraordinary. And it wasn't but that Satan was desperate to get him to do that. Satan was always tempting him and trying to get him to disobey his father in heaven.

But Jesus didn't. And then when Jesus was 30 years old, when he had grown up, he was set aside for a special time of ministry.

[ 29 : 14 ] And for three years, and that's what we read when we go to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we read about these three special years where Jesus went around and he taught people and he did loads of things.

He healed those who were sick. He opened the eyes of the blind. He opened the ears of the deaf. He helped people who couldn't speak to speak.

He helped people who were paralyzed to get strength back in their arms and legs. He healed people with all kinds of diseases and he even raised people from the dead.

And it was an amazing three years and you would think everybody was really happy with that. I often say to myself, I would so love to have lived in the days of Jesus.

I would love to have sat there and listened to him speak. And you'd think everybody would be so excited and so happy. Jesus is here. the Son of God.

[ 30 : 21 ] But everybody wasn't. Some people didn't like him. It's not amazing. Some people did not like Jesus and they wanted rid of him.

Do you know why? Because he made them feel uncomfortable. He was so good and so right and he taught such truth that it made some people angry.

They didn't like it. they couldn't bear how good he was. And so they said we have to get rid of him. And so they plotted and eventually they managed to get rid of him.

And Jesus was taken and he was put to death. Now the other side to all this was this. that God the Father had planned that Jesus was to die.

Because Jesus came into this world for us. Jesus came to do for us what we couldn't do ourselves. Because you see what happens is this.

[ 31 : 30 ] God is so, God the Father is so holy and so pure and so right that he cannot bear sin. And we're all sinners.

And there's a verse in the Bible that says the soul that sins will die. And God said all these people in the world they can't sort themselves out.

That's why Jesus came into the world to die for us. To take our sin on himself. To take the punishment of our sin.

You see God can't say something and then change his mind. When God says something that is it. It's like I think I said this recently.

I remember you're lucky you've grown up at a time in school when there's no belt. When I grew up and when a lot of the people here grew up the teacher always had a belt.

[ 32 : 35 ] It depended on who the teacher was and the kind of belt they had. Some teachers were quite gentle with the belt. Some teachers were brutes with the belt.

I remember once again I took ages before I could even hold a pencil in my hand. This used to get belted for all kinds of things. You didn't have to be really, really bad.

Sometimes it was because you were bad. I think I said this recently, I got belted once for dropping a pencil on the floor. You'd say to yourself, that's got to be so stupid.

In a sense it was. The reason was this. Classrooms were a lot quieter than they are now. It was a day, and probably the teacher was in a bad mood.

Everybody kept dropping their pencil, their ruler, and so on. She got really annoyed about it. She said, the next person who drops a pencil on the floor is going to get belted. Of course, I was the one who dropped the pencil on the floor.

[ 33 : 41 ] I know that the teacher felt bad because she didn't belt very hard. She just gave me two of the belt. I know she felt bad about it, but she had said it, and she had to do it.

Now, we've got to remember that here is somebody who is the most perfect, glorious person, and he has said something, and when he says it, he has to do it.

God can't change his mind and say, oh, well, I'm going to make an allowance. I'll pretend it didn't happen. He can't work like that.

And because of our sin and how he has to deal with it and what he has said, he said, right, my son, you go in their place, and you die in their place.

And so this is the most amazing thing that happened. And so Jesus, we know the story, Jesus was put up on the cross, and he died on the cross. And in his dying he took all our sin upon himself.

[ 34 : 54 ] And he was satisfying everything God asked him to do. But on the cross when he died, it was a very, very sad time.

The enemies of Jesus said, great, that's it. His message is dead. He is dead. That's the end of that.

And they were so happy. Jesus' followers were really, really sad. And he had loads of followers.

Two followers came up and they asked for his body.

And they took his body and they wrapped his body in the grave clothes, it became special grave clothes. And they carried his body very gently. And they put it in a grave.

Now, the graves we have, we dig a hole in the ground. But this was in, quite often there in the Middle East, they buried, yes, they often buried people in the ground.

[ 35 : 56 ] But sometimes it was like in a cave, in a rock. And this cave, this grave, it was like a wee cave dug in the rock. And the body was put in there.

And then a huge stone, like a massive boulder, would be fixed in against the mouth so that it would be closed in. So some graves were like that.

Well, that's the kind of grave that Jesus' body was put in. And so everybody, all Jesus' followers, were really sad. Jesus had a special group of people who followed him very closely called disciples. And you know where they were? They were in a room hiding. They were in a room hiding. They had their door locked because they were scared. And I wonder why they were scared. Well, very simply, they were scared because they were saying, if they've done that to Jesus, what are they going to do to us?

They'll probably now kill us as well. So they were there and they were all scared. But Jesus was there in the grave. But there were a lot of ladies who followed Jesus.

[ 37 : 07 ] And some of the most beautiful Christians in the early church were ladies. and some of these ladies wanted to put spices, special perfumes, on the body of Jesus.

They wanted to anoint Jesus. They used to do that. They would anoint a body when somebody died. So they decided to go on the Sunday morning.

It would be like today. Early, early, early in the morning. Remember, it's on Friday. Jesus has been put to death. And his body has been put into the grave. Well, very early in the morning, they grouped together and they prepared these spices and they made their way to the grave.

And they were scared. Of course they were. Because there were soldiers at the grave. And they were saying to themselves, how are we going to manage?

who's going to take away the stone? Because there was this huge, massive stone at the front of the grave. Because they knew they weren't strong enough to take that away.

[ 38 : 18 ] But they kept going. I love the way they went. That's what you call faith. And that's what you call love. Even although their minds were saying, it's impossible to do this.

Their hearts of love were saying, we're going to do it. And so they went. But you know this, when they got to the grave, they got the biggest shock of their lives.

Because that huge, massive stone was rolled away. And there was a man in a white robe sitting on the stone.

And they were terrified. And I would be, and so would you, if it had gone there. But this man was an angel.

He was appearing as a man. And this man said to them, don't be afraid. Now, I'm sure all of you at different times have been afraid of something.

[ 39 : 24 ] And if somebody says to you, don't be afraid, that's not much use. But if people give you a reason why you shouldn't be afraid, that helps.

I remember when I was a, I think I might have told this before, my memory is, I think I have. When I was a wee boy, I lived in a place called Ardell. I don't know how old I would have been, probably about, it's one of my earliest memories, I was probably about three.

and I was walking down the road with my mum and we passed this quarry and there was a huge machine which was like gobbling up big huge stones and crushing them to become little bits of little gravel.

And the stones were going in one end and they would be crushed and coming out the other. and I remember standing looking at it and it just looked like a huge monster that was gobbling up these stones and crushing them to little bits.

And at night when I was in bed I got scared and I called for my mum and I said to her, Mum, I'm scared that that big thing will come and gobble me up.

[ 40 : 44 ] Now, that sounds so stupid today. But when you're wee and you're all on your own and it's dark, it's amazing the things that go on in your mind.

Now, I know you're all older than that, but maybe when you were a little younger, you had thought, I'm not going to say stupid, well, it was a stupid thought, this great big machine coming and gobbling me up.

And the one thing I remember my mum saying to me, she said, it can't. And I said, how? She said, it's a fixed thing. It's fixed into the ground.

It can't move. And I, from then on, any time I passed that, would say, oh, that's the fixed thing. That's all I needed to know.

It's amazing the things, once something is explained, we stayed in a place and it was very on its own. and there were lots of cows and sheep and I remember there was a couple of bulls nearby and if you've heard bulls when they moo, it's a very, very loud, deep moo.

[ 41 : 57 ] And I remember again, and I don't know what kind of mind I had, hearing these bulls and thinking they were lions. and I remember again calling for my mum and I was saying, are these lions, what if they come in and gobble me up?

I don't know why I was always thinking I had been gobbled up. And she said to me, and again very wise, no, she said, that's one bull shouting over to the other bull in another field, telling him what he had for supper tonight.

So then I thought, that's all right. And you see what I'm saying is, when we're scared, it's no use to say, don't be afraid.

But if somebody tells you why not to be, then that makes a big difference. And that's how it was for these ladies, they came to an empty grave.

Nobody there. They were terrified. But the angel said, don't be afraid. And the angel said, don't be afraid, because, look, look at the empty place.

[ 43 : 10 ] Jesus is not here. He's risen. He's broken through death. He's won over death. He's risen.

And they were absolutely amazed, because that's the one thing you and I know can't happen. When somebody dies, they die. died. And so this was the amazing thing that Jesus had risen from the dead.

And so the message was given, go and tell his disciples that he's risen from the dead. died. And these ladies went away.

And they were, it tells us that they went away with a mixture of fear and joy, great joy. And that's exactly how it would be. On the one hand, there was this sense of, you were scared because of all that had happened, but you were also so happy.

And then we read, of course, that Jesus actually met them. it was, I think this is one of the most wonderful moments, because as we were talking about, here's spring, here we are, the time of new life, new beginnings, and everybody had been so sad because they thought Jesus was dead, and here he is alive again.

[ 44 : 34 ] And the ladies went running to tell the disciples, and as we said, the disciples were meeting in a room with the doors locked, and they were so sad, because they thought it was all over.

They had left everything to follow Jesus. And they were there, and they were just saying, oh, imagine what it would be like if Jesus was still here. And then an amazing thing happened. Jesus appeared right in the middle of the room. The doors were locked, the windows were closed, and he just appeared.

it tells us elsewhere, they were surprised with joy, they were so amazed, and so would you and I. Jesus appeared, he just appeared in the midst.

And this is a great, great, wonderful resurrection story. You know, this is what about the Christian faith. We don't follow somebody who's buried in the Middle East.

[ 45 : 39 ] Christ. We follow somebody who is risen and who is today on the throne of glory, but who also comes through the Spirit down with us, and he comes with us.

And do you know what else Jesus has told us? you see, when Jesus went through death and rose from the dead, his body changed.

Because the body he now has, it's the same body, but it's different. And it's a body that will, now think about this, isn't this wonderful, a body that will never, ever, ever, ever get tired.

Can you think of that? Every day, by night time, we get tired. And I know that maybe sometimes when you're young, you say, oh, why, why, why do my parents tell me I have to go to bed?

You know, when you're wee, you don't want to go to bed. But let me tell you, when you get older, you'll be very glad when you can get to bed. Because we get tired. We get sick.

[ 46 : 52 ] We are, our bodies go through, our bodies eventually get old, and then they die. The new body that Jesus has won for us will never get tired, it'll never get old, it'll never get sick, it'll never die.

And Jesus is saying to us, to every single person, young or old, who trusts in him, who loves him, and he says, look, I will give you everything.

I will give you this. Yes, we, in this life, that's what we know that eventually, unless Jesus comes first, Jesus might come before, Jesus might come before we die.

But the thing is that we will all, if we believe in Jesus, get what's called a resurrection body, a body that will live forever, and will go to be with him forever, and to live in the most amazing world, where everything is a world of peace.

And that's what Jesus has won, and that's why today is such a special day. In a sense, that's why every, we call it the Lord's Day, the first day of the week is such a special day.

[ 48 : 18 ] it reminds us of Jesus winning. And that's the best news that anybody could ever hear.

And I hope that all of us in here, but particularly you as young people, that you will give your hearts and your life to Jesus.

It's the best thing you could ever do. To have Jesus with you will make life so, so much better.

You will have a friend, as it says, what a friend we have in Jesus. You know, friends are special, but Jesus is the most special friend we could ever have.

Let us pray. Oh Lord, our God, we give thanks for the great gospel message, for the great fact that the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world and died on the cross and rose from the dead, and that it is through his death and his resurrection, that we can have life.

Jesus who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. We pray, Lord, to bless each one of us, and we ask, Lord, that we might know your grace and mercy and peace.

[ 49 : 36 ] We pray to bless the cup of tea and coffee in the hall afterwards, and take us all home safely, we pray. in Jesus' name we ask all. Amen.

Before we sing, I just want to say to the campaigners just how really could you were, and how well you listened, and pray that God will bless what you heard to you.

Okay, we're going to finish singing in the 23rd Psalm, Psalm 23, and this is in the Sing Psalms, Psalm 23.

We're going to sing the whole psalm. That's on page 28, Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know.

He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. My wandering steps he brings back to his way.

[ 50 : 38 ] in straight paths of righteousness making me stay. And this he has done his great name to display. Sing the whole psalm, the Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know.

The Lord is my shepherd, no want shall I know. He leads me on the earth, the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. By wandering steps he brings back to his way. In straight paths of righteousness making me stay. and this he has done his great name to display. God walk and rest where darkness is near. Because you are with me no evil I fear.

[ 51 : 59 ] Your rod and your staff bring me comfort and cheer. to the sight of my enemies at table you spread.

The oil of free dark stream you pour on my head. My cup overflows and I gracious we bear.

Surely your covenant mercy and grace will follow me closely in all of my ways.

I will dwell in the house of the Lord all my days. Now may the grace and mercy and peace of God the Father Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forever more.

Amen.