

Cloak of Consolation

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Date: 16 August 2020

Preacher: Mr Scott Macleod

[0 : 00] Well, good evening. We thank you for joining with us for our worship, and we pray that the Lord would bless us in our time together.

I could begin by reading a verse from St. Psalms, Psalm 107.

Straight was the path he led them on, a city to attain. So for the Lord's unfailing love, let them give thanks again. And for the awesome deeds of power, which he for them achieves, for hungry souls he fills with good, the thirsty he relieves. Let us bow our heads in prayer.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for this day and this opportunity to come again and worship you, and to sit at your feet and listen to what you have to say to us. May we be still to hear your voice, speaking to us through your word, even as we read it just now. And we thank you for that word that has been given to us and revealed to us the plan of redemption that comes through Jesus Christ. Through that death at Calvary, upon the cross, where he died for me, and paid the price of my sins so that I may be free.

Amen. And we just praise you for all that you have done for us, even this day, the good things that we have received from you, from your hand, the shelter we have, the homes that we have, the people that we have around us to keep us coming, and the gospel that we have. And the gospel that we have, the freeness of it. We pray for those who do not have such freedoms.

[2 : 27] Those who have no freedoms for their religion. Those who have no freedoms for their religion. We pray for those who have no freedoms for their religion.

We pray that you would encourage them tonight. And keep encouraging them, that they would know your guiding hand and your spirit leading them through the days of hardship that they endure. We pray particularly for our country at this time. Remember our leaders as they make decisions for us.

That you would give them wisdom. For they may not know what to do or what to say next. But we pray that they would fall before you and acknowledge they do not know yet.

That they would seek you. Or they would find you. That you would impart your wisdom to them. For our nation is in great need of salvation. People are looking for satisfaction in their souls.

[3 : 48] And not finding it. We pray that your spirit would be active in every effort that where the gospel is proclaimed in your name today.

Yes, and every moment it is. That your spirit would be convicting people. Encouraging people. Giving them food to help them go on and continue the faith.

That they would have their thirst quenched. And we just pray that you would sustain your people.

That they would dwell in bonds of unity. Regardless of denomination or church. That your people would join together. And agree together. And worship you together.

That we would not be separate from one another. Or think ourselves more highly than we ought to. But that you would unite those who have a love through Jesus Christ.

[5 : 02] And through his name alone. Not through any church. Or any domination. But alone in the name of Jesus. That we would find fellowship together. One with another.

One with another. And so we remember all efforts. Made against this virus that is plaguing our country. We pray for places where there has been outbreaks.

That they would again settle. And that you would guide those who are in charge of these areas.

To make wise decisions. To reduce the impact of the virus. And we pray that it would reduce.

And even as we come and enter into the winter months. That it would not flare up again. And pose a threat to us.

[6 : 09] We pray for your protection. We pray for wise measures to be put in place. That would protect us. And that ultimately people would pray to you for their protection.

For you are the one who can protect and sustain each of us. Even beyond life itself. You are the one who promises eternal life. For those who dwell in Christ Jesus.

And so be with us. Be with us for this time that we have together. Keep the evil one from us. That he would not enter our household for this time.

That we would ponder upon your word. That you would teach us through it. That we would learn more about you. That we would know you better. Trust you. And come to believe in you. Have faith in you.

And be obedient to your will for us in our lives. So we ask all these things in the name of our Saviour. Jesus Christ. Amen.

[7 : 16] Well if we could continue by saying a word to the younger ones that are listening today. I have brought with me a bit of a cat. You all know what it is. It's not like too hard.

I hope you can see this. And I am sure you know what it is. It's a wiper. And they are very useful things. Especially when it is raining. You kind of need them when you are driving a car.

And my friend used to have a car. Where the wiper would stop working. And that was fine until the rain came pouring down. And you couldn't see in front of you.

It was pretty dangerous. And it made me realize how much we rely on these small things that are fitted to our car.

For their safety. And for everyone else's safety. Now. I was thinking the other day. As it was raining.

[8 : 17] That these small raindrops. That stick to our windscreen when we drive. You will of course be traveling with your parents. I hope. I hope you won't be driving. But these wee drops that stick to our windscreens.

And you wouldn't think such a small thing would have such an impact. But when there are hundreds and thousands of them following. And touching the screen. It doesn't take long before you start to have blurred vision.

And you can't exactly see where you want to be going. Without putting the wiper on. And what you are doing is asking the car. To turn them on for you. Really.

And then ask Clearsha Windscreen. And you can continue safely. And get where you want to go to. But I was thinking that maybe. These wee raindrops. They could be like little sins in our lives.

And we might not think. That they would have much of an impact. These little sins. But they all mind up. And we all do hundreds of things that we shouldn't be doing. And thoughts that we shouldn't think.

[9 : 26] And they all build up. And you know what? All these things blur our vision of Christ. And blur the vision of where Jesus wants us to be.

And where we are to go. For sure in our hearts. We must all say that we want to go to heaven. We don't want to go anywhere else. Do we?

And so. If we want to get to heaven. We must stay on the road that leads to heaven. And that involves. Staying on track.

And making the right decisions at the right time. And following the voice of Jesus as he tells us. It's as if we're travelling on our road.

And if we don't put on the wiper to clear our vision. We may end up having to stop. We may end up coming off the road. Or indeed we may end up not turning off where we need to turn off.

[10 : 27] And end up somewhere where we don't want to go. So. What we need to do is ask Jesus. To wash away these sins. And wipe away these sins.

That make our vision of Christ more blurry. And if it's blurry we don't understand him so well. And we don't read our Bible.

We don't understand what we're reading our Bibles. But if Jesus washes these sins away. We see Jesus clearer. And the road before us is clearer for our lives.

That we would trust and commit ourselves to Jesus. He is the only one that can wash away our sins. We just need to ask him.

Ask him as we. In a way as we ask the car to be on the wiper. That Jesus would come and wash away these sins. Never to be seen again.

[11 : 27] New ones will fall. New ones will come to us. But we must ask every day. And every time we see our sins. That he would wash them away.

So that ultimately we stay on the road. We follow the signs that are before us. And we reach the destination that we all desire to reach.

Glory in heaven to be with Christ. May these thoughts be blessed to you today. May we 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. Lead us not into temptation.

[12 : 26] But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom. The power and the glory forever. Amen. May we continue in our worship by reading in the book of 2 Kings.

In the Old Testament. 2 Kings chapter 2. And I'll read from the beginning. Down to the end of verse Mark 15.

This is an account of Elijah ascending into heaven. From the beginning. Chapter 2. Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind.

Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha. Please stay here. For the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.

But Elisha said, as the Lord lives. And as you live yourself. I will not leave you. So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel.

[13 : 35] And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel. Came out to Elisha. And said to him. Do you know that today. The Lord will take away your master from over you.

And he said, yes, I know it. Keep quiet. Elijah said to him. And he did. Oh, dasah will take me now to Bitaksh.

And they said to Der treasury. But Elisha said to Her logic. And ■ências. And they said to El mistakes. And they said to her. And he said to James. And they said to him. Here theborians asked them. Then Paul said, He said to the great streamer.

And they said to them. And let him say, Hu, he said. Yet they said to there. And when he said during the■. Apen. And they said to him. For the orator. And he answered, Yes, I know. Keep quiet. Then Elijah said to him, Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan. But he said, As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.

[14 : 42] So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the sons of the prophet also went and stood at some distance from them, as they were both standing by the Jordan.

Then Elijah took his coat and rolled it up and struck the water. And the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.

And Elisha said, Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me. And he said, You have asked a hard thing. Yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you.

But if you do not see me, it shall not be so. And as they still went on and talked, Behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them.

[15 : 54] And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horses.

And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the water, saying, Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?

And when he had struck the water, the water was parted one side and to the other. And Elisha went over. Now, when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.

And they came to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. Amen. May the reading of God's word be blessed to us this day.

[17 : 07] Now, you remember that the last time I led worship, we thought upon the character of Rahab, who dwelled in the city of Jericho.

And she found salvation in trusting in the Lord's people. They saved her from destruction. As the threat of the Lord's army, approached, they had to cross the river Jordan in order to get to Jericho. And it was done by the power of God that you can read of in the book of Joshua. And so we return to the banks of the river Jordan today and think about these two men who, one being lifted to glory

and one continuing the work as God's prophet on earth.

The man who came from the lowly farm ploughing with his oxen but was chosen by God. Now, we find in the story that these two men are found talking together as they make their way to the other side of the Jordan.

And it seems like the sons of the prophet have left them and just watch them as they go for their last moments together before the glorious separation is made by these fiery horses and fiery chariots.

[18 : 52] So tonight, can we ponder for a moment on the cloak, the continuation and the companionship that we see in this great consolation that has been left.

So firstly, the cloak. We read that Elijah's cloak falls from him as he is carried away before Elisha.

Now, this cloak is of significant sentimental value, surely. For we find upon his calling to be a prophet back in 1 Kings 19 that Elijah approaches Elisha as he is busy plowing in his field.

And we are told that he just approaches him silently and places this distinctive cloak upon him. This seems to be enough to instill a conviction on Elisha's power to go with this man of God.

and to be under his care and under his teaching to ultimately be a prophet in his place. So we see that the cloak is precious in the beginning of the relationship and it's also precious again at the end of it.

[20 : 23] And in that initial meeting, Elijah arrives at the man who was busy in his daily duty working away.

And maybe you today listening at home are you one who goes about your daily duty working? And maybe you have experienced Christ appear to you.

Maybe Christ wants to draw closer to you. for he has a precious cloak of righteousness that he wants to give you.

You have done nothing worthy of receiving it, but he gifts it to the lost sinner. Maybe today is the day that you need to be still before Christ.

Let him come to you and place this cloak on you. For so many men fear the presence of Christ and fear coming to Christ and letting Christ draw near to them.

[21 : 37] Be still, I pray, and let Christ draw near. And for Elisha, this was a sweet gift that fell from the whirlwind.

and possibly even thinking back himself to that moment when it was first placed on his shoulder. But now, note, that it is not Elijah that is giving it to him.

It is the Lord. It is the Lord's hand and it is a precious hand that is giving it to him now. The Lord showing his favour to the man by granting him sight of seeing Elijah leaving and this additional token of receiving his master's cloak.

Yet, to put it on was to wear the responsibility of his teacher. See that the cloak this time was not placed upon him, but it was placed before him.

Was Elisha willing to pick up this great and weighty responsibility? Could he have walked away and left it there?

[22 : 55] In a sense he could have, but in another sense he couldn't have. Because had he left it, the realisation of turning his back on God would have had no peace in his heart and knew that the harmonious obedience and trusting in the will and trusting in the Lord's will was ultimately his best comfort.

For him to shun that responsibility and disobey the Lord would have plagued him with a despondent heart for the rest of his life. this was not worth even considering.

Elisha knew that he had but only to go with God. He had no other choice. And maybe for the Christian today, maybe God has placed something before you for you to uplift.

But you have not. For the fear of what lies before you and the fear of the responsibility that lies before you and seeing your own inadequacy to take up that cloak and wear it.

Our duty is to trust in the Lord's will. Even when that realisation has been made clear to us, there is a service that waits every Christian, some greater, some not so great.

[24 : 36] but it is all a great service that we do together. To work a way for the glory of Christ.

To put on the uniform of Christ as Christians. Not to be ashamed to do so, God's even even though knowing that it will not receive praises from the majority of men.

God will see that's heard at the very beginning by his request before Elijah. That he asks, please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.

He wants to receive a blessing. But you'll note, depending on the version of the Bible you have, there's a reference to Deuteronomy 21 verse 17 here.

And this double portion that has been mentioned, it's not that he would be endowed with a doubly effective spirit, twice as much as what Elijah had.

[25 : 53] What he is asking here is that he would receive an inheritance from Elijah, a double share, of what the first born son would receive within a family unit.

The first born son would receive twice as much as the other sons. And so by having seen the ascension of Elijah, he is confident as receiving this spirit and to have the cloak was a witness to the sons of the prophets and seeing him parting the Jordan as Elijah had done.

He, Elijah, was worthy to be called a son and so received a great blessing. He was not ashamed or afraid to ask of God great things, to use him and bless him abundantly for God's ultimate purposes. He was willing to do so. For Elijah now had no need of this cloak. cloak, even though he was going into the presence of God.

Now Elijah had previously needed this cloak when God appeared to him on Mount Sinai. And even though it was only a whisper from God, the fear in Elijah's heart was sufficient enough that he needed to cover his face and hide himself from God.

[27 : 55] The authority and power and might of God struck a fear in his heart, the holiness of God that he could not look upon.

But now the picture is of one who needs no cover. There shall be no fear of God in heaven like we experience here on earth.

There will be no celestial coverings for our faces before Christ. For your eyes shall see the King and his beauty.

Isaiah 33 verse 17. We will fully enjoy the presence of God and see our Savior in all his glory. So what I thought that is all the fears that we experience in this world, even the fears of God's holiness, will be turned into joys.

[29 : 07] Our eyes will no more behold any sins, for our bodies will be renewed completely, renewed in Christ, and that will continue for all eternity.

And so Elisha, as the man of God, returning back, represents a continuation of an earthly ministry amongst God's people.

He was a prophet in the place of Elijah. And so can we jump to our next point of continuation. It's fitting to mention that these two have returned in the opposing direction, very near the path historically made.

by the children of Israel before they conquered Jericho. So they're heading back across. Now this puts us back to the plains of Moab and Mount Pisgah.

This is where Moses was given the site of the promised land beyond the Jordan. Here he died and was taken into God's care to be buried.

[30 : 30] Israel. And so on these same plains where the Israelites mourned for Moses, Elijah mourns for Elijah.

This land commemorative with losses but revived in hope. Joshua stood in similar ground when he lost his leader.

God's words. He was encouraged with God's words. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

Joshua 1 verse 5. And does Elisha not know his scriptures? Surely he would have recalled these words.

After calling out after God, where is the God of Elijah? And he has struck the river of the Jordan and it has parted again just as it did for Elijah.

[31 : 39] And he must have thought of those words that were spoken to Joshua as he walked through the walls of water on either side, retracing the steps that Joshua had even made through this Jordan river.

And thinking of these words, so I will be with you. And effectively hearing, just as I was with Elijah, Elijah, just as I am the God of Elijah, so I will be with you.

So I will be with you. So I will be with you. So I will be with you.