

Sunday 26th April 2020

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome (Mike P)

One of the best-known rescues in Australia, is the incredible rescue of Stuart Diver from the Thredbo landslide on July 30, 1997. And recently, I was reading a bit of his story again. And here's what he says; **"It all took just thirty seconds. 30 Seconds that keep replaying in my mind over and over again. 30 seconds that changed my life forever. And took the lives of 18 other people - one of them my reason for living - my wife Sal."**

He remembers the water flooding into his unit. And how helpless he was to stop his wife drowning; **"I arch my back, using my elbows to push myself above the water. Mud and water flow around me. There's a tiny gap between my mouth and the roof. A tiny air-pocket. At least I can breathe. The water laps at my lips. I must keep pushing myself up. Part of me wants to drop. They can take me too. It's taken my wife, take me too. I just want to be with Sal. I had two options, neither of them good. The first was to DIE along with Sal. What use was living, when you had lost the thing you cherished most? The other was to LIVE, and be thankful that I did. That was the option I took! Rational thoughts started to enter my head. I was thinking of Sal's Mum, her sister, my parents and my brother. I began to think of all our friends. Suddenly, I had 200 people to live for. I had to live - for each and every one of them."**

The fact that Stuart diver came through is AMAZING. It was certainly a feat of human endurance. But the thing that he says got him through is HOPE. HOPE That he would again see his family and friends

We need a bit of that hope today, don't we? I mean, you only have to turn on the tellie to see it In recent months. We've had floods, fires, cyclones, earthquakes, riots and refugees. We've had two national states of emergency, including massive bushfires and corona virus, together with virus panic-buying, virus isolation, and virus unemployment. It would be easy to lose hope.

So just what do we have that can make us want to live like Stuart Diver? What air-pocket do we have to grab our breath? What hope can we stand on to push ourselves up? Well today, we're looking at **1 Peter 1 - a** chapter of the Bible ALL ABOUT HOPE

And in this chapter, we read about a ROCK-SOLID HOPE. A bright hope for even the darkest of times. A hope to build your life on, now and forever. Because it's a hope about our Lord Jesus, who died on Good Friday to purchase our forgiveness with his own blood, and who rose again on Easter Sunday to give us a living hope, a hope that will not fail us, because our Lord has conquered ever power that might stand against us.

Prayer (Mike P)

Great and mighty God, we thank You for Your son Jesus. We thank you that, at Easter, we remembered his death in our place. Thank You that Jesus' death is all that we need to make us right with You, our creator and Lord. Thank you that Jesus didn't just die, but that He also rose again, that You showed your mighty power when you raised Christ from the dead and seated him at Your right hand in the heavenly realms. We praise you, Father, that this is all because of Your great mercy. We praise You that if we trust in Jesus, we have a new birth into a living hope through His resurrection from the dead. We thank you that through Jesus, no matter what may happen in this world, we have an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade, kept for us in heaven.

Lord, we pray that in the light of all this, that we would greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while we have suffered grief in all kinds of trials. Help us not to trust in the things of this world, but to fix our hope fully on Jesus, on the salvation that He has already won, and that is ready to be fully revealed on the last day. Be at work in us by Your Holy Spirit that we would be empowered to serve you, and to share Your love and the living hope of our risen Lord with all those around us, in both our words and deeds. Amen

Song (modern) Let your kingdom come

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Rh8lOr9glA>

Song (traditional) How great thou art

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNOYHTQqe6c>

Bible Reading – 1 Peter 1:1-12 (NIV)

¹ “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things”.

Announcements

- **Focus for April – Easter.** Easter might have been two weeks ago but are still living in the light of the death and resurrection of Jesus? Or have we moved on to something more (less?) important? Easter is not just a day or even a long weekend, it is a lifestyle. Dying to self and living for Jesus. Let’s not forget Easter too quickly!
- **Prayer.** In the midst of a once in a century event please find extra time to pray. We have started a Church prayer times on ZOOM each weekday at 7pm. It is easy to join and you can even do it from your home phone. If you wish to know how, speak to Jon for more details.
- **School Holidays.** With the school holidays ending today our small groups and our youth groups and playgroups will start meeting again (virtually). Please find the time to support each other in this way. And if you would like to join in for the first time in any of these groups please speak to Stephen or Jon to find out how you might do so.

- **Annual Congregation meeting** will be held this coming Monday 27th April from 7:30pm on ZOOM. We have previously handed out all the relevant documents but if you need another copy please just ask Ross for one. If you would like to have your say and can't make it to the meeting please speak to Ross on 0420 934 270. The Session has decided that this meeting will have just the bare minimum of content to enable us to move forward and we might have another meeting later on in the year to discuss some of the more weightier matters.
- **Cyclone Harold.** Just before Easter Cyclone Harold ravaged the Vanuatu islands of Santo and Ambae which where our mission team have gone for the last four years. We would like to support our brothers and sisters in those communities with help with emergency food and building materials. If you would like to contribute to this fund then please can you make a direct deposit to our Church bank account Commonwealth Kotara BSB 062 829 A/c 1019 4850 or send a cheque to the Church to Charlestown Presbyterian Church PO Box 41 Charlestown 2290. We hope to send our first financial contribution by the end of this week.
- **Pastoral Care.** Are you in need of pastoral care? Please don't be shy in asking. We have a number of people in the Church willing and able to help with shopping or getting medicines from the chemist or even help in your garden. Just speak to Jo, Jon or Stephen. And if you are self isolating because you are wating for a COVID-19 test or even if you have found out that you have this or any other ailments please let us know so that we can pray and provide any physical or spiritual help that you need.

Kids Talk

<https://moore.edu.au/god-is-everywhere/>

Kids Song

God is Everywhere

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhRQHGiCgc0>

Pastoral Prayer (Simon M)

Heavenly Father, as we see the world around us, subject to decay, we thank you that our home is heaven, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. May we long for the city that endures, your perfect kingdom of righteousness and holiness, where we will see your face, where we will know joy everlasting, and where we will meet our saviour, the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star.

Father, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Hog Harbour and Walaha, and other parts of Vanuatu, who are recovering from the devastating effects of the cyclone. With many who are subsistence farmers, may they have sufficient food in their communities to provide for those in need. May they be able to access the building resources and essential requirements to reconstruct the properties which were destroyed, and may they know your goodness and sovereign hand during the recovery. Help us, as a church here in Australia, to support them in this time of need.

Lord, we pray for this week's Annual Meeting, that many will be able to take part, in spite of the physical barriers. We ask for wisdom and discernment in the decisions which are made, and for unity in our desire to bring glory to your Son. We thank you for those who lead our church, and pray that you will continue to raise up men and women to fill the needs of our church ministry.

We pray for the groups which will resume this week, after the holiday period – for Playgroup, IMPACT Youth, SYBS, Home Groups and JOY. We pray that ways will be found to overcome any technology concerns which may restrict people from participating. May these groups provide tremendous fellowship, on the basis of a common faith, where fire kindles fire, and fellowship strengthens faith.

Lord, we pray for those in our community who do not know your forgiveness and grace. Help us, as a church, to continue to be outward focused during the current time period, with a compassion and love for

the lost. We thank you for the opportunities that technology can provide, and ask that you would help us to think creatively and strategically, as we seek to reach others with the gospel.

Father we pray for those in our church family who may be particularly isolated at this time, or lonely, or afraid, for those who are weighed down by anxiety or sadness, for those who are sick, for those struggling with temptation, for those who are weary, for those who are troubled. May we turn our eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, that the things of earth may grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace. In His name we pray. Amen

Song. **Amazing Grace.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpXwOSHTwsY>

Sermon. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkL9OWK3oZc>

Or <https://www.facebook.com/Charlestown-Presbyterian-Church-113127747005906>

When we moved from Tweed Heads to Newcastle a few years ago to minister in this place, for a while we felt like strangers. There were new people to meet, new schools to get involved in, new sporting groups, new neighbours, new doctors. It was all very strange. We didn't seem to fit. And I thought because I was not far from my old friends in Sydney that I might be able to link back into my old social networks but I didn't seem to fit in there either. In twenty years they had all moved on. Yet when I spoke to people back in Tweed Heads and then later on when we went back to visit them, we didn't fit in there either! We were strangers. Strangers in a strange land. Strangers even in familiar places.

And it is been a bit like that over the last month or so, hasn't it? We are all trying to adjust to life under COVID-19. Social distancing. Working from home. Or worse still losing our jobs, our livelihoods, our income. We can feel like strangers in our own country, or own suburb, even in our own home.

And so it is good to turn to the book of 1 Peter because in the very first verses we see that Peter wrote this letter to people who were exiles from their own home, strangers in fact. They don't seem to fit in any more. Being a Christian means they are now on the outer, alienated from the rest of society.

Actually the truth is that all Christians are in some way strangers, exiled, from their homeland. Scattered by God around a foreign world. We are all square pegs in a round hole. The experience we are all feeling at the moment trapped in our homes, is a bit like the experience that we Christians should be always feeling. There is something wrong. We don't fit in. But Peter is writing to these exiles, these strangers and telling them how they should live. And you and I need help with that as well, especially at the moment.

And it is funny, Peter doesn't say as strangers withdraw from others, just weather the storm and look after number 1 and let everyone else find their own way forward. Nor does he say, join in with everyone else and try to fit in so you will no longer feel like strangers. He has a third approach that begins by acknowledging that we are indeed exiles but elect exiles, strangers yes but selected strangers. Let's see what I mean.

1. Strangers (verses 1-2)

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia". Peter starts by introducing himself rather simply. He is an apostle. One of those chosen by Jesus to be with him those 3 years that he ministered in Israel. And Peter is writing to a group of strangers who have been scattered throughout the Roman Empire, most specifically around what is now modern day Turkey.

These guys are a bit like the Israelites were when Babylon came in and dispersed them throughout their ancient kingdom. At that time God's people were no longer in the place that God had given them to live, they now were homeless, stateless, strangers in a strange land. A bit like those refugees we have seen on our televisions over the last couple of years who have left Syria because it is no longer safe to live there and are now living in huge refugee camps or trying to find a home in Europe but are finding it hard to put down roots. These Christians in Peter's time may live in Turkey but that is not their real home.

And Peter says that is OK because you are selected strangers, you are elected exiles. You *"have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance"*.

Christians may not have their home in this world but they do have a home with God in heaven. Others may consider you an outcast, an alien, a stranger but not God. You might feel that you don't fit in at the moment but that is just not true. No siree! For Christians are *chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*. Chosen. Elected. Selected out of all the peoples of the earth to be God's very own family.

According to his foreknowledge. JI Packer once said, *"to be foreknown by God is to be foreloved by Him."* It is isn't that God knew about the choice that you would one day make, no he set his love on you so that you would make that choice. He knew that all of us human beings are dead in our sin, we are spiritually dead and so incapable of choosing him on our own. So he chose us. He set his love upon us. Theologian Geerhardus Vos, put it wonderfully when he said, *"The best proof that God will never stop loving you is that He never began."* He always loved his own! Elect exiles. Selected strangers.

But notice every member of the Trinity was involved in this process. The Father foreknew, the Spirit, (isn't it interesting it goes Father, Spirit, Son rather than the way we would normally take it Father, Son, Spirit), the Spirit sets us apart and sanctifies us, makes us holy, while the Son sprinkles his blood, he cleanses us of all sin and makes us acceptable to God.

That's how important we are to our God. We are not strangers we are family. He choose us before the beginning of the world, he confirmed his selection by 2000 years ago sending his son Jesus to die on the cross for us and then a number of years ago he sent his Holy Spirit into our lives to change us and mould us and make us more like Jesus.

And he did all of this for a purpose. *Chosen for obedience to Jesus Christ*, are the exact words of Peter. Chosen to obey. Chosen to be faithful. Chosen to be like Jesus. And so Peter will write to this group of strangers in Galatia & Gateshead, in Cappadocia & Charlestown, in Bithynia & in Belmont and tell them how to live as strangers in a strange land. How we are to be obedient to Jesus Christ. How to experience his grace and peace at this time.

For it is easy for us to feel forgotten, isolated at this time. The world is changing so where do I now fit in? What would God have me do? How can I love my neighbour in this current situation? What does worship, fellowship and evangelism look like today? Strangers who are

2. Strangely Hopeful

³*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* Peter firstly encourages us to praise God! Not to be defensive. Not to whinge. Not to complain but to praise the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise him for his great mercies. And that is true of any situation that we Christians find ourselves in. We always have a reason to praise God. We can always thank him for his mercy, his grace, his peace.

For friends we have a new birth. We have been born again! We Christians have all had this chance to start again and live not just as citizens of Lake Macquarie but citizens of heaven. So we are dual citizens. We have two passports so to speak. We might live in Australia but our home, our real home is with God in heaven. That is our hope. Our sure hope.

Now we might say to someone “I hope it doesn’t rain this weekend” and what we are really saying is that I’d like it not to rain but I’ve seen the weather forecast and we really can’t be sure of what will happen or not. But Peter says we have a *sure hope* in our future because God did something in the past that *guarantees* what will happen in the days to come. God raised Jesus from the dead.

God allowed his son to die and then on the third day he made him come alive again. And God has done something similar to us as well. We were once dead in our sins, in our wrongdoings and yet God entered our life and gave us a new birth, a new life, a new start. The same power that entered the lifeless body of Jesus has entered into our lives as well. And so because of where we have been, we now have an assurance about where we are going. God has written us a cheque, backed by the bank of heaven, so our inheritance is secure.

“An inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade”. We might be strangers but we are not poor. For what God has given us is imperishable, unable to be destroyed. It’s unspoilable, it will not be polluted or diluted in any way. It’s unfading, it will not be like our bodies and be subject to decay through time or sickness. It is kept for us safer than Fort Knox in heaven.

Robert Louis Stevenson in his poem “When the Stars are Gone” put it this way	
<i>“The Stars shine over the mountains</i>	<i>The stars shine over the sea</i>
<i>The stars look up to the mighty God</i>	<i>The stars look down on me;</i>
<i>The stars shall last for a million years</i>	<i>A million years and a day</i>
<i>But God and I will live and love</i>	<i>When the stars have passed away”</i> .

God’s inheritance is kept for the believer and the believer is kept for their inheritance. *“This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time”*.

For Peter says that we are shielded by God’s power through our faith until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. No matter what happens in this world, we can’t lose what is going to be given to us in the world to come. COVID-19 can’t stop it. Trials can’t stop it. Death cannot stop it. We are in the grip of grace. In God’s grip of grace. We are safe. We are secure. We are not going anywhere. For we are in God’s safe hands.

Doesn’t that give you hope? Doesn’t that help you to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? He has chosen you, elected you and will keep you. That’s our hope. But this hope is not a rocking chair where we sit back and await Jesus return, it is more a walking stick that we can lean on as we stumble our way through life. It is not a sedative to keep us calm. It is a shot of adrenaline to get us up and at it. It is not an anchor to keep us safe where we are, it is a light house showing us the way through the storms that are all around us. For yes we are strangers who are strangely hopeful but we will also go through many

3. Strange Trials (verses 6-9)

⁶ *“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of*

trials". Strangely this hope doesn't just lead to joy it also leads to trouble, to difficulties, to woe. It was the poet William Blake who wrote these words

<i>"Joy and woe are woven fine</i>	<i>A clothing for the soul divine</i>
<i>Under every grief and pine</i>	<i>Runs a joy with silver twine</i>
<i>It is right it should be so</i>	<i>Man was made for joy and woe</i>
<i>And when this we rightly know</i>	<i>Through the world we safely go".</i>

We rejoice even though we suffer grief, even though we go through many trials, even though we suffer. Now that seems counter intuitive, why would we rejoice in our sufferings? Because our sufferings are necessary for the growth of our faith. ⁷ *"These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory & honour when Jesus Christ is revealed"*.

Christian suffering is one way that God prepares us for our future salvation. It refines us like gold is refined. It gets rid of the dross, the impurities. It makes our faith even more valuable.

Peter says think about gold, fire does not destroy gold, it refines it. Gold that commodity that is known for its preciousness and long lasting elegance doesn't just become durable by chance, it has to go through various tests and trials. Similarly nickel has to be thrown into a furnace at some 2,200 degrees centigrade to get rid of the slag. That makes it 99% pure and then it has to be purified still further by acid until it was completely pure.

Do you think that we can be prepared for glory more easily than nickel can be prepared for earthly use? Do you think that this is OK for gold but not for Gods precious sons & daughters to go through the fire? Jesus had to die on the cross, his blood was sprinkled for our purification. Do you think there will be any other way to the crown but through the cross?

Gold is proved genuine by its testing and our faith is proved genuine by our testing. Now that doesn't mean that God doesn't know whether our faith is genuine or not and so he tests us to see if we pass the test. No God chose us. He gave us our faith in the first place. Testings **show us that our faith is genuine**. For when God takes away all other things that we can have our faith in, then we realise we don't need anything else but God. And that gives us a greater love for God.

⁸ *"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls"*. For the Christian, going through the woe does lead us to sorrow but also to a joy, inexplicable joy. God shows his love to us in the midst of pain. He reveals his care for us when we are full of sorrow. He holds our hand. He helps us stand. He is with us in the storm and in the rainbow.

The English Christian Malcolm Muggeridge once wrote *"I can say with complete truthfulness that everything I have ever learned in my seventy five years in this world, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has been through affliction and not through happiness... In other words if it ever were to be possible to eliminate affliction from our earth existence... the result would not be to make life delectable, but to make it too banal and trivial to be endurable. This of course is what the Cross signifies. And it is the cross more than anything else that has called me inexorably to Christ."*

So you feel like a stranger at the moment? You feel like a stranger when you try to follow Jesus and everyone else is doing their own thing? Don't rage against the machine, this is gold, pure gold. God is

working on you as he is working on me. He is taking my fears, my insecurities and my sinful habits and turning them upside down. He is refining us. Now I am not saying I am enjoying this particularly at the moment, but a loving heavenly father uses all things for good for those who love him. Strangers with a strange hope going through strange trials to receive a

4. Strange encouragement (verses 10-2)

For the way of glory, God's glory has always been sufferings first then onto glory. It was what the prophets went through, it was what Jesus went through & it is what you and I will go through. Because that is the message of the whole Bible! Look at what Peter says next. ¹⁰ *"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow"*.

The prophets who wrote Scripture were constantly talking about the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that were to follow. That's what the OT is all about. It is about Jesus. Jesus suffers in death and is glorified in the resurrection. But notice who was it that wrote the OT? Well the simple answer is the prophets, but Peter goes deeper than that. It was the Spirit of Christ, also known as the Holy Spirit. He wrote these words.

But there is more. ¹² *"It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things"* Can you imagine it, the prophets didn't really know what they were talking about. Primarily they were not prophesying for their own time but for a time such as ours. They were working for us. They were preaching for us. They were warning us. Thus we need Christ shaped glasses to understand the OT.

But there is even more. ¹² *"It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven"*. The witness of the OT prophets is backed up by the witness of the NT preachers & even by those who preach from the NT today. For they also talk about Christ. They preach the gospel about the sufferings & glories of Jesus. And once again the agent that drives that message home is the Holy Spirit.

So today we are not even in the same room, maybe not even hearing this gospel message at the same time that it is being preached and yet the power is not in the preacher or in the quality of the video or the sound, it is the power of the Holy Spirit. I am struggling with how to speak on a video or on ZOOM, where to look, how long to go on but that is not the issue.

As the larger Catechism puts it. *"The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners, of driving them out of themselves and drawing them unto Christ, of conforming them to His image and subduing them to His will, of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions, of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation."*

And this is so amazing that even the *"angels long to look into these things."* They would like to trade places with us today. Yes they are God's messengers but they would like to be on the receiving end of this good news as we are today. As would the OT prophets, they would love to be cooped up in their houses hearing the word of God today. You think you want to go back in time, to Genesis 1 or the Exodus or the crossing of the Jordan or the time of Jesus? You would like to go back in a time machine to ancient times? Well they would like to trade places with us today and hear about the mercies of God, about the grace of God. Hear

about how God is bring good even out of trials and hear about how God is refining his people and preparing them for heaven.

Friends we are so privileged to live between the resurrection and the second coming. For Peter is reminding us today that God has chosen us, loved us, protected us and informed us of his eternal plans. Yes we might feel like strangers even in our world today, we might not fit in with everyone else here in Australia but we are receiving the fullness of our salvation and it is all through Jesus Christ.

What a hope we possess, a living hope. What an inheritance is ours, kept for us in heaven. What a faith he is producing in us, as he gets rid of the dross in our lives and what a love he has for us in that he is opening up the curtain for us on the mysteries of this world and sharing us his creatures, his eternal plans.

I read recently about the building of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Apparently when they began construction they didn't use any safety equipment and about 23 people fell to their deaths. And so after a while they rigged up a sort of net under the bridge to catch people if they slipped and fell and for the rest of the construction period only 10 people fell but each one's lives were saved. But the interesting thing was that 25% more work got done on the bridge each day after the net was installed. Why? Because there was a safety net. They knew they were being looked after. They were safe.

How much more would we do in God's service if we knew that underneath our lives was not a safety net but God's everlasting arms. Ready to catch us when we fall. Ready to protect us when we are in danger. Always ready to one day take us to our eternal home. Well God has chosen us as Christians. He is saving us as Christians. He is keeping us as Christians and he is preparing us as Christians for glory. Friends let's get out there with joy, hope and love and be obedience to the cause of Christ, wherever he sends us to go.

Closing Song Modern There is no other name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJRP51v5LAY>

Traditional The Church's One Foundation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jotNbcFeIX4>

Benediction.

As we end our time of worship, hear these words from 1 Peter 1 ⁶ *In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.* ⁷ *These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.* ⁸ *Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,* ⁹ *for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

Virtual Morning Tea

Why not join us on ZOOM for a virtual morning tea. You can connect by

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/630573464>

Meeting ID: 630 573 464 Password: 949109

Or if you are not able to join us on ZOOM please make some phone calls

1. To someone in the Church you haven't seen/spoken to for a while
2. To someone in the church you don't know, just look up your Church phonebook & give them a call.
3. A non Christian you know. Just to see how they are going & if there is anything you can do to help.