

Sent To Save

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 December 2020

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] together in worship today we're glad to have your company and we trust that together again we'll know the lord's blessing as we come before him and to worship him today we're going to begin our service of worship singing to god's praise in psalm 104. psalm 104 as you find it in the sing psalms version that's on page 138 of the books if you're using those all your creatures look towards you for their food to be supplied what you give them they what you give to them they gather with your goodness satisfied when you hide your face they're troubled lifeless they return to earth when new life comes from your spirit to earth's face you give rebirth singing to a tune high for doll and verses 27 to 36 all your creatures look towards you all your creatures look towards you for their food to be supplied what you give to them they gather with your goodness with your goodness satisfied when you hide your face they're troubled lifeless they return to earth your goodness at the earth when new life comes from your spirit to earth's face you give rebirth may the lord's majestic glory always last and never fade may the lord rejoice rejoice and triumph in the works that he has made when he kisses on creation earth begins to shake in fear at his touch the mountains tremble smoke and flame the flames of fire appears to the lord throughout my lifetime to my god i will sing praise mhm may i may medita beat beat beat beat beat beat no more. Praise be to the Lord Almighty. O my soul, the Lord adore.

Let's now read from God's Word. Reading this morning is from the Gospel of John and chapter 3. John chapter 3. Reading from the beginning is Pharisee verse 15. There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. Jesus answered him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again. The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus said to him, How can these things be? Jesus answered him, Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and bear witness of what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

If I have told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have everlasting life.

Amen. We pray that God will bless this portion of his word to us. Now we're going to call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's join together in prayer. Lord our God, we thank you that you have guided our minds to your greatness, to your worthiness to be worshipped and praised in our opening psalm of praise, as well as in this reading from your word. We thank you today, O Lord, for the way in which you are so full of majesty and so wonderful in power and in grace, in mercy, in forgiveness and in justice.

[6 : 19] We thank you today, O Lord, for the privilege that we have of coming before you. We ask that you would enable us, like the psalmist, to gather our thoughts together today so that we may focus on your worship.

That we may indeed come before you giving thanks, not only today, but in all our circumstances, even at times difficult and trying and testing. And amongst all the changes that we know of in our life, Lord, we pray that you would fill us with your grace.

That we may never call into question your wisdom, your right to deal with us as you do, your way of administering the matters of this world and of this time and of history itself and of its course.

Lord, we thank you today that your word reveals to us a God who cares, the God who exercises his great power and influence in the well-being of his people, who uses his power to bring us new birth, so that as we have been singing in your praise, the very earth rejoices when you bring refreshment.

Lord, we pray, Lord, at this time when we know of the need of such that we may know it and have experience throughout the world. We pray, Lord, that during this time of restriction and even increasing restriction during these days, nevertheless, we pray for your gospel to flourish.

[7 : 47] Lord, this virus has gone forth through all the earth and we pray that in the rapid spread of it, that this may indeed be stemmed by you in your mercy.

Yet we pray, Lord, even if it isn't, that we may see the gospel advance even more quickly and spread even more powerfully than any virus. We ask, O Lord, that you would use these times of concern and restriction and disappointment and worry and anxiety so as to bring us to yourself, to enable us, Lord, to fall before you and seek you with all our heart and to come before you, O Lord, knowing and confessing our need and being persuaded, Lord, that whatever else we need and whatever else is provided in your providence for us, above all things, we need yourself.

We need to have that living relationship with you. So that come what may, we will not enter into condemnation, that we will know the blessing of having passed from death to life in a spiritual way, so that we will know, Lord, that we are safe for eternity.

We ask your blessing for us as a people. Bless us, Lord, as a congregation, as we continue to wait upon you and to seek developments in our circumstances, in providence and the whole of our land indeed.

We ask, O Lord, for grace, to be patient, for grace to be wise and for grace to consider our own well-being and that of others. And again, we commit to you, O Lord, those who rule over us and have to take difficult decisions.

[9 : 29] We confess, O Lord, that we find it at times difficult, frustrating indeed, to find yet more restrictions imposed. But we bless you, O Lord, that we can look to you as one who will keep us safe and who will give guidance as required to those who rule over us.

Forgive us, Lord, as a people for our many sins. Forgive us for our idolatry, for the way in which we have set so many other objects of worship, gods of our own making, in your place.

Hide your face, we pray, from this offence. Grant to us, O Lord, that we may be turned as a people into your ways, that you would return us to that message of the gospel that brings hope, that brings a surety to our situation, that brings us especially this wonderful message of a Saviour who came into the world no less than the Son of God.

And Lord, we pray that today as we remind ourselves of these great events of the Christmas story, we do pray that the truth of them may indeed be stamped upon our hearts, that we may come today to celebrate the fact that a Saviour has been born, that you have come into this world and taken now human nature to join it to yourself.

We give thanks for all that you accomplished as you came to give yourself even to the death of the cross. We thank you today that we celebrate not only the incarnation and the birth of Jesus, and that we come to appreciate the death that he died on the cross.

[11 : 22] We thank you too for the resurrection that has overcome death, that brings us that great light of hope, that wonderful, wonderful beam of hope that shines into our darkness.

We pray, Lord, today that it may shine into our hearts too, that we may be enlightened with the hope of resurrection based upon the resurrection of our Lord.

Lord, we ask today that each of us here who participate in this worship may be conscious of your Spirit granting us that light. Bless, we pray, all who are in difficulty at this time.

We pray for those who are ill, whether with the COVID virus or otherwise, for those who are anxious over them, and for those, Lord, who have loved ones in care homes or hospital and have difficulty or not able to visit them at all.

Bless them, we pray. And I give to them, O Lord, at this time, the comfort, the encouragement, the grace, the strength to deal with these situations. Bless those who mourn the passing of loved ones.

[12 : 32] We know that death is always with us. We pray that when it is so much increased by this virus throughout the world taking its toll on human life, O Lord, our God, be merciful to us in your comfort.

Send us, we pray, the consolation of your Spirit to occupy our hearts. Remember those who care for us who have to face these issues day by day in their work and care homes or in hospitals, other clinics or other places throughout our land where the ill are attended.

too. Remember that we pray. Remember, too, we pray, those who help us in our time of death. We thank you for our undertakers, for those who take upon themselves and give themselves so willingly to the onerous duties involved in this.

We give thanks for them locally and elsewhere. Praying, O Lord, that you would make us increasingly thankful for every evidence of your goodness in this and other regards.

Remember our children, children, we pray, grant them your blessing during these days. Help them to understand even in the measure they can their need to put their refuge and find a refuge in the Lord and to be found in him and therefore to be hidden from all that would indeed come to harm them spiritually, whatever things may happen otherwise, physically with them.

[14 : 01] help them, we pray, to trust in you and to know the words of the psalmist for themselves. When I am afraid, I will trust in you.

We ask that you would bless us now as we continue to wait upon you here and as we present these, our prayers to you, Lord. Do for us, we pray, more than we can ask or even think.

We pray it, seeking pardon and cleansing from all our sin. for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now for the children today, I'd like you to turn to Matthew chapter 1 and verse 21.

This is the account we have of when the angel came to Joseph, the husband of Mary, who was going to give birth to Jesus. And we read in verse 20, As Joseph considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son and you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. It's always interesting to do a little study of names, isn't it?

[15 : 23] In our own highland or island tradition, or not perhaps as much as used to be the case, people used to be known by the name of the previous generations, their fathers particularly, as that name was traced back in time, very often the same name appeared in family lines, just as in my own.

My father's name was James, his father's name was James, his father's name again was Alexander, his father's name again was James. So you have a string there of names that appear through the family.

So I would be James, the son of James, the son of James, the son of Alistair, the son of James. That helps you to actually keep together something of family history.

But it's very interesting that the name continues to appear like that in some families. But when you go to the Bible, it's even more interesting in a sense because many of the names that you find appearing in the Bible, particularly back in the Old Testament times, were names that had some relation to or reflection of God in them.

For example, the word Elijah, the name Elijah, that literally means my God is the Lord. It's made up of a few Hebrew words that together make the name Elijah, but literally it means my God is the Lord.

[16 : 48] Elijah was named in such a way that would remind the people to which God sent him as a prophet that God should be their Lord, that their God should be the Lord Jehovah or the Lord of the Covenant.

And very often you find names in the Bible that have that sort of meaning to them so that they present something of importance about God or about trusting in him, about him being a refuge and so on.

And when the angel here came to Joseph, he told him not to be afraid to take Mary who was pregnant and was going to bear a child, not to be afraid to take her, but when she did actually have the baby, he was to call that baby Jesus.

And the angel told him why that was, for he will save his people from their sins. The name Jesus was a name that meant saviour or to be a saviour or bring salvation to us who are sinners.

If you have the name Joshua today, that name is exactly the same name as the name Jesus. Joshua is the Old Testament version of the name Jesus.

[18 : 09] And I know some of you, at least, of the children have that name Joshua. It's a wonderful name in itself. And the word Joshua really means the Lord is salvation or the Lord saves.

And you can trace that through the Bible, the word Joshua and here it's Jesus, the word Jesus as the Son of God as he came to be born through Mary, his mother, he was to be called Jesus.

And the explanation is he will save his people from their sins. And today we think about, celebrate indeed the birth of Jesus.

That's the Christmas story. It's not the whole Christmas story because Jesus was born to do a certain work in the world and especially to die and rise again from the dead.

That's why he took human nature. That's why he was born as a human being. But the emphasis of the angel is very important. You shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins.

[19 : 16] He was called Jesus not just to give us a bit of guidance, not just to educate us, not just to bring us something that would help us to put our lives together.

It's nothing to do with that at all. We can't do that anyway without God's help. He came and he was called Jesus because he was going to save his people from their sins. In other words, you as children and we as adults need to be saved.

We need to be saved from our sins because our sins have brought death to us and in order to overcome death, in order to beat death, in order to have something that's greater than death, Jesus came to live in this world and to die and his name always reminds us that he came to save his people from their sins.

So when you trust in Jesus, the moment you trust in Jesus, you come to possess that salvation that's attached to his name. And I hope today, at this Christmas time and always, that you will know what Jesus means in your own life, that you will know it because when you put your trust in him, your sin is forgiven.

You come to be accepted by God perfectly, righteously and Jesus, the name of Jesus, will then be so, so special for the rest of your life.

[20 : 50] He will call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. Let's now do the Lord's prayer. Let's pray 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, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Let's read again in the same chapter, in John chapter 3.

We'll read from where we stopped at verse 15. So we'll read from verse 16 down to verse 21. We'll come back then to look at verse 17, especially for our short study this morning.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

[22 : 08] Whoever believes in him is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God. This is the judgment.

The light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. But everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed.

But whoever does what is true comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God. God. We're going to look at verse 17 especially but we'll also pick up some of the verses following on from that as we've read to verse 21.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. How amazingly considerate and kind God is.

even though he had given us John 3 16 for God even that was not enough to say that he loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[23 : 29] God then expanded on that in verse 17. And as he expands on that he gives us further insight into the coming of his son into the world and what that was really all about.

It was so that the world so that we should not perish all who believe in him would not perish but have eternal life for God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

And that ties up together for us within these two verses the cross and the incarnation the cross and the birth of Jesus which of course are inseparably tied together that's why he was born so that he would come to die in place of his people.

And when it says in verse 16 that God gave his only son you think particularly there of the giving that culminated in the cross the death of the cross he gave him to that death.

Then this expansion in verse 17 brings the purpose of that so that in the salvation that's in that instead of condemning the world the world might be saved through him.

[24 : 48] It's the same combination really that you find at the beginning of this gospel. John chapter 1 begins with eternity begins with Jesus as the word the son of God the word was with God the word was God and verse 14 the word became flesh and dwelt among us he entered into our humanity that's the Christmas story for us it's not simply Jesus being born it's a matter of the son of God coming to be born as a human in this world and coming to be born with a view to dying on the cross and the resurrection following it so that we might have eternal life and so that we might not be condemned even though that is first of all God sent his son into the world God the father sent his son into the world and that journey began as we said in eternity it began in fact within the very depths of

God himself the depths of the trinity that God is these three persons because especially in John's gospel you'll find the father and son relationship Jesus and the father that relationship in John is foundational to our salvation you cannot understand the cross you cannot understand Jesus in this world you cannot understand any of that unless you come to accept the way that John did keeping with other parts of the Bible but John especially presenting to us the father and the son the relationship between them and how the father sent the son and how the son willingly came into this world for our salvation it's foundational to our salvation you and I have the privilege of knowing the gospel in its purity and of seeking to maintain the purity of this gospel message which maintains the teaching of the Bible that God is three persons one

God and that within the relationships between these three persons you have the outworkings of our salvation what a precious truth it is what a precious privilege to be brought up to know that and to hold on to that and to counter the ideas that have always been in the world and are no less so in our day that God is something else than what the Bible so obviously presents to us one here is saying God did not send a son into the world to condemn but in order that the world might be saved the father sent the son into the world and the word sent there has actually built into it the idea of being sent on a special mission the coming of Jesus the father sending the son into the world was a special mission on God's part through Jesus Christ the mission of salvation and very interestingly when you go to

John chapter 20 you'll find the same description used there of how Jesus was going to send the disciples into the world as his missionaries on the mission that he gave them with the gospel to be presented to the world the message of the gospel John chapter 20 verse 21 Jesus said to them this is Jesus having risen from the dead of course Jesus as the risen Jesus said peace peace be with you as the father has sent me even so I am sending you you see he's tying up together the way the father sent him into the world and the reason why he came and the way that he was commissioning his disciples to go into the world there's a close connection because well I'll leave it to yourselves to work that through maybe this afternoon that'll be a of

Jesus sending his people into the world as his missionaries and him being sent into the world by the father you can think of things like the willingness of Jesus the way Jesus humbled himself the way it meant that he put others ahead of himself and so on all of that is built into the mission of the church just work it through using that as your framework as the father sent me into the world even so I am sending you he was sent on a special mission a mission of salvation and we as his people are sent on the special mission of bringing the news of that salvation in the gospel to this world what a wonderful connection God has made for us in that but then it's not just that the word sent has a special meaning we have to notice that the world and the world in John doesn't mean something geographical we sometimes think of the world as this globe this planet that we belong to that that's the world and of course that is a meaning of that one meaning for this word world but in

[30 : 04] John the word world actually means something moral something spiritual it actually stands for what is opposed to God what is hostile to God what is at enmity God in other words you could say the world means this mass of sinners that we all belong to as we're born into this world that's what Jesus that's what the Son of God was sent into by God the Father Jesus did not come the Son of God did not come into a neutral world he did not come into a world that was ready to welcome him God sent his son hostile that was at odds with himself that was at enmity with himself it wasn't a neutral world it was a world antagonistic to God himself and to God's salvation Hebrews chapter 12 verse 3 reminds us of that in these powerful words that are used where

Jesus as an example particularly to us in how we endure suffering and so on but remember there how it's described as he endured the hostility of sinners against himself consider him as an example consider him he says who endured the hostility the antipathy of sinners against himself that's what he came into and from Adam onwards from Adam's fall onwards apart from Jesus himself every single human being belongs to the world belongs to what the world is in its nature as morally and spiritually opposed to God that's what you have to bear in mind when you read verse 16 for God so loved the world what did God love it's not in terms of numbers but nature it's not the numbers of people that he loved the numbers of people that are going to be saved that's not what's built into the word world at all it's not to do with numbers to do with the nature of the world the world that is opposed to

God opposite to what God is God so loved the world what you and I would never consider loving what you and I would dismiss what you and I would be completely hostile to the idea of loving something like the world that is what God loved when he loved the likes of you and I when he loved the world as the world sinners as sinners fallen broken lost hostile sinners that's what he loved that's the story of Christmas and that's at the heart of what Christmas means and that's why we celebrate it so wonderfully because it has to do with the love of God of course it's more than just at Christmas time I'm not suggesting that but we focus on it just now simply because this time of year gives us the advantage of just reminding ourselves of what an amazing what an unspeakable thing this is that God so loved the world and that God sent his son into the world deliberately and knowingly to bear that hostility of sinners against himself and he did it as we'll see now not to condemn the world but so that the world through him might be saved because God's purpose in sending the son was not condemnation but salvation that's why the second part of the verses is broken into two why did

God send his son what was his purpose of sending his son into the world well first of all it was not to condemn the world that's the negative side of it but rather the positive so that or in order that the world might be saved through him it was not to condemn the world he had good reason to condemn the world you know when you come to know God as your savior when you come to know the reality of your sin and my sin as it really is as the Bible describes it when you come to accept it as such then you come to understand something of how what good reason God had if he had come to condemn us it's what we deserved it's what we brought upon ourselves it's what sinners really have caused in terms of our standing and our relationship with God the brokenness of that relationship what we actually deserve is the condemnation that

God is pleased to withhold from all who come to trust in him and the purpose for sending his son into the world is not to condemn the world though God would have good reason to do that today you and I would not have reason to complain if God had said their sin deserves eternal death eternal condemnation so that's what I'm going to do what did he do instead well he still said sin deserves eternal condemnation but he said I'm going to put that on my son's account instead of the sinners that deserve to die that's where I'm going to place it that's what I'm going to do because my love for sinners my love for my people stands in the way of their condemnation though that is what they deserve

[36 : 18] God so loved the world God sent his son into the world not to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved now we have to make a distinction here between judgment and condemnation you go further into the passage in verse 19 this is the judgment same word that's translated judgment condemnation not only here but other contexts as well and it can bear both meanings but here this is the judgment the light has come into the world so when we're saying we distinguish between judgment and condemnation what exactly do we mean by that well the coming of the son of God into the world as it says there later as light into the darkness of this world this is the judgment he says that light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil in other words the coming of the son of God into the world is a decisive moment in human experience because the coming of the son of God into the world is really to do with sifting it's really to do with showing up the difference between those who are condemned and those who are saved between those who believe and those who do not that's what it means by the judgment this is the judgment this is what shows up the difference the distinction this is what actually makes the cleavage the division between those who come to believe as it says in verse 18 there and those who do not believe and that's what leads to the difference between being saved or being condemned so condemnation is really the difference condemnation rather in distinction from judgment is the result of not believing the result of loving the darkness the result of rejecting the coming of the light turning away from the light choosing something else instead of Jesus as the light that came into the world and when we come to when we come to make that distinction it helps us to understand the distinction between judgment and condemnation because at the end of it all if you think ahead to the last judgment to the final judgment every human being is going to be judged but not every human being will be condemned

God's people will face God in the judgment but they will do so clothed with the righteousness of Jesus they will face judgment and God will actually declare them to be righteous those who haven't come to place their trust in Jesus they will be also in the judgment but will actually be condemned he came into the world not to condemn the world but his coming was a judgment in the sense of putting a distinction between light and darkness between salvation and condemnation between faith and unbelief and the judgment is something that we bring on ourselves because as he came to the world as the light of the world what's happening really if we reject Jesus we're actually condemning ourselves essentially this is the condemnation that people love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil the rejection of Jesus is a great sin on our part because it's rejecting the light that came into the world in Christ and that way we're condemning ourselves before there's any condemnation on the part of God subsequent to our judgment if we reject him we're essentially condemning ourselves whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God

I remember back in my days in secondary school in those days on Friday final two final two sessions if I remember rightly periods rather were given to various types of activities that you could choose to do whether it be sporting or outdoor or indoor there's a whole lot of different ones and one of those times he chose to go to a class during oil painting under one of the art teachers and I remember very clearly the first time we went that he took out samples of paintings and many of these paintings were actually from the impressionist type of paintings or painter and impressionism is not something that you know just records things in details or draws things paints in detail it's just the impression it's to do with light and the transmission of light and darkness and shadows and I remember one of my fellow pupils when the book was opened and placed in front of him and he turned around to the boy beside him and said this is rubbish this is rubbish and the teacher of course overheard and he said that's not rubbish boy that's a masterpiece you're looking at of course it was he had the knowledge to know to know that it was a masterpiece it wasn't rubbish and the boy was rejecting this wonderful painting because it just didn't fit with what he thought a good painting was what he was showing was his own ignorance what he was doing essentially was condemning himself the rejection of the masterpiece of rubbish said more about himself than anything else

Jesus is God's masterpiece and when we reject him we're really saying about ourselves far more than we're saying about Jesus we're condemning ourselves and Jesus came the Lord came into the world God sent a son into the world not to condemn the world but now that the world we'll see that the world might be saved through him that's the positive side this is what it was not for it was not to condemn the world but alternatively that the world might be saved through him isn't it wonderful that the Bible is always so positive and always puts the positive above the negative even when it stresses things like death when it stresses things like judgment in terms of our condemnation when it stresses things like the damnation of the lost which the Bible clearly reveals to us yet it does so not in a way that overcomes or overtakes the positive the emphasis in the Bible is always predominantly on life on salvation on God's love on the way that God provided us despite what we are despite what he knows about us emphasis on the positive here's the positive overcoming the negative here is God saying this is not why I sent my son into the world so that you'll be all condemned though that's what you deserve

I sent him in order that the world through him might be saved and indeed isn't that what Jesus said in chapter 10 of John speaking there as the good shepherd presenting himself as the good shepherd I have come in contrast with others that he describes I have come so that they might have life and have it the more abundantly that's why he came that we might have life remember God's appeal through the prophet Ezekiel to the people of Israel who had so badly gone astray and abandoned the ways of God and chosen other gods other idols in their place this is his appeal through Ezekiel turn turn from your wicked ways why will you die O Israel turn why will you die here is God appealing through the gospel to us today why would you die why would you choose death why would you choose the negative over the positive why would you actually reject

[45 : 17] Jesus what could possibly persuade you to do such a thing when the Bible itself so clearly places the positive emphasis on life above the emphasis on condemnation that it undoubtedly has and of course saved when it says here nor that the world might be saved through him saved is nothing less than eternal life that's where you've got it in verse 16 whoever believes should not perish but have eternal life that's the opposite of the condemnation having eternal life we saw on Wednesday looking at John 17 as we've begun going through that chapter in verse 3 we came to Christ's own definition of eternal life this is eternal life that they might know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent there it is in essence there it is distilled by Jesus himself into that one dynamic verse this is eternal life to know God to have that relationship with God through his son that has come truly to know

God as a friend to know him as a life companion to know him in a living relationship that's eternal life the moment you put your trust in Jesus eternal life for you begins at that point it moves from that point onwards until it's fulfilled finally in its fullness in eternity in heaven but it begins at that moment you believe in Christ that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved you see it says whoever believes in him is not condemned it doesn't say will not be condemned is not condemned but whoever does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God there are all the links and what wonderful links they are the link between believing and coming to the light between believing coming to the light and having salvation not being condemned being saved it's all together in that wonderful string of phrases of concepts that are strung together all around the string of salvation these wonderful jewels that are aspects of our salvation and just as you find a difference between what happens or what the result of coming to the light is so you also find a difference between faith and unbelief and the consequences of such because it says in verse 20 there whoever does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed that means the fear of being shamed the fear of being shamed in the presence of God one thing to be shamed in the presence of human beings bad enough but it's much worse to be shamed or put to shame in the presence of God to lose everything you've hoped for to lose everything that's worthwhile to be put to shame that's condemnation that's a consequence of not believing a consequence of not accepting the light of not coming to the light and that's the contrast there whoever does the truth it's better as the truth rather than what is true as it's there in verse 21 whoever does the truth because that links with

Jesus as the truth comes to the light when you came to realize that you were a sinner that you needed salvation that you needed Christ that you needed God in your life you didn't turn away from the light you weren't afraid then to come to the light you wanted to come to the light and you still want to come to the light as I believe one of the things that characterizes you is that you come to the light and you keep on coming to the light you want to come to the light you're not afraid to come to Jesus to come to the light why because you want it confirmed again and again that he is yours and that you are his that you have this salvation that this is indeed your precious and present possession whoever does the truth comes to the light and it's not so that you'll just feel good about things and it's certainly not because you want confirmation that actually you're better than other people it's so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in

God so that it may be established beyond doubt that God is behind all this that he is the one who has enabled you to do this who has provided the salvation for us who sent his son into the world not to condemn the world but that through him the world might be saved who came in the person of his son as the light of the world who shines that light into the darkness of this world through the gospel right up to the present day who is speaking to you and to me today through this gospel who is assuring us that coming to the light is not something you need to be afraid of unless you want to hold on to your sins and so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God you come to the light so that your life will give glory to

God not only to establish it in your own experience but that through you as well others may come to the light and come to see the wonder that God sent his son into the world not to condemn the world but that the world through him should be saved have you come to the light have you come to appreciate the light believingly lovingly is that light today shining in your heart not just the light of the Bible and its teaching but the light of the son of God living in you through the Holy Spirit as somebody put it these words we conclude with entitled our greatest need if our greatest need had been information God would have sent us an educator if our greatest need had been technology

[52 : 17] God would have sent us a scientist if our greatest need had been money God would have sent us an economist if our greatest need had been pleasure God would have sent us an entertainer but our greatest need was forgiveness.

So God sent us a saviour. May he bless his word to us today. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you for the sending of your Son.

We thank you, Lord, that you yourself chose to send your Son for our salvation rather than condemnation. Oh, we thank you today, O Lord, for all that that tells us, for all that that means to us.

We thank you today that in the gospel, this wonderful declaration continues to be made that God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved.

Save us, we pray, all of us who know the gospel so well. Save us, we pray, for your name's sake, that it might be true of us too, that we come to the light so that it might be known to ourselves and others that our deeds have been wrought in God.

[53 : 45] Receive our worship, we pray, for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing now in Psalm 118.

Psalm 118, and sing Psalms, and verses 23 to 29. You'll find on page 156, if you're using the psalm books, we sing to the tune Weirham, 118 at verse 23, the Lord himself has done all this.

It is a marvel in our sight. This is the day the Lord has made. In it let us take great delight. And this is the day of salvation that the psalmist here is presenting by way of a prophecy in the Old Testament, fulfilled of course as we've seen today in Jesus Christ, which really fulfills the emphasis in these verses in verse 26.

He's blessed who comes in God's great name and comes to save us. So these verses from verse 23, the Lord himself has done all this.

The Lord himself has done all this. It is a marvel in our sight.

[55 : 10] This is the day the Lord has made. In it let us take great delight.

Save us, O Lord, we humbly pray. O Lord, we pray, grant us success.

He's blessed who comes in God's great name. You from the Lord's house we will bless.

The Lord is God, and he has made his glorious light upon us all.

Let us approach the altar shore and celebrate the festival.

[56 : 31] You are my God, I'll give you thanks. You are my God, I'll give you thanks.

You are my God, I'll give you praise. O thank the Lord, for he is good.

His steadfast love endures always. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Thank you so much again for joining us for this service. It's great to be together even in this limited way. I do trust that despite all the added restrictions of recent days, you'll have a wonderful Christmas, whether it's with family or just elsewhere.

But I do pray that God's blessing will visit us all at this time, and that we will indeed celebrate the fact that God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

[57 : 56] You join us again, if you can, this evening at 6.30 when the service will be conducted by Reverend Kenny I. MacLeod. Spirit. Thank you. Thank you. May I see you soon as I know that God's is today.