

A religious fraud

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Date: 25 June 2023

Preacher: Malcolm Hazell

[0 : 00] You Thank you.

Thank you.

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[57 : 59] And when you're there.

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[60 : 29] Thank you.

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

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. that we have of him. The adventures on his motorbike, the doll's house he lovingly and skillfully made, sailing in the homemade boat, filming his grandchildren's plays.

We thank you for his faith in you, for his love for you and the devotion with which he served you.

Thank you for his love for your church and the way he served you as Lord among your people here.

We thank you for the way that he taught, nurtured and shared your good news with so many young people here over the years. Loving Father, we thank you for the many ways he reflected your character.

[68 : 07] By your grace, help us this day to commit Peter into your hands. And as we do, grant us your peace. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

We're now going to have a Bible reading from Psalm 24, which as we've heard from Vanessa, was chosen by Pauline remembering singing with Peter Stainer's crucifixion in the church choir together. Peter's grandson, Elliot, is going to read that to us. Thank you, Elliot. Of David, a psalm.

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it, for he founded it on the seas, and established it on the waters. Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false God. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from God their Saviour.

[69 : 10] Such is the generation of those who seek him. Seek your face, God of Jacob. Lift you up your heads, you gates. Be lifted, you ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty. The Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your head, you gates.

Lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in. Who is he, this King of Glory? The Lord Almighty. He is the King of Glory. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, thank you very much, Elliot. And welcome, everybody. It's lovely to see friends from the years I've been here and some friends that I don't know.

Thank you so much for coming to remember Peter. Shall we come to God in prayer as we come around his word and may his word speak to us. Let's pray. Loving Father, we give you thanks for your word which meant so much to Peter and means so much to us.

[70 : 26] Speak to us through this word. It's a written word and we pray that it will become a living word in our experience today. Pauline and Peter sang it.

I pray, Holy Spirit, this psalm will sing in our hearts and we will go away rejoicing. Hear our prayer. Amen. We've had a real treat today because we've had Psalm 23 we sang at the Crem.

Psalm 24 just read and Elliot's been working hard. He was reading Psalm 100 earlier so we're really in the psalms. Now, of course, the psalms are the hymn book of the church.

The psalms have been sung over two and a half thousand years and I'm sure many of us just have particular favourites. Now, the psalms that we've been looking at obviously we're looking at Psalm 23 at the Crem reminds us about the shepherding of God.

This particular psalm looks at God being sovereign, the king and so you'll see that as we work through the psalm together.

[71 : 36] So, if you've got in front of you you should have Bibles. I should have checked what page number it was on but do turn the page up Psalm 24 can somebody tell me the number? 555 555 that's marvellous what a good number thank you.

So, turn to 555 and you can check that I'm preaching from the word of God as set out in the Bibles in the pews. So, the psalm starts with a statement which you may just skip over but I want you to notice it.

The earth is the Lord's and everything everything in it. What the psalmist is saying here is that when you travelled here today and you saw a beautiful day you saw trees you saw birds you saw grass you saw I saw a puppy this morning in my house called Bramble I saw these things and what God says is I made them all.

Now just have a look around this lovely church today there's a large number of people here he made you too. Now you'll not be surprised at me saying that God is creator but did you notice what it said?

It says the earth is the Lord's and everything in it that means it's got his name on it it belongs to him everything that you see belongs to him you belong to the Lord now we're really grateful that Peter was loaned to us for 93 years that was a long a long period wasn't it but he goes back now to his maker and keeper for eternity it's a precious thing to be given part of God's good creation to share that good creation but ultimately when we're born we are naked and when we die we are naked dust we are and dust we will return but the Lord holds us and preserves us for the new heaven and the new earth for all who believe so dear friends our brother

[74 : 03] Peter belonged to the Lord so does every living thing all that you see so does your bank account you may have a title deed on a house do you know what it doesn't belong to you it belongs to the Lord because the psalmist says the earth is the Lord's and everything in it remarkable statement you hallelujah luring at this point or are you going oh I didn't realize it all belongs to him now this particular psalm is probably the high point of David's reign because it marks that moment when after a successful battle David comes back to Jerusalem and he's got the ark of the covenant which was a symbol of the very presence of God containing the ten commandments and he's bringing them back to the place where God was considered to dwell or his feet touched the ground on earth

Jerusalem and so this would have been a glorious moment when victory had been done I don't know whether as you were singing Pauline Psalm 24 whether it felt victorious did it ish yes I'm getting a slight nod eyebrows raised at least so so this particular psalm is a glorious psalm which is stating that the king King David in those days is victorious but it's pointing to another king let me highlight a few things we won't have time to take us through everything here but look at verse three for a moment so as David's coming into Jerusalem he goes into Jerusalem successfully with the Ark of the Covenant but a question comes who may ascend the hill of the Lord who may stand in his holy place a question who can go and be with God who is holy well the psalmist answers he says he who has clean hands and a pure heart who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false this question is a disturbing question it should be for each of us who may ascend the hill of the

Lord the answer comes not me not Peter if it's based upon his pure hands he sounds like he was perfect but I don't think he was perfect was he I don't think so he said to me a number of times what have I done wrong we've all sinned and fallen short of God's glory so it's not Peter who can ascend the hill of the Lord it's not Malcolm and it's not any of you so who is it well David managed to get in temporarily but this psalm is pointing to the one person who can ascend the hill of the Lord and his name is Peter's saviour our Lord Jesus Christ because he alone is a man with clean hands and a pure heart are you glad about that that at least one person can ascend the hill of the

Lord to be in the holy place you may say well that's great at least one person can but how is that any good for you and for me how is that good news to Peter how is that good news to us today well I just want to remind you of what happened when Jesus ascended a hill the hill that he ascended was the hill on which he was crucified it was Calvary and he could have ascended the hill and bypassed Calvary and gone to be with his heavenly father forever but he chose to stop on a cruel hill for you and for me so that you who have unclean hands impure hearts just like I have just like Peter had could ascend the hill of the Lord he died on a cross bearing our sin and our shame he hung there for you and for me this is gospel good news it's very very sad news but it's gospel good news for you and for me because there is one who has a pure heart who has not lifted up his head to an idol and he has opened up a new way a way for you to go and be with God why is that so important well remember that first verse the earth is the

Lord's and everything in it our God is a creator God that means that everything about him is about life and creativity I'm not sure whether there'll be train sets in heaven I'm sure if there are they won't just go round and round and round because I think God's very creative and the thing about him is that where the Lord is there is life and if you want to know eternal life the only way is if you can ascend the hill of the Lord and to be with the Lord who is the Lord of life the creator God do you want to ascend the hill of the Lord I hope all of you say amen yes I do well then let's go on to verses 7 through 2 10 now I've never sung Psalm 24 I've really missed out but I suspect this might be a crescendo now Elliot was just holding himself back as he was reading this earlier but let me read it to you lift up your heads oh you gates be lifted up you ancient doors that the king of glory may come in who is the king of glory the lord mighty in battle lift up your heads oh you gates lift them up you ancient doors that the king of glory may come in who is the king of glory the lord almighty he is the king of glory can you hear the emphasis in the psalmist getting excited about there is one who can go in who can break through now in the houses of parliament today there is a particular gate it's called the sovereign gate anybody seen this has anybody gone around the houses of parliament and seen it the sovereign gate i was going to do a trick question if anybody had done this and say has anybody been through the sovereign gate because of course only the sovereign can go through the sovereign gate that means that when parliament opens once a year i was going to say prince charles i should say king charles will go through the sovereign gate and what this is talking about here is that there will be a sovereign there is a king there is the king of glory who alone can go through the gates into the very presence of god that's what this psalm is shouting about and the reason why that's such good news is that jesus christ has gone before us he has ascended on high after his resurrection and he has opened up a way through the gates into the very presence of god who is the lord of all and the lord of life and he's seated at the right hand of the father today and he's praying for you and he's praying for me that our hearts might be open to him that we might confess our sin that we are a people of unclean lips that we often have a heart that goes after idols and he's saying i died for you i opened up a way for you will you turn away from what you know to be wrong and will you put your trust in the king of glory who has opened up the way to the father i know that if peter were here he would be completely delighted if today for you and for me we reaffirmed our

trust in the king of glory who's opened up the way to the father and if you've never done that before he'd be even more thrilled if for the first time you said i believe in the king king jesus who died for my sin who opened

[83 : 10] up away to heaven what a glorious psalm does it yet sing in your heart would you like to sing it i won't ask pauline to come up just now but this psalm is a gift from god to you i pray that you will receive it with thankfulness and believe in the king of glory shall we talk to him in prayer loving father we give thanks for your servant peter who achieved many many wonderful things in his life but his greatest crown his greatest glory was to know you the one true god and your son jesus christ who is the king of glory who is the one who has opened up a new and living way to and birth king so can you like yo i all that is wrong and restore us to make us what you always intended us to be, like your son, the king of glory. Thank you, Lord. Thank you for your word. Please, Holy Spirit, apply it to our lives. May it be our song today and in the days ahead. Amen. Well, in your service booklets, we have a beautiful song, Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine. It's a lovely tune. It's well known. Could I encourage you to make this your prayer or your statement of declaration that you are assured because of Christ? Shall we stand and worship God together?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Please sit down.

[89 : 01] Amen. Let's now turn to God as we pray particularly for Peter's family and all those who mourn at this time.

To your loving care, O God, we commend those who mourn, especially Pauline, Vanessa, Joe, and all their family. We pray that you would give them time and space to grieve.

But as they do, may they be aware of your constant presence. You are the God of all comfort. And we pray that you would surround them with your comfort.

Fill them with a sense of peace. A peace that comes from you, which the world cannot give. And assure them with a solid, unshakable hope of the life beyond death that Peter has now because he put his trust in Jesus.

And which is available to all of us who receive that gift of grace from you and turn to you. We pray for Peter's family and all those who miss him at this time.

[90 : 06] That you would sustain them in the days to come. With treasured memories of the past and radiant hopes for the future. And bring us all at the last to fullness of life.

With your saints in the kingdom of heaven. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Now I'd like to welcome Jennifer, Peter's granddaughter, who's going to come and read to us.

I'm reading the poem Crossing the Bar by Tennyson.

Sunset, an evening star, and one clear call from me. And may there be no moaning of the bar when I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep, too full for sound and foam. When that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home.

[91 : 09] Twilight, an evening bell, and after that the dark. And may there be no sadness of farewell when I embark.

For though from out are born of time and place. The flood may bear me far. I hope to see my pilot face to face.

When I have crossed the bar. Thank you so much, Jennifer.

As we reflect on that and reflect on all that we've heard today. We're going to sing our final hymn. Another one of Peter's favourites. To God be the glory.

Let's stand and sing together. Let's make our first time. I want to sing with you, among and Thank you.

[92 : 16] Let's sing with you. Jesus died in creche expense Pianoscreen In thy holy honor Who is a God, is a God And yet now is wise Who is Lord, who is Lord And then now rejoice Who are you, Father For Jesus the Son And then in thy glory Great things he has come To the earth and the earth The righteous are mine

To heaven and heaven The Lord is so mine For the Father is surrender Who should be released At the moment of Jesus The Father who is saved Praise the Lord, praise the Lord And yet now is wise Praise the Lord, praise the Lord That will never rejoice O Father, who is the Lord If Jesus the Son

And then in thy glory Great things he has come Amen.

Christ, Lord, Christ, Lord, and we are in His voice. Christ, Lord, Christ, Lord, and we are in His voice.

Amen.

Do please sit down. Thank you so much for joining us at this service. I'd just like to point out a few things to you before a final prayer of blessing.

[95 : 27] As Vanessa said, the family would love to see you afterwards over tea and cake and sandwiches. There is a lot of cake and sandwiches. I've seen it. There's plenty for everyone. It's up in the hub, our church center behind you.

Just go through the door here and go upwards and follow everyone else, and you'll make your way up to there. It'd be lovely if you can join us to stick around and spend time with the family and as friends of Peter.

There's information at the back of your service sheet about if you'd like to make a gift in memory of Peter to Baptist Union Home Mission and BMS World Mission, which causes very close to Peter's heart.

And if you'd like to find out more, just read a little bit more about the future hope that Peter had in Jesus, that Malcolm was talking about, what it means to have a relationship with Jesus. We've got some of these little leaflets just at the front step here, Journey Into Life.

Do please take one of those on your way out. A final prayer of blessing. Let's pray. May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself.

[96 : 32] May the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in his service. May the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our souls. May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always.

Amen. God bless you and we look forward to seeing you over tea and coffee. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

[98 : 14] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

[101 : 23] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[103 : 53] Thank you.