

Being Christian Witnesses

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 96, the Scottish Psalter version on page 358. We'll take up our singing at verse 7, it's verse 8 on the sheep, we'll take it up at verse 7 to verse 11. Do ye ascribe unto the Lord of people every tribe, glory do ye unto the Lord and mighty power ascribe. Give ye the glory to the Lord that to his name is due. Come ye into his courts and bring an offering with you. We'll sing from verse 7 to 11 to God's praise and we stand to sing.

Glory do ye unto the Lord and mighty power ascribe. Give ye the glory to the Lord, that to his name is due. O Lord and mighty power ascribe. Give ye the glory to the Lord, that to his name is due.

Almighty power ascribe. Give ye the glory to the Lord, that to his name is due. Come ye, into his force and bring an offering with you. In beauty of his holiness, O dear, the Lord and mighty power ascribe. Give ye the glory to the Lord, that to his name is due.

The grace that all the earth drew out, from the earth's face before. All the earth drew out, from the earth's face before.

■■■ Omar Among the heathen sick, O examples the world shall shed fastly, from moving he shall judge the people righteously.

[3 : 1 2] Let hands be glad before the Lord and let the earth rejoice.

Let cease and all that is said cry out and make a noise.

Let's come together to God in prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for every opportunity we have to come and worship you together as a people.

We thank you that we have your word before us that guides us, Lord, that speaks to us of all our needs. We thank you that we are able to offer up praise to you and offer up prayer to you and that you hear and delight in all of these things.

And we do pray, Lord, that you will bless us and be with us. We thank you that you are a king over us and that we come into the presence of you as our king. And although there was much joy in our nation and excitement yesterday over the coronation of a new king, King Charles III, we thank you above all, Lord, and pray for him that he would know Jesus Christ as his Lord and King, that all the nations of our world would come to give glory to you and that we would find in you the one who is with us.

[4 : 5 7] So, Lord, may you bless us together. May you bless us young and old alike as we hear of your truth, of your word today. May you bless us in every home and family we represent. May you be with us, Lord, and guide us throughout this day.

Help us to be glad in it, for this is a day that you have made. Help us to rejoice in that. So, Lord, continue with us and go before us, pardoning all our sin in Jesus' name.

Amen. I'm sure not just the young folks, but many of us would have been paying attention to what was happening in London yesterday as it was shown on our screens, as it was heard on the radio, wherever you went yesterday, there was signs and indications that something important was happening.

It was the coronation of the king. And as you watched on, I'm sure there was many different things that maybe caught your attention. Maybe you had your favorite part of the day, maybe you weren't interested in it at all, but whatever situation we found ourselves in, something important was happening with the coronation of King Charles III.

And when you watch and see what was happening, you see many things that maybe catch your attention. the amount of different people that were coming from all over the world to be there, important people.

[6 : 19] The fanfare and all the parades and the crowds that were there, all there to see what was taking place. The way King Charles was dressed and all the different things that he had to go through as he became king and as the crown was placed on his head.

There was lots of different things happening. He is the king of our nation, but he's not the only king in the world. There's kings and queens in other parts of the world as well.

If you find a list of all the different kings and queens, you find that lots of different countries around the world have their own king or queen. Norway, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, even Cambodia, where Muriel, who was here with us recently, even where she is, there's a king over that nation as well.

So there may be lots of different kings and queens around the world. And although all of these kings and queens, there's a lot of fanfare around them, there's a lot of things that are so important about their role and all that's done when they become king or queen and they have this crown put on their head, can they be said of one of them that they are the king or queen of the whole world?

It can't. And can it be said of anyone that they are king of the whole world? Yes, it can.

[7 : 49] It can be said of only one person. And that's the Lord. The Lord is king of all nations. In Psalm 47, it speaks about how the Lord is king.

It says, how awesome is the Lord most high, great king who rules the earth throughout, the whole of the world. It says that God has gone up with shouts of joy, the Lord amidst the trumpets sound.

So there's this fanfare that the Lord is king. And it says in the Psalm, the leaders of the nations come to yield themselves to Abraham's God.

He is the king of all the world and of all people. So the Lord is king. And when we think of that, we think of, well, who is our king?

Is King Charles our only king, our most important king? No. King Jesus is the most important king. And what we see of King Jesus is that he was given a crown when he was in this world.

[9 : 00] But it was very different to the crown that was put on King Charles' head yesterday. It was a crown of thorns. So very different.

Instead of people shouting, God save the king as they did yesterday, people when Jesus was shown to be king were shouting, crucify him.

That means put him to death. So Jesus came to be king over us all. But in order to be king, he had to take that crown, that crown of suffering and die for us that we might know him as our true king forever for all eternity.

So as we think of the great fanfare around King Charles yesterday and the great crown, the beautiful crown that was put on his head, he cannot be king of the whole world for all time, but Jesus is.

And that's what we are to remember and to know that we can have Jesus as our king too. So may God bless his word and these thoughts to us.

[10 : 08] We're going to say the Lord's prayer together now. Amen. Amen. 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, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

We're going to sing again to God's praise this time in Psalm 107 in the Scottish Psalter. At the beginning of that psalm, Psalm 107, we'll sing from verse 1 to verse 9.

Psalm 107, page 382 of the psalm books. Singing from the beginning, praise God for he is good, for still his mercy's lasting be let God's redeemed say so, whom he from the enemy's hand did free.

[11 : 14] We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 9 to God's praise. Amen. Praise God for he is good for self, his mercy's lasting be.

let God's let God's redeemed say so, whom he from the enemy's handed free.

and gather and gather them out of the land from north, south, east, and west, they strayed in deserts pathless with with no safety found to rest.

For thirst and hunger in their soul whence it's empress, they cry out to the Lord and he them free from distress.

Them also in a way to walk that right to see dead guide, that they might to ascetic o wherein they might abide.

[13 : 34] O that men to the Lord would give grace for his goodness and for his works of wonder done unto the sons of men.

For he that soul that longing is God fully satisfied with goodness he he that he that he that he that he that he that he that he that well let's turn to read God's word together we're turning to 1st Peter chapter 2 1st Peter chapter 2 it's been a bit of time since we were studying this book together but we're going to return to it today and over the next few weeks coming as well to look continue our study through 1st

Peter we take up our reading today in chapter 2 at the beginning of that chapter reading from verse 1 down to verse 12 1st Peter chapter 2 so put away malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up to salvation if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good as you come to him a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ for it stands in scripture behold I am laying in Zion a stone a corner stone chosen and precious and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame so the honor is for you who believe but for those who do not believe the stone that the builders rejected has become the corner stone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense they stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do but you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light once you were not a people but now you are

God's people once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy beloved I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul keep your conduct among the gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation amen and may God bless that reading from his word we'll again unite our hearts in prayer let us pray our father in heaven as we continue to offer up our worship to you we thank you that we come to unite our hearts in that way we come to offer up praise and prayer to you seeking your goodness over us seeking your blessing and your guidance and your mercy to be upon us as a people here but also as your people far and wide we thank you that your word reminds us again and again that you have your people to to all to all to all ends of the earth and you are to yourself from north south east and west you seek to gather your people to come and worship you and to return to the one who is our only

Lord our only God and so we pray that as your word goes out today here and far and wide that your word will be blessed by you that it will build up and strengthen your people and encourage us Lord that you are the one who is building his church and that there is nothing that will overcome not even the gates of hell as your word says as I'll conquer your church but we thank you that we have a great corner stone that the foundation is Jesus Christ and as we have him as that corner stone the one who was so precious who was your chosen son that he would come into this world to save sinners we thank you that you did not hold him back but that you sent him for us and for all who would believe that we would know the great joy of salvation that we would know that great turning that we even read of in a word before us that once we were not a people but now we are

[19 : 30] God's people once we had not received mercy but now we have received mercy that we have been brought from darkness into his marvelous light so we pray Lord that that would be taking place throughout the world today that people would receive mercy and be brought from darkness into light even in our own midst here Lord that we would be converted and convicted by your word so Lord we ask that in all that we do it would be for your glory we pray your encouragement upon us as a people we pray Lord that you will help us as your people to serve with all our hearts to seek your glory in our midst again as a people throughout our islands throughout our communities here throughout our nation that we keep praying to you Lord as the one the coronation that so much has changed over these last number of years we think of the coronation of a new king and as we pray for him as he goes on following the coronation we pray that you will give him wisdom that you will give him strength that you will give him help and abundantly

Lord that you will bless him by your word and by your spirit to acknowledge you we heard so much of your word and your truth yesterday and the professions that he brought before us Lord but may they be true in his heart and not just on his lips that he would rule wisely according to the counsel of your word so we pray Lord that you will be with him and his family and all who lead us and guide us in these days our prime minister our to open their hearts to open their eyes to see and to know you we pray that throughout our world as we were reminded on Wednesday evening with the visit of the Slavic Gospel Association we are reminded of the wonder of your gospel and the power of it how it is able to bring people in every land from darkness to light we thank that your name is being praised in the midst of times of conflict in the times of great need that even when there seems to be so little to give thanks for yet oh

Lord your people praise your name and rejoice in your truth and that reminds us Lord of our own lives and how blessed we are to have so much and yet we take so much for granted so help us Lord that we will see the wonder of your truth and the privilege to hear it to have it before us but not just to hear and see it but to truly believe and to trust on the one who is the word the Lord Jesus Christ so we thank you for the visit of the Slavic Gospel Association we pray your blessing on both Trevor and Derek as they go round congregations in our island and as they return to their own homes and families and people in the lands there in Eastern Europe into Russia and even further afield Lord we pray that your power of your spirit would be upon our lands and upon your people that we would see your power and presence in our midst we ask that even now as we continue in worship of you that you would bless your word to us and hear our prayers remember us as homes and families and all our communities here those in need around us those who are unwell those who are mourning and grieving those who are going through many different trials so

Lord we pray for your goodness and mercy to be with us so we ask all things confessing our sins and pleading with you Lord help us to be salt and light in this world help us even as we turn to your word to learn from it and help us Lord that we would rejoice in your goodness to us but also long to see many more come to a saving knowledge of you so go before us now pardoning our sin in Jesus name Amen we sing again to God's praise in Psalm 135 this time it's in the sing Psalms version Psalm 135 we take up our reading at verse 13 of the psalm we're going to sing from verse 13 down to the end of the psalm Lord your name endures forever your renown is ever great for the Lord sustains his servants and his folk will vindicate we sing from verse 13 down to the end of the psalm to

God's praise much March your name endures forever, during the rest of our great, for the Lord succincts his servants and his folk will vindicate.

[24 : 58] But the idols of the nations, made of silver and of gold, are by human hands created with a hammer or a moan.

Must have thought speak they cannot, find they have thought cannot see, hear they have thought hear they cannot, in him a still breath can be.

Those who make them will be like them, those who trust them are the same.

Praise the Lord, O house of Israel, our own south exalted sin.

Praise the Lord, O house of Levi, you who fill him, praise the Lord.

[26 : 39] Praise the Lord, who dwells in Zion, in Jerusalem. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Well, we can turn back to our reading in 1 Peter, chapter 2.

As I say, we're coming back to this study in 1 Peter. We had come as far as verse 8 in chapter 2. And we're going to look at verse 9 down to verse 12 today, under the heading of Being Christian Witnesses.

If I was to give a brief recap of what we've looked at so far in this letter of Peter to a church that was scattered far and wide, there are a few things that we would maybe just want to highlight before we just jump back in at verse 9.

Who was Peter writing to? Well, we see from the outset of the letter that there are people who have been scattered far and wide, but they are God's people, and they are facing various trials and persecutions because of their faith.

[28 : 03] They are suffering for it. And that's one of the main reasons why Peter is writing to them. He's writing to encourage them in the midst of these trials that they face.

He's writing to a people who are scattered, but he's writing to them to encourage them and strengthen them and build them up in the faith. And what does he say to them to seek to encourage them?

Well, he reminds them of a few different things. He encourages them in both a positive way that they have, as we saw in verse 3, the first part there, that they have a hope and an inheritance to look forward to.

That as God's people, they have much to give thanks for and to be blessed by in the present, but also much to look forward to in the future.

But he doesn't ignore the issues that are going on around them either. He makes it very clear that he knows that they are suffering because of their faith, that they are suffering and going through all these trials.

[29 : 14] It says in verse 6 of chapter 1, In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials. So there's a rejoicing, but there's a reality as well that they will have trials.

But then he goes on to remind them that they are remembered by God. It's not just Peter remembering them in this way by writing to them, but reminding them that God remembers them too.

And that they, in the midst of everything that's going on, are to be a holy people. In verse 15, in chapter 1, he says, He says, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

He is saying you are set apart by God. And so in the midst of all this suffering that you are facing, you are to be God's people, that you are to be a holy people, set apart, and that your conduct is to be holy in the midst of them.

So all this adds up to Peter seeking to equip them to a life of mission together, being the witnesses of God in the midst of a very difficult environment, knowing that such a life is costly.

[30 : 36] But it's not just to merely survive in this setting, but to thrive. And so at the end of chapter 1 and into chapter 2, you have this great reminder of the foundation of all of it, and that is God's Word.

It is God's Word. At the end of chapter 1, you're reminded that the Word of the Lord remains forever, that this is a powerful Word. And then as you go into chapter 2, you're reminded that this Word causes offense, but it also causes blessing.

It is a powerful Word. And I use the reminder of Charles Spurgeon's conversion when we were last looking at this passage in chapter 2 to show the power of God's Word, how Charles Spurgeon's own conversion was through God's Word speaking to him in a very powerful way.

It was almost by mistake that Charles Spurgeon ended up in the place where he heard God's Word convicting him. He was on his way to church one Sunday morning, but it was in the midst of winter and there was this great snowstorm going on around him and he found himself ducking into a side street to shelter from the snow for a time.

But he noticed that there was a small Methodist church in the street there. And so, he went in there instead of carrying on to the church that he'd planned to go to. The minister of the church there hadn't managed to get to church because of the snowstorm and it was a different preacher who hadn't intended to be preaching that day.

[32 : 19] And so, everything maybe seemed to be working against him. He hadn't got to where he wanted to be. He wasn't hearing the preacher that was planned in the church he was in. But yet, God had appointed this time for him to hear words that transformed his life.

The preacher who stood to preach that day, he said, didn't have much to say. And he kept repeating a verse. It was from Isaiah 45, verse 22.

Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else. This verse was repeated so often and yet it spoke so powerfully to Charles Spurgeon.

The word of the Lord remains forever. It is a powerful word and it's a word that is still able to convict and to convert. And so, as we go on in this chapter, as we remember the power of God's word, we come into chapter 2, verse 9 to verse 12 together today.

And here we see that this trusting and unchanging power of God's truth, we see that it led from just looking up to God and rejoicing in Him to looking out and to looking out to those around us, to looking out around the people that we have around us.

[33 : 46] And that's what Peter is directing the people here to, to look to God, to trust in Him, but also to be aware of those who are around them and the power that this word has to transform.

and it's about being Christian witnesses to this end. And so that's what we're thinking about together here this morning as we continue our study.

We're going to look at verse 9 to verse 12 under the heading of being Christian witnesses in a hostile world but remembering why we are to be so.

And the first thing is the mission of our witness. The second thing is the motivation of our witness. And the third thing is the manner of our witness.

Many of the things that we're looking at here today, they're almost a reminder of things that we've looked at in the past as well. So first we have the mission of our witness.

[34 : 51] And he says in verse 9 here, you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

If you were watching the coronation yesterday or if you saw any of it afterwards, did you feel a part of it? Did you feel that you were involved in it in a special way?

Did it make you think, there's my king? Now the coronation is past, do you feel that you have access to this king?

In many ways, we maybe feel detached from it. We're only seeing it on our screens or reading about it online or in newspapers. We can't just call around and ask the king for advice or help.

He may be king, but he's king at a distance. But what we have before us here and the reminder that Peter is giving to the people then and to ourselves today is that we have a king who is very different.

[36 : 15] a king whose subjects we are, but a king whose relationship with us is very different and ours with him.

And what he says in these verses are powerful reminders to us of what we have with God. after the coronation of the king yesterday, do you feel it's your mission to proclaim the excellencies of him?

Do you feel that that's in order for you to proclaim the excellencies of King Charles? Well, we'll seek to uphold him in prayer, but our prayer would be that he, as king in this, over our nation, would proclaim the excellencies of him who is king over all nations and all the world, that he would call him from darkness to light to know the joy of the salvation that there is in the king who is Christ Jesus.

And if we know Christ as king, then as Peter is saying here, as his people, as his subjects, as his children, that we are to proclaim the excellencies of him who called us from darkness to his marvelous light.

This is the mission of our witness, to proclaim him, to make Christ known, to show him to the world in which we live, knowing for ourselves the wonder that is our king, Christ Jesus.

[38 : 01] Jesus. Peter is writing to these people who were scattered, who were persecuted, but he's writing to them, reminding them, you are God's people.

And he reminds them of this privilege and blessing that is theirs. Through these ways he describes them, four ways he describes them there in verse nine.

And they're very much Old Testament language here describing them, but reminding us how God continues to call his people through every generation to proclaim his excellencies.

And you see these four ways that he describes them. When you read through the Old Testament, you see how God dealt patiently and graciously with his people again and again.

For example, in Exodus 6, verse 7, he says, I will take you to be my people and I will be your God and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

[39 : 08] There's this reminder that we need God to be our God, to be our king. We need to be his people, to enjoy his blessings and the abundant blessing that is salvation through Jesus Christ.

And then he uses these words to describe how they are shown as a people. He says first that you are a chosen race. You are a chosen race.

I remember from the beginning of this letter, he's writing to these people, but he's reminding them that they are a people who are elect, who are called by God, who God has remembered.

And that's what he's reminding them here again. You are a chosen race, a people God has chosen for himself. Undeserving sinners that we are, he has chosen to call us his people, his own.

We are a distinct people. And he goes on to show this as well by saying you're a chosen people, you are a royal priesthood.

[40 : 18] Again, the Old Testament language here, when the priest was the one who would come before God and offer up prayers for the people. The people were separated from God.

And yet, here he is reminding us we have access to God. Jesus, our King, we don't even have to make an appointment to try and see him.

We can come to him at any time. We have access to him, unrestricted access, unhindered access, because we are a chosen people, because we are a royal priesthood.

We are a holy nation, he says. That is, God through Jesus has changed our lives. And that allows us to be something we could never be before, a holy people.

A people set apart for God's glory. They are a scattered people, just as so often in the Old Testament, God's people were scattered far and wide, taken into exile so often, but yet they were to be a holy people, God's representatives, no matter where they were or who they were with.

[41 : 40] And so is the same true for us. God's people are people for his own possession.

It says in another translation, a peculiar people, which has maybe been misunderstood as seen as maybe Christians as just being a strange kind of people, but that's not what it means at all.

A people for his possession, a peculiar people, is a people who are precious to God. That's the real meaning behind that word.

It's purchased, a purchased possession, a unique possession, something of rare beauty. That's how Christians are to be.

Malachi chapter 3 verse 7 says, They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession. It's the same word, possession, there as it is here, a treasured possession.

[42 : 44] Things of beauty, bought at a high price. The price was Jesus giving his life as a ransom for us. And so, here is what we have as his people, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are a precious possession to him.

Our king keeps a close watch on us. He looks after us with the greatest of care. He protects us, he shelters us, and therefore he says, we are to proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

The more we know the beauty of Jesus, the more we know the grace and the love that he has shown to us to make us his people, to purchase us as his people, the more we are to proclaim the excellencies of him, the king who has loved us with a love like no other.

So, the mission of our witness is to proclaim him who has done all of this for his people. people. The second thing we want to see here is the motivation of our witness.

We see this in verse 10. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

[44 : 23] The mission of our witness, it was to proclaim. And if we need any more motivation in all that Christ has done for us, we are reminded of it here in verse 10.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

We were despised, we were worthless people. We were sinners who were lost, but now we are God's prized possessions. sins.

We have mercy shown to us. God sent his Son to seek and to save the lost, and how precious we are to him.

Isn't it a wonderful thing that we can know mercy, to know his mercy? Once we were just lost, worthless people.

[45 : 25] now we are God's people. Do we see ourselves as God's people, or do we still see ourselves as our own people?

We are his, we are purchased with a price. We belong to him. When we know this then, what then is our motivation?

when we know the mercy of God, the wonder of all that he has done for us, what is our motivation? Surely that others would know this mercy for themselves.

Surely that others would hear that this mercy is there for them, that it is there for all, to hear this message of the gospel, that we are not a people when we are apart from God, that we can know the blessing of being God's people, knowing the love that he has shown for us, that we would see a perishing people around us and be motivated to show them the mercy of God.

A teenager had once been out with their friends and they had their ear pods in, a set of headphones, now you get these little things you put in your ears, they're small and they stick in but from time to time they can fall out.

[46 : 59] Well this teenager had been out with friends and lost one of their ear pods and with their friends had been hunting around trying to find it again but without success so eventually he went home to his mother and said I've lost one of my ear pods, I've tried to find it and I just can't.

And the mother, as mothers often do, said let's go and have a look. Within minutes the mother had found it. It would be no surprise that the child couldn't find it but the mother could.

And the child said I looked so hard. How did you manage to find it? And the mother's reply was this, we weren't looking for the same thing.

You were just looking for a bit of plastic. I was looking for 200 pounds. The difference was there in the motivation.

There was a cost to the mother that wasn't there for the son. And that's the way that we should see it. Every soul is precious.

[48 : 09] Every soul is priceless. And that's the way we should look at it. It's not just another person. It's not just someone we maybe don't get along with or don't even like.

It is a person made in the image of God. And we should long for all to know the mercy of God. To know the salvation that there is in Christ Jesus.

That is the value of a soul. it is priceless. And the cost was paid by Christ himself. And so therefore what is our motivation in being Christ's witnesses?

It's to see everyone as precious. Precious to the Lord and needing the mercy of God. So if we have received mercy we should see everyone around us that needs mercy.

And that should be our motivation to witness. The final thing we see here is the manner of our witness.

[49 : 23] He speaks there in verse 11 and 12 about our behavior and our conduct. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul.

keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of licitation.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable. Now this links back as we said before to the fact of being holy in verse 15.

He who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. We see the connection here again. Keep your conduct holy.

The church, the people who Peter was addressing, they were given a focus of the glory of this gospel. And their mission was there, their motivation was there, but that doesn't mean it was going to be easy.

[50 : 33] There was going to be many a challenge as they were proclaiming this goodness of God. They lived among a hostile people. They faced all kinds of persecution and could justifiably, you might say, respond in anger.

To have the heart of Jonah, who as he was called to go back to Nineveh, say they don't deserve to hear this gospel. Look at what they've done. Look at how they behaved towards God's people.

I'm not going to tell them. In fact, I'm going to run in the opposite direction. But God brought him to realize they needed mercy as much as him or anyone else.

But his heart needed to be changed. And so often it is the case, as Peter is writing to them here, as he's writing to ourselves today, that we have to think of our own hearts, our own manner, in our witness to.

How we look at people, how we behave with people, how we deal with people. So Peter here addresses the manner of their witness, how they conduct themselves.

[51 : 46] We see as we read through chapter two here that the gospel, Christ, is already offensive to people. You see it in verse eight where he's described as a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense.

The gospel message in and of itself, the truth, it's offensive in and of itself. It'll often offend people.

The people Peter was writing to knew that, we know that, ourselves, that the gospel offends people. But as God's people, as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own possession, we should not cause the offense.

The gospel offends, but we should not be the ones who cause offense. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable.

the word honorable there is good. We say to children, now we're going somewhere important.

[53 : 03] I want you to be on good behavior, I want to be on your best behavior. Well, we're saying the same thing here. You're going to be in a hostile place, you're going to face persecution, but I want your behavior to represent me.

and the goodness of God, the love of Christ. What is he getting at here? There is a vocal and a visible side to words and actions.

Our witness, the impact it has, is so often determined by the conduct, the manner we use in showing the gospel. When you look back at the coronation yesterday, words were spoken, scriptures were read, oaths were taken, all of these things, but will it be seen in the life and rule of the king?

And we ourselves, we can take our own oaths before God too. We can take vows before God, and we'll see more of these things as we go on in this letter, but what is seen as the evidence of them, the way we conduct ourselves, the way we live our lives.

The scattered church here, they were to live in light of the promises of scripture and follow the commands that the scriptures were giving. That's what Peter was telling them and what we ourselves have to live by too.

[54 : 40] How do we conduct ourselves among those around us? us? We will always fail and have regrets, and when we do, we have a saviour to go to who is able to forgive us.

But the problem is when we don't see the manner of our conduct as a problem or causing offence. When people could say of Christians, your conduct is worse than those who aren't Christians, that's when we are failing.

We are not being holy in our conduct, set apart, different in the ways that we behave. And so that is why he is saying keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable.

What's at stake? Well, what he says is so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Our conduct can so easily come between those we are behaving before and then coming to Christ.

[56 : 03] We are to show the love of Christ because what's at stake? Well, he's saying here, keep your conduct honourable, that they may glorify God.

What's on the flip side of that? They won't. They won't glorify God because of our behaviour. Or, thanks be to God, sometimes they will glorify God despite our behaviour.

We shouldn't be on any stumbling block or an excuse for anyone to say, if that's how Christians behave, I want nothing to do with it.

How would they receive this letter? How should we receive this letter? Well, surely it should make us think of two things. One, how has my conduct been?

That's what they would have thought, that's what we should think. Are there areas where I should go and apologise to people that my conduct was not right as a Christian?

[57 : 15] And the second thing is, how do we deal with this going forward? Is it going to change me? Am I going to take these words seriously?

Let your conduct be honourable before the Gentiles. are we going to go forward addressing our conduct?

Making sure our conduct is in line with the word of God. How do we deal with fellow Christians? Is our conduct honourable?

How do we deal with others around us? Just as they had to in Peter's day, their conduct was to be honourable before those who were persecuting them.

Romans 12 says, to love your enemy, that you may heap burning coal on their head. It's very similar to what we have here.

[58 : 15] So that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God. Is that what our conduct leads to?

People seeing our good deeds and glorifying God. Do we lambast or do we love? There's a testimony of one who is now a preacher, but he was in a world that was lost.

In his life he was lost. But he says this, when I was lost, I certainly criticized my fair share of Christians. I argued with them.

I despised them for being against the things I did. However, I never could get past their love and their devotion to the Bible.

the truth and honesty of their lives made a statement for God that none of my arguments could ever overcome.

[59 : 19] It was the faithful witness of a few sincere, dedicated believers that helped bring me to Jesus. Would that that be said of us?

We see here a Christian witness from a people who were persecuted, a people who were scattered, but who knew God with them. We long to see people coming to Christ.

It is the mission of our witness to proclaim the excellencies of him who called us from darkness to light. Our motivation is there.

We have mercy. We long for others to know this mercy. And let's make sure the manner of our witness is blessed by God to see others proclaim the goodness of God and give him praise.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, help us if we need to repent, to repent to you as the one who is able to forgive.

[60 : 31] And teach us, O Lord, to walk in your ways, to heed your word, and to live lives that are honourable in your sight and honourable before others. Help us to love and to obey and to honour you in all that we do, that we would see many more come to glorify God in the day of visitation when he returns.

As we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing in conclusion to God's praise in Psalm 34 and sing Psalm's version on page 40 of the psalm book.

We'll sing verse 11 to 14. Psalm 34 at verse 11. Come hear my children, gather round and listen to my word and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord.

We'll sing from verse 11 to 14 to God's praise. Amen. Come hear my children, come hear my children, God, the road, and listen to my word and I will help you understand construing his time by hue and■■■■ did your die.

You may fear the Lord, does anyone delight in life and long to sing if the Lord unto Long to sacred days, then keep your tongue from evil speech, pure lips from lying ways. Depart and turn from evil past, and practice what is right.

[63 : 27] Tis thine to know the way of peace.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right.

Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen. Posh, who■■■, nochmal diadem, ALIZAD literal strangers are the permission of the second example of this beer.

entrust into the living room. We are finally left here, and we have Mother, Son, and God, I caught the manner of faith from God, my pig with your condiciones.

[64 : 55] To argue in fact it is He will be right if he is this man? To address the pile of faith, there will be another man who uw welcome■■■■ian and■rooted. And ■■■■■ the duration was the one who Fe grew. Thank you.

Thank you.