

The Key that Christ Has

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Date: 24 July 2022

[0 : 00] I want to extend a very warm welcome to everybody this morning and particularly any who may be visiting with us. It's nice to have you here and trust that we'll all know God's blessing and also a welcome to those who are joining us online.

Just a small intimation sheet because of the holidays, so just take your time reading through it. The one thing to Mr McKeever, the minister, developed a very sore throat and has lost his voice, so he'll be unable to take the service this evening, so I'm going to take that service.

So that's the only change that's there. We're going to begin singing in Psalm 146, Psalm 146, and we're going to sing, and this is from the Scottish Psalter, which is on page 445 and verses 1 to 7, the tune of St. Stephen.

Praise God. The Lord praise, O my soul. I'll praise God while I live, while I have being to my God.

In songs I'll praises give. Trust not in princes nor man's son, in whom there is no stay. His breath departs, to his earth he turns.

[1 : 16] That day his thoughts decay. O happy is that man and blessed, whom Jacob's God doth aid, whose hope upon the Lord doth rest, and on his God is stayed, who made the earth and heavens high, who made the swelling deep, and all that is within the same, who truth doth ever keep, who righteous judgment executes.

For those oppressed that be, who to the hungry giveth food, God sets the prisoners free. Psalm 146, verses 1 to 7.

The tune is St. Stephen. St. Stephen. Praise God. Praise God the Lord.

Praise God the Lord. Praise O my soul. And praise God the Father. Why I have thee, into my God, in songs and praises dear.

Trust not in Prince's Norman Son, in whom there is no fear.

[2 : 43] His bloody heart, whose earth he turns, the King's thoughts he came.

O happy is that man unplest, whom Jacob's God can be.

Whose hope upon the Lord the rest, and on his God is safe.

Who made the earth of heaven's high, who made the swelling deep.

And all of us within the city, who truth doth ever be.

[4 : 06] Her righteous judgment executes, for those so present like me.

Where to the hungry give a good God sets the blissful tree.

Let us pray. O Lord our God, as we bow in your presence today, we pray that we might be able to praise you with all our being, as long as we live.

Your word tells us that the grave doesn't praise you, but in life we do. And so we pray that while we have the opportunity, that we might give you the praise and honour that is due to your name, for you are worthy of all praise and honour.

Throughout an endless eternity, that's what the saints in glory do. And so we pray that as we live out our days here in this world, that we might be found as people of praise.

[5 : 27] And that we may be engaged in recognising your wonderful works in everything. We have to confess, Lord, that we do not understand you, or able to grasp the immensity of who you are.

Because your ways are not our ways. The things that sometimes appear logical and right to us are not the way that you think at all. But you have revealed to us many of the things, although there are hidden things that have not been revealed to us about yourself.

You have chosen to reveal a lot. And we give thanks for your word, which opens up to us, to our understanding, and through your spirit is able to teach us great things, so that we're able to lay hold upon more and more of just who you are, of the nature, the character of God.

And so we pray that as we gather before you, we may seek to give you everything that we have, that we may lay ourselves before you. And we come so often, when we come under your word, we are reminded of what we are.

And we look at our own lives, and we see so much of the failure and the sin that is such a blot upon who we are. And often when we come under your word, we begin to have new intentions of seeking to obey you better.

[6 : 52] But Lord, we know that we are so bound by sin, and it causes us to walk with a spiritual limp in our lives. But we give thanks for the forgiveness that your word promises when we come to you confessing your sin.

And we pray that right now we may be able to do that, all of us, from the oldest to the youngest, that we will confess our sin within our own heart, knowing that you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We pray, Lord, that you will open your word to us today, that we will hear what God the Lord will speak, knowing that to his folk he speaks peace. We pray, Lord, that you will bless us as a congregation.

We give thanks, Lord, for the new settlement as Callum Murdo and Joanne have come with us and their family. And we give thanks, Lord, for the gifts that you have equipped them with. And we pray, Lord, that they will be a great blessing to us and we to them.

We pray for Mr. McKeever just now, that you will restore him to full health and strength again soon. And we thank you for his ministry here and pray that you will uphold him and Donna and the family.

[8 : 08] Lord, our God, we give thanks for all your servants, for all who proclaim your word, for all who are working for you day and night. We remember Muriel in Cambodia.

We commit her to you and ask that you will be with her and that you will help her in all the challenges that she faces day by day. We remember all the missionaries throughout this world.

Some we know. Probably most we don't. But we give thanks for all the missionary agencies that are involved in bringing the gospel into all the areas of this world.

And we give thanks for the wonderful way that the gospel touches hearts. And right throughout this world, there is a massive global spread of the gospel that the media doesn't report on.

But we give thanks, Lord, that you know everyone that is calling upon your name. We pray to bless us here. We pray for the tweenies who are in with us just now and be with them as they make their way back to the hall.

[9 : 08] We give thanks, Lord, for all who give of their time and talent and energy at all the different levels. Although the Sunday school is on holiday just now, we pray for all the Sunday school teachers and for all who help in the creche and in the tweenies.

And we pray for all the work that's done, all the youth work and all who are involved in that. We commit them to your care and keeping. Pray for our school teachers. And we ask, Lord, that you'll be with them at this time, at holiday time.

And remember all the children. Watch over them. And we remember the work of the camps. And we give thanks, Lord, for the great work that goes on throughout the holidays. And pray that your protection will be known and that there will be a great work taking place, that seed will be sown and many people come to faith.

Lord, bless us as a nation. We need you. Lord, we seem to be reeling like, as it says in the psalm, they reel and stagger like one drunk. But we haven't sometimes realized that we're at our wits end.

O Lord, may we nationally begin to cry to you. That almost seems impossible. But we know that nothing is impossible with you. Have mercy upon us.

[10 : 22] Deliver us from ourselves, from our own stupidity. And help us, Lord, to have a focus upon yourself. Lord, we pray then for our leadership. We ask, Lord, in this time of great instability throughout this world, that a greater stability will be brought in.

And we know that as long as people walk away from the gospel, and the more that they push you away, the more you give us up to ourselves, the worse things will be.

Lord, be gracious to us, we pray. Bless those who are ill. We ask your healing hand to be upon them. We pray for those who mourn, and we remember the McLeod family in Plasterfield.

Lord, we commit them to your care and keeping. And we ask for all whose hearts are sore and heavy because of bereavement. Bring in the oil of healing that you alone can bring into broken hearts.

We ask, Lord, for our elderly and those who are coming to the end of their days. We pray for any who still don't know you. Oh, that you would turn them to yourself. Watch over us then, we pray, and grant us your grace as we wait upon you.

[11 : 32] And cleanse us from our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Just a wee word to the young folk.

And there are a few around, and of course we've got the tweenies here. We know that young people are always asking questions. And that's good. Of course, it's not just young people that ask questions.

We all ask questions. It doesn't matter how old we are. We're always asking questions. But it's good to ask questions because it's one of the ways that we learn.

And you know, God has given us many great things, but two of the greatest things that he has ever given to us. One is the Bible. And when you're in tweenies and in Sunday school, you learn about the Bible.

The other great thing God has given us is prayer, where we speak to him. The Bible is God speaking to us. We speak to God in prayer.

[12 : 35] So taking the questions that young people, and I'm sure you all ask, with regard to life, but I'm going to turn these questions of the who and the what and the when and the where and all these things that young people always ask.

You're always asking, what, when, where, why, all these things. So the first thing we'll say is, who should pray? Who's able to pray?

Maybe you say to yourself, I'm too wee to pray. Oh no, you're not. All of you here today, you can all pray. From the youngest person to the oldest person, you're all able to pray.

God doesn't say to anybody, you're too young or you're too old to pray. Isn't that wonderful? As soon as you're able to talk, you're able to pray.

And then you say, what do we pray about? What do you pray about? Well, do you know what the Bible tells us? Everything. Isn't that amazing?

[13 : 41] Everything. Everything. Imagine if God said, well, you can, there's only a few things you can pray about. But he doesn't. He says, in everything, pray.

So it doesn't matter how big the thing is, it doesn't matter how little the thing is, you can bring it to God and pray about it. And again, we have to ask, when can we pray?

Do you know the great thing? Anytime. You can be in your bed and you can pray. You can be in here and you can pray. You can, during the day, during the night, anywhere, at any time, you can pray.

That's the wonderful thing about it. And again, we ask, where do we pray? Well, obviously, we've just prayed here. But again, you can pray, not just at any time, but anywhere.

Where? You can pray in tweenies, you can pray at home, you can pray in the playground, at nursery, at school, you can pray with your friends, you can pray with your family, you can pray in bed, you can pray at breakfast, you can pray anytime.

[14 : 53] And then we ask, why should we pray? Well, above all, we pray so that we get to know God better. And there's nobody better in the whole wide world that we could know than God.

You ask God, help me, Lord, to know you better. And do you know something? The more time you spend with someone, the more you get to know that person.

And the more time you spend speaking to God, the more you'll get to know. So remember that. Remember, as we said there, the who, the what, the when, the where, the why, about prayer.

Because God has given us this anytime, anywhere, day or night, and we can pray about anything. Remember that. So we're now going to pray.

We're going to pray the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

[16 : 03] 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, power and the glory, forever. Amen. We're going to sing again in Psalm 73, again from the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 73, from the Scottish Psalter.

And we're going to sing from verse 23, which we find on page 316. Psalm 73, verse 23. Nevertheless, nevertheless, continually, O Lord, I am with thee.

Thou dost me hold by my right hand, and still upholdest me. Thou with thy counsel while I live, wilt me conduct and guide, and to thy glory afterward receive me to abide.

Whom have I in the heavens high, but thee, O Lord, alone? And in the earth whom I desire, besides thee there is none. My flesh and heart doth faint and fail, but God doth fail me never.

[17 : 12] For of my heart God is a strength and portion forever. We're going to sing from verse 23 to the end of the Psalm on page 316, Psalm 73, and the tune is Tiverton, Nevertheless, Continually.

Nevertheless, continually, O Lord, O Lord, I am with thee.

Thou dost me hold by my right hand, and still upholdest me.

Thou with thy counsel while I live, will be called the God of the night, and to thy glory afterward receive me to abide.

Whom have I in the heavens high, but thee, O Lord, O Lord, alone?

[18 : 35] And in the earth whom I desire, besides thee there is none.

My flesh and heart doth faint and fail, but God doth fail me never.

For of my heart God is the strength and portion forever.

For Lord, For Lord, Lord, Lord, may thou that are far from thee forever perish, shall.

Then that a-boring from thee go, thou hast destroyed all. But surely it is good for me, thou hast destroyed all. But surely it is good for me, that I draw near to God.

[19 : 45] But surely it is good for me, that I draw near to God. In God I trust that all thy words I may declare upon.

For Lord, I am going to read God's word now in the book of the Revelation. Revelation chapter 3. Revelation chapter 3.

Revelation chapter 3. Revelation 3. Revelation 3. From the beginning, And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you're dead. Wake up and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

Remember then what you received and heard, keep it and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

[21 : 18] Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.

I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, The words of the Holy One, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.

I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie. Behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.

[22 : 41] I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.

Never shall he go out of it. And I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write, The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.

I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

[23 : 50] I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich in white garments, so that you may clothe yourself, and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and solved to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

Those whom I love I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered, and sat down with my father on his throne. He who was an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word.

We're going to sing again and sing psalms this time in Psalm 118. Psalm 118, we sing from verses 15 to verse 24.

And the tune is, Psalm 118, that's on page 156. Verse 15 of Psalm 118.

[25 : 07] Triumphant shouts of joy resound in places where the righteous dwell. The Lord's right hand is lifted high, His mighty hand does all things well.

I shall not die, but I shall live. The Lord's great works I will proclaim. The Lord severely chastened me and rescued me from death's domain.

Throw wide the gates of righteousness. I'll enter and give thanks to God. This is the gate of God through which the righteous come before the Lord.

From verse 15 through to verse 24 of Psalm 118. Tune as we are in. Triumphant shouts of joy resound. Triumphant shouts of joy resound.

I have found shouts of joy resound. In places with the righteous dwell.

[26 : 10] Triumphant shouts of joy resound. Triumphant shouts of joy resound. This mighty hand that's all things well.

I shall not die, but I shall live. The Lord's big words I will proclaim.

The Lord's severe, reaching me, But rescued me from death's domain.

Though wide the gates of righteousness I'll enter and give thanks to God.

This is the King of God Through which the righteous come Before the Lord.

[27 : 43] You answered me, I will advance Salvation comes from you alone.

The stone the builders had refused That's now beyond the cornerstone

The true one. The true one. Who has the key of David. Who opens and no one will shut. Who shuts and no one opens. I suppose in the main letter writing today is largely gone.

Letter writing used to be very much the way The way that we communicated with one another. We either phoned people or else we wrote people.

Of course today there's so many different ways Of texting and messaging and getting in touch with people. But, and it's a shame that letter writing Because it was almost an art.

[29 : 59] And it's still nice when somebody writes a letter. And I'm sure we all when we get a letter we enjoy, enjoy reading it. Well, here we have probably the greatest letters ever written Because these are letters that have come from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they came to what is known as the letters to the seven churches in Asia. And the thing is that in these letters Jesus reveals to each church exactly how things are.

Because we're always going to remember that the Lord sees completely differently To the way that you and I see. We see in the surface. We see what's obvious to us.

We make assessments about how things are. But sometimes our assessments can be way off the mark. We think we know. But often we don't.

And I think there's a classic example of this here. When we read there that the church for instance in Sardis, The previous church we read about at the beginning of this chapter, They were a church that there was no doubt that they were a church that people talked about.

[31 : 16] Because we see what it says. I know your works. You have a reputation of being alive. If people said, you know, people would be saying in that day, Do you know where you want to go?

If you want to go to a vibrant church. If you want to go to a church where things are really happening, Go to Sardis. That was the talk. That's how people thought.

That's what they thought. We're really alive. What does God say? No, you're not. You're dead. Isn't that quite a frightening thought?

That a church that thought they were vibrant and alive, That God said, actually, you're not. You're dead. You see, God sees how it really is. He sees right into the heart of each one of us.

He knows who we are, what we are. He knows how we interact with one another. He knows our motives. He knows what we do and why we do. He knows our thoughts.

[32 : 15] He knows everything about us. And so that's actually, it's a very, very solemn thing. So that's what God is saying of that church in Sardis, That they are dead.

Just like the church in Laodicea, The last church in this chapter, Excuse me, that's spoken of. Again, they thought they were doing really well. In fact, they thought that they were doing so well That they didn't need anything.

They said, you know, we're really getting on. We're really prospering. They actually say, we have need of nothing. God's assessment of them was the very opposite.

He said, you know what I'd like to do? I'd like to spit you out of my mouth. That's how bad he found that church. And so, these things, I suppose, challenge us.

Within a congregation or within the church calendar, We have what are known as quenal visitations. Every five years, the Presbyty will visit a congregation.

[33 : 21] And they will be able to kind of assess how things are going. And while these can be quite robust examinations, And they can get a fair assessment of how things are going.

It's not a real accurate assessment like the Lord would give. Because the Lord is visiting us all the time. And he's seeing how things really are. He knows how we came to church today.

He knows the attitude of heart we have. He knows what we think of one another. Do we come with things in our heart against others? If so, that's going to militate in our worship.

If we come with things against someone, It's going to militate against us in our prayers. Remember what the Lord says, If you've got anything against someone, You've got to deal with that first before you pray.

All these things are obstacles to our spiritual life. All these things grieve God's spirit. And so, it's very important that we're always examining ourselves.

[34 : 27] Of course, Mr. McKeever just now is doing a study on the church. A very in-depth, a good study. And one of the things we're realizing is that the church in the New Testament age, Of course, is the people of God.

And so, we've got to take all these things to heart as we look at this. Now, Jesus, the Lord here is giving this. He gives a self-declaration to each church.

And he says, excuse me, that he is the holy one and the true one. That means that there is no sin or deception. There is no hint of injustice in the Lord.

He is altogether true. Everything that he is, everything that he does is perfect. It is true. It is righteous. It is holy.

It is altogether right. Remember how Abraham said, shall not the judge of all the earth do right. And that's exactly what the Lord does. And then, he goes on to say, who has the keys of David?

[35 : 34] Who opens and no one will shut? Who shuts and no one opens? Now, of course, we know that keys are absolutely essential in life. That a key opens and a key closes.

And that's exactly how it is. We're dependent upon keys. If, for instance, Roddy was to have lost the keys of the church this morning, which obviously he wouldn't, we wouldn't be in here today.

It's the keys that are as important as that. So keys open and keys lock. And so we find here that, saying here, Jesus says that he has the keys of David.

So we've got to ask ourselves, what do we understand by this? Well, if we go back to the Old Testament, we remember how the nation of Israel, they came to a point where they wanted to have a king.

Just like all the other nations round about. And so the Lord said, okay, a king will be given. And, of course, you remember that the first king that was chosen was Saul.

[36 : 35] And although Saul had a very good beginning, he very quickly, he fell away. And Saul was replaced by David. And God said, I will give you a man after my own heart.

My choice. And, of course, he gave them David, King David. And David and his kingdom was a kind of a symbol, a type of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we read about the key of David in Isaiah chapter 22. Because there was a man of God there who took over from a very worldly man called Shebna.

And it says here, and I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open and none shall shut. And he shall shut and none shall open.

And this key actually opened, this key opened the door to all the wealth and all the power and all the influence of the king. It was a very, very important key.

[37 : 36] It was a key that opened to all these things. And that's what Jesus is saying. He said, that's the key I have. I have the key to everything. I have the key that opens.

In fact, Jesus, as he talks about, he's not just a key, he's a door. He says, I am the door. And so here we find that Jesus is saying, he is the key to life.

Now, you and I know that many, many people today, in fact, we would say that everybody in life, is kind of looking for the meaning of life. What's it about? Where am I going?

What's it all about? And so many people are striving for certain things. Some people say, well, you know, if I get wealth, if I get influence, if I get power, so many people want a wee bit of power, a wee bit of influence, a wee bit of wealth, a wee bit of popularity, a wee bit of, if I get this, if I get that.

People strive for this in life. And, you know, these things, they cannot ultimately satisfy. Guaranteed, if you get wealth, you want more.

[38 : 44] If you get power, you want more. If you get influence, you want more. Nobody who has wealth or influence or power is ever satisfied with what they have. They always want more of it.

And it's one of the hardest things where they have to give up. And so these things are, they're fleeting things and they're never satisfying things in and of themselves.

Because ultimately it's not things that satisfy, but a passion. That's Jesus. And he is the key. He's the key to life. And may I say to anybody in here today who has not found that Jesus is the key to life, you don't know what you're missing.

Because life, when you take Jesus, it's like turning a key and opening a door. All of you who are Christians, do you remember what happened when you came to faith?

It was like, just like that. It was like getting a key to opening a door that ushered you into a new world. Where you saw things differently. Where you looked at things in a different way.

[39 : 53] There was a new perspective on life. Your movement came from yourself to the Lord. You began to see God. You began to see God's hand in everything.

You began to think about yourself in relation to God. What can I do for God? How can I serve God? Before you became a Christian, serving God was never on your agenda.

You never really thought about, you know, I really need to serve God. What can I do? You do. But when you become a Christian, you thought about it. And the Lord gives us a sphere of service, wherever we are, wherever we live, whatever we're doing.

It isn't simply like, say, you say to yourself, well, I can only be a servant, give service to the Lord if I'm a minister or an office payer. No. Every Christian is giving service to the Lord wherever you are.

In the home, at work. Your place is your ministry. It's your field of service. And so when you become a Christian, that's what happens.

[40 : 56] One of the things that happens. The Lord takes you into this new place where life changes in so many different ways for you. And so the Lord says, I've got this key, this key that opens up.

And he opens up treasures for us that the world can never give. He gives us his peace. He gives hope. You know, you look out in the world today.

There are so many people. And they are feeling utterly hopeless. There is so much despair in their heart. There's so much despair around. When we look at the uncertainty of this world.

And with the whole war in Ukraine and climate change and the whole financial restraints that are placed upon us. And food is going up and energy bills and everything is going up.

And people saying we're living in a hopeless world. And there's not a truth in that. But there's one place of hope. And that is in Jesus Christ. He gives hope.

[42 : 02] Because when he gives himself, he gives hope. That's one of the things we sang about that in Psalm 146. And money can't buy. Influence can't get you hope.

Power can't get you hope. Can't get you peace. Can't get you the joy of the Lord. These things are things money can't buy. Influence can't get you.

Power can't get you. But Jesus gives them to you free. Because he is the key. He is the key to this wealth of his own spiritual blessings and resources.

And all of us understand that when we come to faith in Christ. Doesn't mean that every day we're filled with his peace and filled with his joy. Maybe some of you today aren't.

But it's still there. And it will rise back up again. Maybe today you're feeling a bit down. Maybe today you say, I've lost the joy of the Lord. I don't know the peace I once had.

[43 : 02] These things happen sometimes. But they haven't been removed. And you'll again experience them in their fullness. But a key, as we know, doesn't just open.

A key also locks. It closes. It closes. If you've got valuables, we often use the expression, we put them under lock and key. Under somewhere safe.

So that they'll be secure. And when you go to bed at night, unless sometimes, what often happens, we forget to lock our doors. But normally, we lock our doors when we go to bed at night.

Because we want to keep ourselves, our family, everybody safe and secure. And you know, that's what the Lord does as well with that key. When we come to him, he says, you know what?

I'm going to lock you into myself. From this day on, you are the safest, most secure person in this whole wide world. Your world might tumble around you.

[44 : 01] Everybody might leave you. But I'm still watching you. Not just watching you. I've got you safe. You are as secure today as ever you will be.

And that's one of the wonderful things. Not just for our days in this world and for time, but right throughout eternity. The Lord has you. As he says in John's Gospel, that he has his sheep in his hand.

And then it mentions in the Father's hand. And there is no force or no grip in this world. There's no force in this world. And even supposing all the forces and powers of hell gather together.

To try to prise open the hand of the Lord to get you out. It cannot happen. You cannot be safer. You cannot be more secure than in the hand of the Lord.

Because he has locked you with that key into himself forever. In fact, in Revelation chapter 1, it tells us, speaks to us about the keys.

[45 : 10] And tells us here in verse 18 or verse 17, fear not, I am the first and the last. This is what Jesus says. And the living one, I died and behold, I am alive forevermore.

And I have the keys of death and of life. Use this awful enemy, death. We know what death does. It invades. It takes away those whom we love.

It takes away family. It takes away friends. Cold hand. We use the expression cold hand of death. And there's nothing colder in all this world than death. It's that enemy.

That last enemy. And it's something that we recoil from. But you know the wonderful thing is, we don't even need to be afraid of death. That hope that Jesus gives us is a hope that's there for death.

Because the wonderful thing is, Jesus says, you know, see death. I've actually gone beforehand for you. I died for you. I went to the cross for you.

[46 : 13] I went and I bore your sins upon myself. I did all that. But I went under the power of death. I went under the power of the grave.

I was laid into the grave. But you know what? I rose up. I'm the living one. That's what he says. I'm alive forever more. And I have conquered.

I have the key of death. I've conquered it. I have the key of the grave. I have conquered it. Isn't that wonderful? Jesus is saying, I am the personal guarantee that what happened to me on that Easter morning will happen to you as well.

And when it says that I have the keys of death and of Hades, Hades is really, sometimes it's translated as hell, but it is actually the unseen world that is beyond death.

And that involves the grave. It does involve hell and it involves heaven. It involves, Hades is really the unseen world that takes place after and which does also involve the grave.

[47 : 25] And so, this is the amazing thing that we said that although Satan will do his worst and Satan will try and derail you as a Christian.

You know, Satan, the day you become a Christian, you're a marked man in hell. And Satan will follow you everywhere. And he will try and derail you. He will try and spoil your enjoyment of Christianity.

He will sow seeds of doubt in your mind regarding other Christians and regarding God's promises to you. He will do anything and everything to keep the joy of the Lord away from you.

He will tempt you and try you constantly. And he will want to ruin your witness. And that's why we need to pray for one another. Because there are forces far greater than ourselves out to destroy us every single day.

You've got to remember that. So pray for yourself and pray for one another. And he wants to take your soul to hell. But you know what? He can't. He cannot. He cannot.

[48 : 30] No matter how much he tries, he cannot. The Lord will never, ever, ever lose one that he has saved. And that's a great and a wonderful thing. And so Jesus, who has the keys, and remember these are the keys that when he locks, nobody can open.

And when he opens, nobody can shut. And that's a wonderful thing here. That in the whole domain of death, Jesus is Lord.

He's in control. He alone knows the destiny of each soul. You know, people come forward. People come to profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is a wonderful thing.

And they come before the Kirk session. And the Kirk session, they hear the person will say about, they'll be able to say that they love the Lord Jesus Christ. We want to hear that confession.

Because it's biblical. We're told, confess Christ. Believe in the heart and confess with the mouth. But you know, at the end of the day, a Kirk session has no power over the destiny of any soul.

[49 : 40] Kirk session can only deal with what is seen outwardly. The Lord alone knows. And you know, we've always got to remember the Lord our God is merciful.

And he is gracious. And he's long suffering. And he's slow to wrath. And he's not willing that any should perish. That's what the word says. And what does that not give us hope?

Does that not give you hope? If today you are outside Christ. That he's not willing that any should perish. And today the invitation is there to you to come to him. He's got outstretched arms.

He's inviting you today if you haven't got right with God. And he will give you this hope. Not only for time, but also for eternity. That's the wonderful thing. So he is Lord.

He is Lord over death as well. He is Lord over the destiny of the soul. And we've got to remember that we all one day will appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

[50 : 41] On that day he will be displayed in all his royal glory and grandeur. Not as a babe of Bethlehem. But the king immortal and all powerful.

And for those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ. We've said this often enough before. He will give them exactly what they wanted. But it's only then that they will discover what rejection actually means.

You see rejection in this world is different to rejection forever. Because rejection in this world the Lord is still present. In this world his common grace is extended.

His mercy is, remember what it says, Good unto all men is the Lord. To everybody God is good. But that changes at death.

That changes in hell. And that's the solemnity of it. When people say, surely the Lord cannot at the end of the day reject people. Well at the end of the day the Lord only gives to people what they've chosen.

[51 : 49] What they wanted in life. If people say, I don't want Jesus. Jesus at the end will say, alright, I'm going to give you what you wanted in life.

You didn't want me. Here you are forever. It's a solemn thought. So that's why it is so important that here in life and time that we get right with God.

And that's what Jesus is. I want you today, if you're still outside, to get right with me. And so we find that here Jesus has the keys.

And so we have the keys of death. And keys of the grave. And keys of heaven. And keys of hell. But you know for the Christian, as we think of death, which is inevitably coming.

Do you know something? Death actually is your servant. Death is for you. And you may say that's strange. It is, in a sense.

[52 : 51] But in 1 Corinthians, the apostle gives a list of all the things that are for the Christian. And included in that list is death.

That death is for you. Death is a chariot that takes you from this world into the presence of the Lord. So, although we know that death and the grave and these things are, we talk of the finality, and we've said it so often, the finality of the grave.

But we've got to remember that the grave is temporary. It's a temporary resting place for the body. The soul has gone to glory. The body is resting in the grave till the resurrection. And just when the earth is filled in and the turf rolled over, it's just like going to bed at night for the body.

Because that's just like there's the blanket, there's the duvet. Resurrection morning, it's all opened. The body rises to be reunited with the soul. That's hope.

There's nothing else in this world. Does anybody else have a message other than the Lord? So much hope as that. No. So today, let us hear the voice of the one who says, I've got the keys.

[54 : 08] I've got the keys of life. I've got the keys of death. I've got the keys of the afterlife. Come to me and put your hand in my hand. Let's pray.

Lord our God, we pray to bless us. And we give thanks for tying together and being able to reflect on your word. Oh Lord, help us to hear what you say to us. Time is short.

May we indeed put our hand in your hand. That hand that's outstretched to us. Take away from us our every sin we pray. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 16.

And sing Psalms. Psalm number 16. And we're going to sing from verse 8 to the end. The tune is Golden Hill. Psalm 16.

Sing Psalms. And you'll find that on page 17. Psalm 16. Before me constantly I set the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

[55 : 07] 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 in 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.

8 to the end. Psalm 16. Before me constantly. Before me constantly I set 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.

[56 : 23] My body too will rest secure in hope unwavering.

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

Not will you leave your Holy One to see the tombs decay. You have made known to me the path of life divine. You have made known to me the path of life divine. You have made known to me the path of life divine. You have made known to me the path of life divine. You have made known to me the path of life divine.

To see the tombs decay. You have made known to me.

The path of life divine. Blessed shall I know.

[57 : 33] At your right hand. Joy from your face will shine.

Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. I will go to the.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.