

The Peace and Presence of God

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Date: 16 June 2024

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] Well, a very warm welcome to you all to the service this morning, which happens to be, as you know, my last service as the Minister of the Congregation, so it's a very poignant time for me. I hope it's not the last service altogether, but it is for the moment as Minister of the Congregation at least. And you'll find the intimations as usual on the sheet, and I'm not going to go through them today because we have a Sunday School Prize-giving in the Hall after the service, so we'll keep things as short as possible. YF also meets tonight in the MA Hall, that's after the evening service. All P7 children are also warmly invited tonight.

Cook session is due to meet tomorrow evening at 7pm, the Wednesday meeting and Thursday meetings at the usual time, and the 55-plus fellowship will meet on Friday from 12 to 2, and I hope to be present for that as well. Service is next Lord's Day there at the usual times. And there is a service of thanksgiving and a reception to mark my retirement. That'll be on Friday the 28th. I'm not going to read through the details there because it's a bit emotional for me to do it. Thank you for arranging it. I greatly appreciate that, as does Donna and my family as well. So please just read through that yourselves. There's the Lewis Christian Conference, and there's a note for the record subscriptions for the magazine, the monthly record, if you want to continue or begin receiving it. Just look at the details there as to how to pay for that. And there's the Blights would appeal next Saturday, 9.30 to 12 noon.

Just before the benedictions, I'll actually say a few more things before we go through to the hall. But meantime, let's just begin the worship of God. And we're going to begin from Psalm 34.

Psalm 34 on page 40. The tune is Bays of Haras. We're singing verses 1 to 9. At all times I will bless the Lord. I'll praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. That's Psalm 34. That's on page 40. We're singing the verses marked 1 to 9. At all times I will bless the Lord.

At all times I will bless the Lord. At all times I will bless the Lord. At all times I will bless the Lord.

[2 : 38] I'll praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord.

Let's love the souls rejoice. You ever met us, praise the Lord. I sought his name with me.

I sought the Lord. I sought the Lord. His answer came. From years he set me free.

He loved her. He sought the Lord. He sent me free. He said he was running to gloom.

I failed her. He sought him with it. This happy man cries to the Lord from his deliverance day.

[4 : 09] The angel of the Lord serves and rise continually.

For those who give and honor him, he sets his people free.

Come, take some sea, the Lord is good, who trusts in him, his place.

Oh, hear the Lord, you saints with me, you will not be oppressed.

Let's unite now in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord in prayer. Amen.

[5 : 53] Amen. We pray for your blessing upon them. We pray that they may continue to learn about you, and especially that they may come to follow you and worship you and serve you in this world.

Come before us and cleanse us from all our sin for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Amen. Well, I thought I'd come down to your level today, or just about your level. It's very hard for you to look up to that big pulpit up there, isn't it?

So high up. I want to begin by telling you how you're such a special part of this congregation. You're a special part of this congregation.

You are part of the congregation. You don't just become part of the congregation when you grow up to be adults. You're a part of it already. And you're a very special part.

[7 : 14] Because we look to you, we older ones look to you, as those who will for yourselves come to follow the Lord one day. And indeed, we hope you do that very early on in your life.

You learn about Him in Sunday school, in the Bible class. And that's so important for you then to come and try and live by what you learn as you go through the things of life.

Now, I want you to look behind me, or behind the pulpit, at the windows that you see there. Maybe those who are working the camera, for those who are online, can actually zoom in and focus on the window, and especially on the colors of those windows.

There are a number of colors in these windows. And there are three, especially, that are important. There's blue. There's purple, even if it's a light purple.

And there's all the way around the edge, a very deep crimson red. And these colors are colors that are mentioned for the Old Testament tabernacle.

[8 : 17] The big tent that the people of God met in during the days of the Old Testament in the wilderness until the temple was built instead of the tabernacle.

And the colors of the tabernacle, these three colors, were important and taught the people some very important things. Blue reminds us of what?

What can you think of as light blue? It's not light blue today. You can't see it, but it is light blue. So there's a clue for you there. What is it? Yeah. Not water.

No. Anything else that's light blue? It's above your head. Yeah. The sky. It's the color of the sky. And that's really something that reminds us of God's heaven.

Heaven where God lives. Heaven where God will bring all those He saves to be with Himself in heaven. So whenever you see the color light blue, and when you think, looking at that window, when you see the blue color, it reminds you of heaven, reminds you of the God of heaven, and it reminds you of heaven being the place that God's saved people will be in throughout all eternity.

[9 : 36] Then there's the color purple. And purple is associated with royalty. In the old days especially, those who were kings and queens wore purple.

Clothes of purple or cloaks of purple especially. And when you see the color purple in the window and the color purple in the tabernacle, it reminded the people that God was their king.

That royalty belonged to God. But not only that, that they as God's people, as God's children, were royal children. And all the people who belonged to God are His spiritual family, and they themselves are royalty as well.

Just like you find the royal family, King Charles and the royal family. All of the royal family, you could say, have royalty. They belong to that royal family.

And if you're a Christian today, and all you are Christians belong to the royal family of God. And that's such an important thing for you to learn about, that God brings us into His family as we come to know Jesus as our Savior.

[10 : 49] So there's blue for heaven. There's purple for royalty. There's one other color around the edge of these windows. It's a deep crimson red color.

And in the Bible, it's always associated with blood. And blood is always associated with the death of Jesus.

So all the way around these windows, you have a color that reminds you of the death of Jesus on the cross. It's not that long ago since we had the Lord's Supper here, where we remember the Lord's death, as He Himself requires of us.

So when you look at these windows and you see these colors, and you see how brilliantly bright red around the edge that crimson color is, remember that it's about Jesus.

It's about Jesus that you're learning in Sunday school and Bible class. And especially what Jesus did to save us from our sins. He gave Himself to the death of the cross.

[11 : 53] He gave Himself to die for our sins. He took our sins to Himself. And the death that He died is the death He died so that we might live forever.

Blue, purple, and crimson red. Now let's say the Lord's Prayer together. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. I'm going to sing again to God's praise.

And this time we're singing in Gaelic. Whenever we have a combined service, we have one of the singings in Gaelic. This is from Psalm 85, verses 8 to 9. You'll find it on your bulletin sheet.

[12 : 57] Words which in English speak about giving a listening to God because He speaks peace to His own people.

These two verses. This is from Psalm 85, verses 8 to 9. And this is from Psalm 85, verses 8 to 9.

And this will THE maximum I hear is my've- CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHORIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS
CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Will you turn with me now to read the Word of God,

please, from the second letter of Paul to the Thessalonians, and chapter 3.
That's second Thessalonians, chapter 3. We'll read through the whole chapter. It's page 1192, or thereabouts, if you're using the church Bibles.

[16 : 45] Amen.

Amen.

Bless us, Lord, at this juncture in the congregation's experience. We know that there have been many times before when ministries have come to an end in this congregation and been followed by others.

And we thank you for your faithfulness in regard to that as well, that it is in your appointment that congregations flourish, that congregations continue in their development.

[22 : 12] And we thank you, O Lord, for your wisdom in the way in which you guide your people in such choices as need to be made. And we pray for this congregation, Lord, in days to come.

We pray as we come to express our thankfulness and appreciation of their support in the gospel, and of their commitment to the gospel and to promoting that gospel in our community.

And we pray that you would be with them, Lord, that they may know that you are that ready presence at all times, that they can look to with confidence. We pray that you would guide them as they seek your own guidance for the way ahead.

We ask that you would bless each and every home, each and every family, each and every individual connected to the congregation. We pray that you would bless the eldership at this time. We ask for them, that you would give them, Lord, the guidance and strength of your spirit, so as to guide the congregation in the way ahead. We pray for Calamurdo and his role as assistant.

[23 : 18] We pray that you would bless him and Johan, as he will have more responsibilities in the days to come. And we ask, O Lord, that together the congregation will continue to develop and continue to know the leading of your spirit and the blessing of your word amongst them.

Lord, we pray for that work of your spirit to bring many more to a knowledge of Christ, many more to a commitment to him as their savior, and many more to come to show themselves to willingly be a people of the Lord who will go forth into the world holding forth the word of life.

Bless, we pray, all who join us online from week to week. We thank you for them. We thank you for their support, sometimes shown even in material ways.

We pray that that aspect of the congregation's ministry will continue to be blessed as well. We thank you for all who, from time to time, send words of encouragement as they join the services of the congregation online.

We pray that you bless, Lord, all the other activities of the congregation from week to week. Bless the work, we pray, especially amongst the children, amongst the young people and adults alike.

[24 : 35] We ask that all the other activities connected with the weekly endeavors of the congregation may be blessed. And may be blessed internally and externally to those around who see and hear of the work of the congregation from week to week.

Be pleased, we pray, O Lord, to continue to bestow the strength of your spirit and the blessing of your spirit and the energy of your spirit to win hearts to yourself and to expand the congregation even in numerical terms as well.

But especially, we pray that they may continue to deepen their roots spiritually and that they may come to know of that growth in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember those who are unable to be with us today through illness or through other duties. We pray that you would bless them, O Lord, and those away from home at this time. Be pleased, we

pray, to draw near to them.

And grant to us, O Lord, as we continue to wait upon you, that in all our several responsibilities in the Church of Christ and in this congregation, we may continue to depend upon the Lord and seek his blessing upon our lives from day to day.

[25 : 49] Hear us now, we pray. Continue with us and pardon and cleanse us from all our sins. For Jesus' sake. Amen. We'll sing once more to God's praise.

We're singing Psalm 122. Psalm 122. That's in the Scottish Psalter version. That's on page 416.

The tune is Free Church. I joyed went to the house of God. Go up, they said to me. Jerusalem within thy gates, our feet shall standing be.

Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together. And to that place the tribes go up. The tribes of God go thither. These verses, Psalm 122.

To God's praise. I joyed went to the house of God.

[26 : 49] Go up, they said to me. Jerusalem within thy gates, Our feet shall stand on him.

The exorcised calling people. Hymn. And we shall stand in me. The hemos of all Broadcl Harona's support, known for a city isenko Fank, Israel within thyis.

Hymn. Zumines should principles to while the earth are held together, To the place that shines over, the times of God go thither.

In this church's testimony there, to God's name comes to me.

For crowns of judgment in the cross of the disciples' escape.

[28 : 08] In the dead of seven will have peace and felicity.

Let them that love me and my peace have still prosperity.

For I wish that peace may still within thy bones remain.

And ever may thy promises prosperity retain.

For my friends and brethren sing, this day in me I'll sing.

[29 : 24] And for the house of God our Lord I'll sing thy good only.

Amen. Now if you turn with me please to 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. I'd like us together to consider the words of verse 16 for a short time this morning.

2 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 16. Now may the God of peace himself give you peace at all times, in every way.

The Lord be with you all. Well as you well know we live in a world that desperately needs peace.

In so many different ways as you look out over people's lives, whether locally, nationally or internationally, you can see that people are in need of peace.

[30 : 30] Though not necessarily looking for it in the right places. And we ourselves need that peace so much. We need the peace as we'll see of which Paul is here speaking of as he wrote to the Thessalonians.

We need that peace individually, deep within our hearts. But without that peace life is not structured as it should be. The peace that we'll see comes from the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And of course peace in the Bible, we've seen this many times, peace in the Bible means a lot more than just the absence of strife or of conflict or of war.

Peace actually in the Bible means a situation or a state of well-being, of spiritual prosperity in the highest sense.

That overall well-being that God gives to his people spiritually and morally through what he has done in the Lord Jesus Christ. And it belongs to the highest blessing that we receive from God.

[31 : 39] Includes and contains this peace of God. This peace that has two dimensions to it really. The peace the Bible speaks of as peace with God and also peace with one another.

And both of these are joined together in the Lord Jesus Christ and what he is and who he is for his own believing people. Through him we come to have peace with God.

Through him we have the privilege of having peace with one another. And Paul's prayer for these Thessalonians who, like every other church you find mentioned in the New Testament, had problems of their own.

Things that needed to be corrected by God, by Paul in his writings. But here is Paul saying this especially is what he desires for and prays for them.

That the Lord of peace himself will give them peace at all times. And that the Lord will be with them all. And what was Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians is my prayer for you today.

[32 : 48] As I lay down my congregational ministry with yourselves. So I pray that this verse will be abundantly fulfilled in your experience in the days to come.

That the Lord of peace himself will give you peace at all times. And that the Lord himself will indeed be with you. So let's look at the source of peace first of all.

And then look at the outworking of peace very briefly. Well the source of peace obviously is as he says there's the Lord of peace. May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times.

Now usually in the Bible in the New Testament we find the God of peace being the phrase that's attached to spiritual peace from God or with God. The God of peace is the God who made peace through the death of Jesus on the cross.

Colossians chapter 1 and verse 20 especially speaks there about the person of Jesus and his qualification to be the saviour of his people.

[33 : 54] And how he was endowed and indeed possessed himself as he says in that great chapter. That he is in fact the one in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

God was pleased to make the fullness of God dwell in him as a person. And therefore through him to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross.

Peace with God. Peace involving reconciliation. And peace by means of the cross. The removal of enmity that had been brought in by our sin and rebellion against God.

So that's mostly the emphasis you find on peace and peace with God. Peace that God has created through the cross. But you notice here in Thessalonians in this text we're looking at it's actually the Lord of peace himself.

And that mostly in the New Testament refers to Jesus specifically. It's a specific reference to the Lord of peace himself. And wherever you find the word Lord like that most often it refers precisely or specially to Jesus himself.

[35 : 12] So that's what he's really saying. May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times. In other words it's reminding us that Jesus is also the bestower of peace.

It's not just peace from the Father through him. The peace that you find as a property of salvation. The peace between yourselves and God. And created for peace with one another.

There is also peace from Jesus himself. Jesus as the saviour of his people is the bestower of peace. Just as much as the Father. And you have these wonderful words in John's Gospel in chapter 14.

Where he taught the disciples as he prepared to go out to the cross. And as he sought to allay their fears. As he sought to calm their minds.

They knew he was going. He had told them it was necessary for him to go. They just couldn't think of the world being the same without him. They couldn't think of how they were going to manage life without him.

[36 : 11] And indeed they had a good point. They didn't then understand of course that the Holy Spirit was going to come. And that Jesus was going to be present with them through the Holy Spirit.

But you remember what he said. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Peace I leave with you.

It's the kind of thing you find in somebody who's just drawn up a will. And saying this is what I bequeath to you. This is what I am laying down for you. That you will come to possess after I am gone.

And that's what Jesus was saying. My peace I give to you. The peace that I specially have to give to you is what I'm going to give to you.

And you remember he actually then went and made a specific contrast with the world. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

[37 : 10] Not as the world gives do I give to you. Because that's you see where most people actually look for peace isn't it. You look out over the world today.

You look out all that's happening in the world outside of the worship of God. Or outside of the gatherings of God's people or gospel ordinances. Where do people look for peace? They look for it in material things.

They look for it in the things of this world. And you know better than that because you have the gospel. And you know what Jesus is saying in the gospel about peace. It's not a peace that you can create.

Not a peace that you manufacture for yourself. It doesn't come by reason of anything that you're able to do yourself. It's his peace. He has done it for you. He gives it to you.

My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives give I to you. Wherever you're looking for peace today. Jesus is saying to you categorically and precisely. You will not find it anywhere else but in me.

[38 : 09] You will not find the source of it in anything to do with the world. You will not find it in your own abilities. You will not find it in your worldly success. You will only find it in me.

And if you don't have me you don't have this peace. And you see he said in that context too didn't he. Let not your hearts be troubled.

Neither let it be afraid. Similar to what we saw last Lord's Day. In Genesis chapter 46. Where you find God as we saw.

Reassuring Jacob. Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt. For there I will make you a great nation. I myself will go with you.

And I myself will bring you back again. Very similar to what Paul was saying here to the Thessalonians isn't it? Where he is assuring them that their peace is in and from the Lord himself.

[39 : 14] That they need not be troubled for whatever lies ahead. As we'll see in a minute he says. That he may give you peace at all times in every way. And we thought last week of how not to be afraid of the future.

Whether for the congregation that you are. Or for yourself as an individual. As you go on trusting in Christ and looking to Jesus. And looking for him as the head of his church.

To guide you through whatever lies ahead. This is what he said. Don't be afraid. Because you have my peace. And my peace pacifies your heart. My peace occupies your mind.

My peace goes with you. As you keep looking to me. There's the source of our peace in Jesus himself. And you notice how emphatically Paul actually mentioned this.

He said, Now may the Lord of peace himself. You see he's adding that word himself. Just to actually reinforce the point that he's making. This is where your peace is from.

[40 : 16] This is where your peace actually is found and lies. In Jesus himself. And may the Lord himself. May he himself give you his peace. May the Lord himself give you peace.

Don't look anywhere else. For your peace today. I don't know how you've come to this building. With what sort of heart you've come to this building.

I know you've come sincerely. I know you've come as a congregation. Who it's been my privilege to preach to for eight years. I know you know the gospel.

I know you know everything the gospel says. About Christ and his death. And the creation of peace by God through the cross. But today don't look for your peace.

Outwith of that Jesus. You have all the peace you need. In himself. And this is the prayer. May the Lord of peace himself.

[41 : 22] Give you that peace. Whatever happens in the days. Months or even years to come. Don't let your eyes be deflected. Don't let your mind be taken aside from.

Focusing on Jesus himself. As you serve him. As the Lord of peace. Look always to him. And find your peace in him.

And enjoy the peace. That is in him. And that he gives. To all who trust in him. And you see he's saying. May the Lord of peace himself.

Give you peace. At all times. In every way. And he's adding that. So that the Thessalonians will say. Well maybe we can look to the Lord.

At some times. In some situations of crisis. And then look for peace then. And find our peace then. In him. And he be the source. Of our peace then. No no. Paul is saying.

[42 : 19] At all times. And in every way. In other words. Constantly. Continuously. Look to the Lord. And may he constantly. Continually. Give you this peace.

Pour this peace into your hearts. And when he says. In every way. That literally means. At every turn. Because life has lots of turns.

There are lots of turnings already. In your lives. In your human experience. Turnings that you anticipated. And some you very much didn't. Unexpected events.

Challenging events. Painful events. Events that you wouldn't have. Created for yourself. That in one sense. You would rather.

It never happened. But here is something. That's always true. The Lord himself. May he give you peace. At all times. At every turn.

[43 : 17] What an advantage. It is to an individual. And indeed. To a congregation. As well. To know. The Lord's peace. At every turn. Whatever the turns.

May bring about. Whatever the circumstances. May be in. God's peace. God's peace doesn't change. The source of peace. Doesn't change. The quality of the peace.

Doesn't change. The purpose of the peace. Doesn't change. And that's why he's saying to them. May the Lord of peace. Himself. Give you this peace.

At all times. At every turn. And then secondly. The outworking of this peace. How does this peace. How is it outworked.

In our experience. What sort of role. Do we have. In the experience. Of this peace. And then. Enjoying this peace. One with another. Well for a start.

[44 : 13] It's a peace. Which we experience. Together. The word you hear. May the God. The Lord of peace. Himself. Give you peace. You.

Plural. Peace. And so often. In Paul's writings. In the New Testament. Keeping with others as well. The plural is used. Just to remind. Those he's writing to.

This is not just. For individuals. To enjoy on their own. This is something. For congregations. For churches. To experience. And to enjoy. Together. It's not so long ago.

We looked at a. Short series of study. Of the church. Gathered. The church. Together. The church. Engaged. Together. As a body of people. Built together. Joined together.

And here is another word. Here's Paul again. Using the plural. May he give you. Plural peace. At all times. Absolutely crucial. That we know.

[45 : 07] God's peace for ourselves. Individually. That you yourself. Today. Know what it is. To have peace. In your heart. Through faith. In the Lord. Jesus Christ. That you experience.

That peace. That you know. Things are right. Between yourself. And God. But it's also crucial. That we know this peace. Because. That we know this peace.

Corporately. Or congregational. Every time. Somebody comes to know the Lord. And know that peace. In their hearts. God. Even if they don't understand it. At the time.

Or something that is. Going to grow with them. From then on. What the Lord always does. Is place that individual. In connection. With a body of people. Who also know that peace too.

And today. You and I are thankful. Surely. That God has not saved us. For life on our own. That God has saved us. And placed us in a fellowship.

[46 : 07] In a communion of people. That God has given us. His peace. Not just to be enjoyed. Personally. Though very much it is that. But to be enjoyed.

Along with others. And in connection with others. And indeed. For the well-being of others. Along with ourselves. See there is the great thing.

About God's salvation. Our sin. Created. An individualism. By which. Which is expressed. In so many different ways.

In the life of. Every one of us. As sinners. That individualism. That is expressed. In pride. And arrogance. And self-esteem. All the ways.

In which the Bible. Shows us. What's deep in our heart. As sinners. That expresses itself. Then in our behavior. Conversation. And otherwise. And what God does.

[47 : 01] In his work of grace. What God does. By his spirit. In our hearts. What God does. In saving us individually. And placing us. In the fellowship. Of God's people. He undoes.

What sin. Has brought about. But he replaces that. With its opposite. Instead of the individualism. The self-pleasing. And all that goes along with that. As a product of sin.

He actually replaces that. With a desire. For the well-being of others. For a unity. That moves. And grows.

By the spirit of God. And what a great privilege. It is to know that. To know today. That God has placed us. In that community of people.

That express their faith in God. By seeking the well-being. Of one another. That's why so often. In the Bible. And the New Testament.

[47 : 57] Especially. And more especially. In the writings of John. You find. It emphasized again. And again. Beloved. Let us. Love one another.

For love. Is of God. Let us love. One another. How does that express itself? Love expresses itself practically.

You don't just say. To your fellow Christians. I do love you. I do love the fact. That you're part of this congregation. I belong to. You show your love. Practically. You do things in love.

You exercise that love. As Paul says. As John says. Not in word. Only. But also. In action. And indeed. In sincerity.

God undoes. What sin has caused. And replaces it with. That wonderful corporate unity.

[48 : 55] And. Together then. As the Lord will give you peace at all times as we pray. So it will be that you. Together. Grow.

In spiritual. Stature. You worship together. Together. You learn together. You serve together. You wait for each other. You look after each other.

You do everything that God himself. Sets before you in the gospel. To be a people. Who know his peace. And who want that peace disseminated.

Not only amongst yourselves. But to that world out there. You want to be a congregation. That are known to the world. As a people of peace. Because one of the most destructive things.

Is division in the church. And Paul wrote. To all of these. Congregations. Churches that he wrote to. And in some way or other. They all had problems. And he always advocated peace for them.

[49 : 56] To love one another. To be at peace with each other. To look after. The well-being of others. Besides themselves. And to the Philippians. For example. He gave the great example of Christ.

Who came not to please himself. But to give himself. To the death of the cross. So. It's experienced together. And secondly.

The outworking of peace. It requires. Our commitment. To unity. If I can take you just briefly. To what he wrote to the Ephesian church. And chapter four.

A very powerful passage. That has to do with. With unity. And with our responsibilities. In regard to unity. Not only the outworking of peace.

Experienced together. But it requires. Our commitment. Individually. To that unity. Notice what he says there. The beginning of Ephesians four. I therefore. A prisoner for the Lord.

[50 : 52] Urge you. To walk in a manner worthy. Of the calling. To which you have been called. With all humility. And gentleness. With patience. Bearing with one another.

In love. Eager to maintain. The unity of the spirit. In the bond of peace. Speaking there about peace. The bond of peace.

That ties people together. Who love the Lord. But you see what he's saying. God has created that unity. By his spirit. It's the unity of the spirit. We don't create it.

God creates it for us. But he gives us the responsibility. To look after it. To make sure that we value it. That we follow it through. In our relationships. One with another.

So maintain. He says. That unity of the spirit. And how? In the bond. Of peace. Nowhere. Is the unity of God's people. Best seen and expressed.

[51 : 48] Than in showing them. At peace. With one another. At peace with God. At peace. Peace with God's providence. At peace with one another.

At peace. In the gospel. And that's why you find these terms. As well mentioned. To the Ephesians. As well as to the Thessalonians. And Philippians. As we read there.

At the beginning. Of chapter four. Of Ephesians. Where Paul mentioned those things. Humility. And gentleness. And patience. And patience. Bearing with one another.

In love. Because that's all part. Of what he next says. Of maintaining the unity. Of the spirit. In the bond of peace. It all goes together. And back to Thessalonians.

May the Lord of peace himself. Give you peace at all times. In every way. The Lord. Be with you. All. I was going to.

[52 : 43] Just mention. Philippians chapter four. I don't want to mention. Too many texts. Because it crowds it. And it's important to focus. Just on the main point. Being made. This Lord of peace.

Giving peace. But in Philippians four. You remember very well. How. Paul there. In writing to the Philippians. Who themselves. Had some problems. But in a wonderful passage.

In chapter four. And verses six to seven. He says this. Do not be anxious. About anything. But in everything. By prayer. And supplication. With thanksgiving.

Let your requests. Be made known to God. And the peace of God. Which surpasses all understanding. Will guard your hearts. And minds. In Christ Jesus. Finally brothers. Whatever is true. Whatever is honorable. Whatever is just. Whatever is pure. Whatever is lovely. Whatever is commendable. If there is any excellence. If there is any worthy. Anything worthy of praise.

[53 : 37] Think about these things. And the God of peace. Will be with you. You see what he's saying. He's saying that. Through prayer.

We come to experience. The peace of God. Garrisoning and guarding. Our hearts and minds. Again it's together. It's plural. And appreciation.

For those things. That are lovely. That are like God himself. Leads to God of peace. Himself. Himself. Being with you. In other words.

A prayerful mind. And a holy mind. In that exercise. Together. Lead to experiencing. The Lord of peace himself. Giving peace.

To his people. And it's connected finally. With God's presence. The Lord of peace. Himself. Give you peace. At all times. In every way.

[54 : 32] The Lord. Be with you all. All these words. Are really just an extension. In a sense. Of what he's saying there. At the beginning. The Lord of peace himself. Give you peace.

Because you can't separate. The Lord. Giving peace. To his people. From the Lord. Being with his people. The presence. Of Jesus. As well as the.

Bestowing. Bestowing. The bestowing. By Jesus. Of this peace. The peace. And the presence. Of God. All built into this. One wonderful text.

The Lord. Be with you all. This is the peace. That Paul sought. For the Thessalonians. This is the peace.

The peace. That you seek. For yourselves. As a congregation. That you set before God.

Prayerfully. And practically. Demonstrate.

[55 : 27] In your relationships. One with another. This is the peace. That you value. The peace. That you appreciate. The peace. That you give thanks. To God for. The peace.

That you pray. Will be continued. And expanded. And enlarged. In your own experience. And appreciation. Of it. The peace. That only Jesus. Can give. The Lord of peace.

Himself. Is the one. You're looking to. For that peace. To be experienced. And enjoyed. By you together. And that is the peace.

I pray. Will be with you. And remain with you. And I do sincerely pray. These words. Of this verse. For you. As I take my leave.

Of active ministry. With you. I pray. The Lord of peace. Himself. Give you peace. At all times. In every way. The Lord.

[56 : 24] Be. With you all. Let's pray. We give thanks. Oh Lord. That you are.

The Lord of peace. You preside. Over peace. Like you do. Everything else. And we know. Lord. That the peace. That we need. And the peace. That we enjoy.

As your people. Is a peace. That you have created. For us. A peace. That issues. From yourself. A peace. Oh Lord. That we crave.

As we seek. Your peace. From day to day. And we. Oh Lord. Ask that. You would continue. To bestow. That peace. Upon us. Day by day. Even as the apostle.

Your servant. Sought for these. Thessalonian believers. And we pray. That the Lord of peace. Himself. Will continue. To give this congregation. Peace. And all our congregations.

[57 : 17] And enable us Lord. We pray to thrive. Under the experience. Of you bestowing. That peace upon us. We pray that your presence. Will go with us. Into every area of life.

Receive our thanks. We pray now. Pardoning our sin. For Christ's sake. Amen. We are going to conclude. Our service.

This morning. By singing in Psalm 72. 72. In the singed Psalms version. That is on page 92. And we are singing to the tune. Before the throne.

And verses 1 to 7. Words again. That bring our minds. To Jesus. As the king of his people. And how he is the one.

Who bestows. Peace upon them. Endow the king. With justice Lord. The royal son. With righteousness. Your people. Your afflicted ones. He will judge.

[58 : 12] With truth. And uprightness. The mountains. Will bring peace to them. The hills. The fruit. Of righteousness. And so on. Verses 1 to 7. To his praise.

Amen. To our hearts. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. If you just please take your seats for a moment.

Well I hope as many as possible will manage to go through to the hall to the prize giving. To show our support for the children. And to be with them at the time of the end of session prize giving. I will hopefully God willing be saying much more on the 28th at the time of the farewell. But I'd like to say at this point how much these eight years have meant to me and to Donna as we've saved the Lord amongst you.

[60 : 56] I could not have wished to end my ministry in a better congregation than yourselves. As I mentioned at the Gaelic prayer meeting.

The last Gaelic prayer meeting. The quality of reception to the word of God in this congregation. Matches anywhere else that I've ever known. And that's a great privilege.

And a great honour indeed. For anyone who ministers to you. Thank you for calling me. To be your minister. Thank you.

It's been my privilege these past eight years. To have preached the gospel to you.

To have as far as possible gone in and out amongst you. To have shared with you. In your times of joy and times of sorrow. Which are always features of every congregation's life.

[61 : 59] I can say I have sought at all times. To be faithful to the Lord. And to his word. But I do sincerely thank you.

It has been my honour indeed. To have been your minister. During these years. And I pray as we saw this morning. That the Lord of Peace will indeed.

Give you peace. In everything and at every turn. In these days to come. I'm sure that you will give. Whoever comes to.

Be your minister in the future. The same. Attentive. Careful. And valuable support. That you have given to me.

I thank you for your support. Of every endeavour we've had. Together in the gospel. Some of these initiatives. Have come from yourselves. And I and the Kirk Session have been pleased to support them.

[63 : 04] And to encourage you in them. And whatever initiatives have come. From myself. From time to time. I thank you for your cooperation and willingness.

To follow through with them. In the conviction that they were indeed. Activities which would benefit. The congregation. And serve the gospel. And be pleasing to God.

And I pray that. You will continue to grow in the grace. And in the knowledge. Of our Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ.

Now if you allow me to get to the main door. I'm not sure if all of you can come through the main door. I'd like it if you could. Some will have to go through I suppose. That don't use the steps. But as many as possible.

I'd like to just greet you. On the way out today. Saying this is my final service as minister. Father.

And if you could. Let me get to the main door please. I'll be happy to do that. Let's stand now for the benediction.

[64 : 02] Now may the peace of God. That passes all understanding. Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the love of God the Father. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you now and evermore. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.