

# James Philip Thanksgiving Service - Whole Service

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Date: 19 March 2009

Preacher: NULL

[ 0 : 00 ] Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

This is the gospel which James Philip gloried in. Set free from the guilt and the penalty of sin and united to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our resurrection life, our hope, our joy and our peace. And so we are able to see with Paul this afternoon, I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

On behalf of Mary, William and Jennifer, can I give to you this afternoon the very warmest of welcomes to Holyrood Abbey, James Philip's Church, and to the service of thanksgiving for the life and for the ministry of God's servant.

And in all that we do in this time together, the primary note is that of worship. Praise to the living and the eternal God of glory and of grace.

[ 2 : 00 ] And so we begin by lifting up our hearts and our voices. In the singing of our opening hymn, Praise my soul, the King of heaven. To his feet thy tribute bring, Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, Who like me his praise should sing.

Praise him, praise him, Praise him, praise him, Praise the everlasting King. Praise the everlasting King.

Praise the everlasting King. kwb My disse to The righteous King. K-9 souara disse to The Holyrood Abbey.

K-9 satanic sing. K-10 a however m Say, mentioned to The turning sonata Yesh Sivr Tiem Israel. Thank■■■ yala yas hir couldn't express our wers, nad yarmuille, kami at tion baixo.

K-9 souara disse to The beat. Amen. Amen.

[ 4 : 26 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Let us pray. Almighty God, great and gracious, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, before whose face the generations rise and pass away, we bow our heads and our hearts, and our hearts in worship in your presence.

With full hearts we give you thanks that you have not left us to live and to die in this world without hope. You have given to us your own dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of sinners. And it is in his name that we come into your presence today. We give you thanks, O God, for the wonder of your loving kindness and tender mercy, whereby through all the changing scenes of life, you have been our God, our guide, our shepherd, and our friend.

[ 7 : 11 ] And we have been recipients of the multitude of your tender mercies, renewed to us day after day. But most of all, we bless you for the gift of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

We stand amazed before the cross of Calvary, where the Son of God loved us and gave himself for us.

We rejoice in the full and perfect atonement he made for our sins, paying the price and meeting the judgment so that we might be forgiven.

We rejoice in the fact that he secured for us eternal redemption and opened the kingdom of heaven to all who believe on him as their own Savior.

And on this day when we face the reality of death, we rejoice in the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the assurance that it gives us that sin and death and the whole kingdom of evil have been conquered, and that victory has been given to us.

[ 8 : 26 ] As our beloved minister James would say, and would have us say, we believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

Gathered in your presence this day, we pray that you will speak to us all, young and old, and especially those of us who have grown old along with Jim.

Speak to us of the things that are unseen and eternal. Keep us all mindful that here in this world we are strangers and pilgrims, and that we nightly pitch our moving tent a day's march nearer home. In the midst of all the sorrow and loss we feel, make us aware of that heavenly home where the saints are gathered in glory, and where there is no more pain or crying or sorrow, and where all those who have died trusting the Savior will see his face and will serve him with unsitting hearts. God grant that when the time comes, we will be found ready and waiting. God grant that when the time comes, we will be found ready and waiting. In this place, with all its hallowed memories, we give thanks for the ministry of our dear James Philip, that brought so many to Christ, that fed and nurtured our souls.

[ 10 : 04 ] We give thanks for our life and ministry, that gave such an example, and urged us on to stand firm and to be faithful right to the end, as he himself did.

Look upon us, gracious God, you know and understand human sorrow and loss, and you are indeed the God of all comfort.

Minister to our sore hearts with the grace and the sure hope of the ghost gospel, and make the truth of eternity real to us.

Hear our prayer, accept our worship, and continue with us. And this we pray in our Savior's name. Amen. Amen. Gathered here to give thanks to God for the life and ministry of James Philip, we all have our own treasured memories, which become more precious the older we get.

[ 11 : 21 ] Some memories are just too personal to be made public outside the family, but some do need to be spoken about to honor the man we remember.

Buxburn, the village where my sister, brother, and I lived, was a dull place. Our home was small, of poor quality, with seven people in three rooms, and for various reasons, we were always short of money.

All of that created a variety of tensions which affected the three children. My brother hated the fact that often the coat or suit he wore was handed down from the son of the manse across the road from our home.

There are also, of course, many bright memories. Going back many years, I remember a concert in the village hall when Jim sang two solos.

I was surprised at his composure on the platform. I was impressed with the quality of his singing. It was so far back, I can't remember if his voice had broken or not.

[ 12 : 51 ] But not only was I impressed, I confess I was a little envious, because to me it was another reminder that my big brother was good at everything.

He always got prizes at school. When ready for secondary school, he won a scholarship to attend Robert Gordon's college, one of the best schools in the area.

He became a gifted musician. Years later, Jim told me how, as a teenager, he had played the church organ at a series of meetings held by the Church of Scotland evangelist, Dr. Reverend D.P. Thompson.

And Jim showed me the decision card he signed, confessing Jesus as his Savior. After school came Aberdeen University, because he aimed to become a school teacher.

It was there he met William Still, and that began a lifelong friendship. Few have recognized just what significant support, encouragement, and when needed, caution, my brother gave to William Still right through his ministry.

[ 14 : 12 ] While at university, Jim became persuaded of a call to the ministry, but as soon as he graduated MA, he was conscripted into the RAF. He served, not as air crew, until he was invalided home from Burma, suffering severely from rheumatic fever.

He then went on to complete his training in divinity in Aberdeen. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and then went to Glasgow to be the assistant to Dr. William Fitch in Springburn Hill Parish Church, and he was ordained there in 1948.

There are people here today who benefited greatly from Jim's ministry in Glasgow, not least in the very large Bible class that was his responsibility.

In December 1949, he was inducted to Gardenstown, where he exercised a remarkable ministry. We tend to think of him mainly as a Bible preacher, expository teacher, and this he certainly was. From beginning to end, he stood firm on the inspiration and authority of Scripture and on the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, and from this he would not be moved.

[ 15 : 39 ] Neither would he be moved from the centrality and priority of preaching, supported by the prayers of his congregation. and his preaching was not a form of lecturing.

It was diffused with the warmth and earnestness of his own life of faith, his walk with God, and his love for his people.

All his preaching was done in the context of worship. It was not a formality that he began each service with the words, Let us worship God.

He was defining what the congregation was gathered for. Then after a psalm was sung came the words, Let us pray. Can you picture him often leaning forward on the lectern like that?

That particularly earnest look on his face, and again that particular tone of his voice, as if he was saying to you personally, I shall lead you, come with me, right into the presence of God, join with me speaking to God.

[ 17 : 05 ] And such was the unction of God's spirit that at the end of the prayer our hearts seemed to say, Amen, Lord, that's what we wanted to say.

James Philip, a great Bible teacher, was also a true evangelist. And heaven will reveal just how many were brought to saving faith.

Some from a churchy background and some very different. in the Gardenstown Mance after one prayer meeting, Jim asked me if I had noticed a particular man's prayer spoken so earnestly.

Then he added, Lars Hogman, A, that man wrecked the pub and was arrested. And a year later, praying in the prayer meeting in a way that moved my heart.

Another memory there is of Gardenstown days is our lovely Sunday summer evening. As we walked down to church, we saw all the goss and other things on the steep cliff at the corner of the bay, alight with smoke, rising up into the air.

[ 18 : 27 ] The sermon that Sunday evening was on the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah and the need to be saved. At the end, the preacher said so earnestly, when you leave the church, look over and see the smoke rising and remember the day of God's judgment.

During one spell of his time in Gardenstown, such was this power the working of the Spirit of God through the preaching, that Jim was worried that two Sundays had actually gone past without anyone actually being converted.

How we long to see God at work like that in our day. Of course, such ministry was not without cost. Far more than people realized, James Philip was a sensitive man, and in many ways a very private man. Even those of us close to him often were not sure just what he was thinking.

He was a man with a heart of love. He was a man who could be trusted. If you confided in him, you could be quite sure that he would not betray your confidence.

[ 20 : 00 ] And that is not true of all ministers. He was often deeply hurt by the scorn and criticism of ministers and others who had no sympathy with his doctrine or his preaching.

He was also hurt by and grieved over some he had helped greatly, who later became disaffected and critical. He was saddened when some of those called to the ministry under his preaching later compromised their commitment to the historic doctrines of the faith, at least in their preaching.

His years in Gardenstown were sore in many ways, not least in loneliness. Rich as his ministry there was, I always believed his place was in Edinburgh and in due time he came to Holyrood.

There are many applications of the verse in the New Testament that says we have no idea and can't even imagine the range of blessings God has prepared for those who love him.

One significant blessing was when Mary Muffet came into Jim's life. What a love affair that lasted a lifetime.

[ 21 : 26 ] What a transformation and fulfillment in Jim's life. What a partnership in the service of God and the gospel. What a home.

What love parents had for children and what love and admiration the children had for their parents. care. What care they all showed for James right to the end.

What an example to us all of Christian marriage. At the farewell gathering at Jim's retirement, I had the privilege of giving an address.

I think it was the closing address. And I quoted from Hebrews chapter 13 verse 7. Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you.

Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. It is little wonder that today we give thanks to God for the life and ministry of James Philip.

[ 22 : 47 ] James Philip was inducted to Holyrood Abbey Church on the 15th of January 1958. he was the 19th minister to be formally approached by the vacancy committee.

In other words, in turning to James, they really were scraping the barrel. Some barrel. Indeed, before asking him to be sole nominee, a previous sole nominee who had withdrawn at the last minute, said, nothing will ever be made of a church in as poor a state as that.

Now, I wonder if James was tempted himself to believe that, because within a few weeks he was utterly convinced that in coming to Holyrood, he had made the biggest mistake of his life.

It was actually a quite desolating time for him, and he was in a torment of spirit about it. Indeed, he told me himself one day that during this time he would go out some nights, and discouraged and dispirited, he would simply walk the streets until it was time to go home and time for bed.

But then that day came when he made his way into Holyrood Park, and standing on top of the Salisbury Crags, looking over the city and down into the Holyrood parish.

[ 24 : 25 ] God brought to his heart and to his mind the words he brought to an equally discouraged and dispirited gospel minister. Acts 18 and verse 9, do not be afraid, keep on speaking, do not be silent, for I am with you and no one is going to attack you and harm you, because I have many people in this city, and many of these many people are here in this church today.

You are the fruit of that promise of God, and if not here today, then throughout the land, overseas, with many now in glory.

glory. And so James kept on speaking, and in those days he was something of a lone evangel here in Edinburgh, at least in the church of Scotland.

But it wasn't long until people began to hear of this new man in the East End, of how he systematically expounded the Bible. Starving Christians began to fill the pews, and were fed and were satisfied, Lord's Day by Lord's Day.

And then the students began to hear of him, and the gallery began to fill up. People were converted, lives were changed, lives were transformed, a midweek meeting began down here in the transept of the church, and then a prayer meeting, and with Saturday night being the only night when nothing was going on in the building, so a Saturday night it was, and on that first night such were the numbers that they had to use the hall and not the vestry as had been intimated, and the many people kept on coming.

[ 26 : 32 ] All this being said, what encouragements, the work here in Holyrood had its lonely aspects, things, and so God gave to James the gift of Mary Moffat.

They first met during an Edinburgh CU evangelistic week in 1956, the one at which Neil McTaggart was converted, and then again two years later when, now in Edinburgh, James was the speaker at the annual IBF Scottish Conference and Largs.

I have to tell you this, but Mary began to play hooky. She belonged to Charlotte Chapel, but was to be increasingly seen sitting in the gallery here in Holyrood.

As James himself told us, when he saw her sitting up there in the gallery, he knew that this was the woman he was going to marry.

mind you, and I do need to be careful here, the man sitting behind me nearly ruined it all. When he spoke at a meeting in Charlotte Chapel, and in what he said at this particular meeting, he spoke about being loyal to your church.

[ 27 : 56 ] Mary took it to heart and stopped attending Holyrood, and James was not best pleased with his brother. But it wasn't long before she was attracted back to Holyrood, and following her pre-registration year in Zambia, James and Mary were married on the 19th of November 1960 in Gilcompton South Church by William Still.

They were two of two children, of whom they were to be so very, very proud, William and Jennifer, and six much-loved and hugely adored grandchildren, Joanna and Juliet, and Ruth and Rachel, Sam and Philip.

James' ministry here in Holyrood was marked by what can only be described as a seriousness and an earnestness. And of course, after all, saving sinners from hell and preparing believers for heaven is a serious business.

peace. And this was seen as George has already commented, not least in the way in which Lord's day worship was conducted. From the very way he walked up these pulpit steps to the way in which he called us to worship.

And will we ever forget, having sung the opening praise, the way in which with these palms opened like this, he would bend to the microphone and say, let us pray.

[ 29 : 34 ] And we were ushered, weren't we, into the throne room of heaven itself to be given a glimpse of glory. Where do we begin in talking about his preaching?

Its depth, its clarity, profundity, simplicity, the passion, the zeal, the joy in it, and the tears.

I wasn't the only divinity student to walk out of this place, saying, and I said it more than once, oh, to be able to preach like that.

And again and again, no matter what book he was expounding, he would bring us back to the great two-fold theme, which marked his ministry here in this place, the two crosses, the two deaths at the heart of the Christian gospel, and the Christian life of discipleship.

The cross on which Jesus had to die, the just for the unjust to bring us to God, and then the cross upon which we have to die, dying to sell, so that we might be raised to live for Christ.

[ 30 : 53 ] Christ. And it was this great theme that marked not only what he said, but how he himself lived. In the words of George Muller, having been asked the secret of his success in gospel work and ministry, there was a day when I died, died to George Muller.

And that was James Philip. And that was the secret of his success. He was the clay jar of 2 Corinthians 4. He was a nothing in his own eyes.

And as I said here on Sunday morning, he wouldn't have crossed the road to hear himself preach.

And it was because of this, his humility, the self emptying, that here in this place we were privileged to see something of the all surpassing power of God in glorious demonstration.

Through his ministry, men were called to full-time ministry, with ministries being shaped and moulded for the future. Many were called to service overseas.

The first in 1959 was Malcolm Moffat. And so many, many more were called to dedicated service, in the home, in the office, in the university, in the factory floor, in the shop, or wherever.

[ 32 : 26 ] What a debt we owed him. All this being said, we have to say that he wasn't the perfect minister. Dare I mention it, but his children's addresses?

addresses. And I've actually scored out what I was going to say. But he wasn't at his strongest with children's addresses. Indeed, I'm ashamed to say it, but with my two flatmates and one or two others here in this place today who I won't embarrass, we used to give him marks out of ten each Sunday.

He rarely got above two. Although on one occasion telling us about a visit on holiday to Fountains Abbey, we did give him a five.

But what we truly remember about him in this place is that he was a man who had a passion for holiness. In him we saw something of the image of Christ.

He was a man with a zeal for God and his glory, a man with a burden for those who are without Christ. How he pled from this pulpit often with tears for people to come to Jesus.

[ 33 : 48 ] He was a man with a love for the people under his pastoral care. He was a true pastor and a faithful friend. He was in essence a true man in Christ.

Now James Phillips' ministry was to extend way beyond the walls of this place. And here one must begin with the monthly Bible reading notes which went all over the country and all over the world. For many a minister like myself, these notes are still first port of call in preparation. The big question always is begin with James Phillips or end with James Phillips.

Then there was the tape ministry with the Bible notes. They were the only feeding that many a Christian in a spiritually barren situation ever received.

Manna from heaven as it was for missionaries in isolated areas. And then the number of books and commentaries and booklets which he wrote.

[ 34 : 50 ] My own copies of Romans and Christian maturity are falling apart. heart. And then this final work, the glory of the cross, a memorial to what was at the heart of his ministry, a distillation of his writing on and preaching of the cross.

And just to say that we have 700 copies of these here today and you will receive one as you leave. He had a vast correspondence with ministers, missionaries, and those who had been touched by his ministry in different ways.

He was a conference and convention speaker. Port Stewart, my, how he loved Northern Ireland and how Northern Ireland loved him. Stritheffer, Gailoch.

He did the Scottish CU circuit most years and was forever speaking at IVF conferences. He was a frequent speaker at the Creef Conference and so many other Bible weeks.

theological and missionary gatherings. With a heart for overseas mission, James was for years on the OMF Scottish Council and for a time was its chairman.

[ 36 : 07 ] During his sabbatical he visited Southeast Asia and even today missionaries still speak of his ministry during that time.

He supported the work of Rutherford House from its beginning. He was a trustee and a council member and following on from Mr. Still he was the chairman of the Creef Conference and there are many many other areas of Christian work and witness that we could mention if we had the time.

In the Church of Scotland, though not a frequent speaker at Presbytery, whenever he did, his intervention was always telling. A general assembly, his voice was to be heard on such subjects as Sabbath day observance, the Westminster confession, and women's ordination.

But most significantly of all, I do believe, was his involvement in the Church of Scotland selection school procedure, firstly as an assessor, then as a director.

Though he was somewhat scorned for his theology, he was so very deeply respected for his sheer integrity, in that he was honest and all was scrupulously fair.

[ 37 : 28 ] If there is one thing that leaves you open-mouthed in awe concerning James was his sheer capacity for work. Two expositions on a Sunday, a midweek exposition, a word at the prayer meeting, plus the daily Bible reading notes, and all of this before other pastoral responsibilities and various local and wider church commitments.

If ever a man was focused on his work, it was him. And yet he still had time for his family and for other pursuits. He listened to music, the classics, often whilst he was preparing.

And he played himself expertly, and he composed as well. He read avidly. There was always a pile of books beside his bed, and he drove Mary to utter distraction by reading far into the night.

He played golf abominably. He loved visiting gardens, but like his successor, didn't know which end of the spade actually went into the ground. And he lived for his holidays in the highlands, Arrasig, Gairloch, where on the beach, reading Agatha Christie, it was rumoured that, though I still refused to believe it until I see the photographic evidence.

It's rumoured that he took off his jacket and his tie. James had a huge intellect. He had a warm, a compassionate heart. He was gracious, kind, and generous spirited.

[ 39 : 06 ] He had, yes, a serious nature, and he was somewhat shy. As George has said, he was sensitive and could be very easily hurt.

But you know, he had a great sense of humour as well, and he could be enormous fun. Ask Ali Keaton to tell you James' story of the operatic diva and the trampoline.

You might not find it funny, but it killed him. But then James could be a contradiction in himself, not least when it came to patience.

There must have been times, surely, when in sheer frustration he wanted to wring your neck and mine. But he was enormously long-suffering with us, and so very understanding.

But put a driver or a three-wood into his hand, and it was as if a demon had got into him. It was always a source of mystery to Tom Maxwell, Ali Keaton, and Alec Gilroy, why James was never taken up on a charge of manslaughter for driving off the first tee at Moncton Hall when the foursome ahead was only 70 to 80 yards down the fairway.

[ 40 : 26 ] He was always going at a million miles an hour, always in a hurry, even to the extent of bounding up the stairs at Willowbray Avenue, two at a time.

Let me pause here, and if I could say just a particular word to Joanna and Juliet, and Ruth and Rachel and Sam and Philip sitting down here.

Look around the church this afternoon. There are so many here. I wonder how many you think are here. Maybe after the service you can count.

And here's a thought. Most of these people are related to you. That's absolutely right. They're related to you. A relation is a member of your family, your mum, your dad, your brother, your sister, your gran, your grandpa, your aunt, your uncle, your cousin, and so on.

Well, so many of the people here are related to you in that your grandpa was their spiritual father, even their spiritual grandfather and great grandfather.

[ 41 : 40 ] What do I mean? Didn't your grandpa tell you about Jesus? And didn't you learn from him what it means to love Jesus?

Your grandpa was my spiritual father in that through knowing him and listening to him, he taught me as he did you and your mum and dad.

He taught me about Jesus and what it means to love Jesus and obey Jesus and serve Jesus and live for Jesus. Isn't that amazing to have such a big family?

We just loved your grandpa to bits. And we respected him and we always did what he said. And do you know this? If you wanted to get married, you had to ask your grandpa.

I'll always remember the Sunday morning, Lynn and I walking through to the vestry to see your grandpa. We were wanting to get married. And I turned round to Lynn and I said to her, you know, it's one thing for the Lord to say that we can get married.

[ 42 : 57 ] But this is the big one. And when we got into the vestry, he just smiled and hugged us.

After preaching through Romans for one last time, Eleanor Robertson and I worked out that in preaching and writing, he had gone through Romans in Holyrood at least seven or eight times. He retired, his last Sunday being the 24th of October, 1997. And so James and Mary left Holyrood. But they were soon to return.

And of course they returned because this was their home and we their family. And here his presence in church was simply a benediction to us.

Just to say that if the words of the psalmist were true of anyone, they were true of him, they will still bear fruit in old age. And he did. And he had an ongoing ministry here in this church.

[ 44 : 01 ] In September of 1999, he was made minister emeritus of Holyrood Abbey. We honoured him as the Lord would have wanted us to honour him. In January of 2002, marking his 80th birthday, serving the word of God, a celebration of his life and ministry was published and presented to him at an informal gathering at Creef Hydro.

We'll always remember that night, as we sat and concentrated on the food that we were eating, he could but look at this book, and every page he turned, he seemed to say, this is actually about me. James had his first major stroke in August of 1998. He broke his hip in 2002. That was a Saturday night, getting ready to come to the prayer meeting.

And it was about then that we began to see something of a deterioration in his physical and mental capacity. And it's true that as the physical and mental deterioration progressed over the coming and following years, he never but ever complained.

Not only that, but in all of his frailty and forgetfulness, the one thing that he never lost, next to his love for and dependence on Mary, and how we pay tribute to her today for her faithfulness and steadfastness and caring for James with such loving devotion.

[ 45 : 32 ] But what he never lost was his memory of God's Word. I will always remember one evening going to the Astley Ainsley and we sat together. and I took his Bible.

I daren't read from the NIV, but I took his Bible and we turned to Romans 8 and I read the first half of the first verse.

He completed it. I went on to verse 2. He completed it. And we did the whole of Romans 8 faultlessly.

Other evenings we did Ephesians two. Chunks of the Sermon on the Mount and a number of Psalms. Last Thursday James was looking as well as he had ever been for some time.

He was alert and responsive. And so in the evening the family went home. Later on in the evening the staff nurse in the ward went in to see him and did what she did each night and read him the evening portion.

[ 46 : 39 ] of daily light. He was rested, calm and at peace. Fifteen minutes later she went in again and he had gone home.

Though absent from the body he was present with the Lord he loved and adored and served all the days of his life. And that we would never grudge him.

And so we say today echoing the words of the Lord, well done, good and faithful servant. And we would always also say as James would want us to say, to God be the glory, great things he has done.

Let's pray together. Amen. God be the Lord, the Lord of hosts and the King of glory, we bow our hearts before you today as we bring to you in Jesus name.

These are praises and thanksgivings, blessing you, magnifying and adoring you, not only for all that you are in your sovereign majesty and holiness, and in your amazing and abounding grace and mercy in the gospel, but for all that you've revealed yourself to be as this God through the life and ministry of your servant, our father in the faith, our pastor, our brother, our friend, James Philip.

[ 48 : 17 ] We bless you for all that he was in Christ, for his coming to faith, for his growth and grace, for his call to the ministry, for your leading and guiding of him to Gardens Town and then to Holyroote, for his faithfulness and ministry, for his care as a pastor, for his wisdom and counseling, for his compassion in times of grief and despair, for his goodness and his kindness, for all that he was as an example of holiness, for his zeal in preaching, for his steadfastness in the face of ridicule, for his hard burden for the lost, for his love of your church, and for his jealousy for your honor, reputation and glory.

We bring to you our thanks. grace. We pray very especially today for Mary and ask, oh God, that you would draw near to her and that you would be her comfort, her refuge and her strength in time of trouble.

We pray for William and Rebecca, Joanna and Juliet, Jennifer and Nigel, Ruth, Rachel, Sam and Philip. We pray for George and for Moira up in Aberdeen.

And pray that in these days, oh God, that they might prove the sufficiency of your grace and that you would bring to them anew and afresh all the promises of your glorious gospel, that you are the resurrection and the life.

Oh God, continue with us now and bless us in our worship for Jesus sake. Amen. Great is the gospel of our glorious God where mercy met the anger of God's rod and we stand to sing.

[ 50 : 35 ] May we keep Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 53 : 20 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Father, by your word, we have heard the gospel. Because of your gospel, we love you. And because we love you, we love your word.

As we pray, we pray, open our eyes by the power of your spirit, that we might know Jesus and give him the glory and the honor and the praise that he is due.

[ 55 : 26 ] For we ask it in the Lord, we ask it in the Lord, amen. A selections of readings from the word of God.

A selections of selections of the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. The Spirit of the Lord has anointed the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the Lord has sent me to preach good tidings unto the meek.

He has sent me to pray, and the Lord has sent me to proclaim liberty to proclaim liberty to the Lord, and the Lord has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives. And the opening of the prison to proclaim the Lord has sent me to proclaim the Lord, and the opening of the prison to proclaim the glory of the Lord.

And the opening of the Lord has sent me to proclaim the glory of the Lord, and the opening of the Lord has sent me to proclaim the glory of the Lord.

Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions.

[ 56 : 57 ] If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

[ 58 : 43 ] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Who was made of the seed of David, who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.

For by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God is manifest, apart from the law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

[ 60 : 18 ] Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.

For there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

To declare his righteousness for the remissions of sins that are passed, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Hebrews chapter 7 and 9. Jesus, the guarantor of a better covenant.

The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office. But he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever.

[ 61 : 50 ] Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own.

For then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all, at the end of the ages, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

[ 63 : 35 ] And so, the apostle continues in Hebrews 13, verse 6, so we can confidently say, the Lord is my helper.

I will not fear. What can man do to me? Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and follow their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same. yesterday, today, and forever. Not long after he had his first stroke, in 1998, a Christian publisher wrote to my father asking him if he would write a chapter in a book they were doing about coping with illness.

Why don't you do that, I said. I think you'd do it very well. No, he said. When I asked him why, he just quietly said this. I don't want to speak about myself.

I only want to speak and write about Jesus Christ. And a true Christian leader is one who leads all who follow him, not to himself, but to one place alone, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 64 : 53 ] James Phillips spoke the Word of God to many, many of us here in this building today. And therefore, we will honor him if we follow him now and turn our minds to that one place to consider this Jesus Christ.

The same. Yesterday, today, and forever. That verse, of course, is often taken just in isolation and even by itself. It is a wonderful, wonderful verse, isn't it?

Especially at a time like this. God buries his workmen, but his work goes on. And the God of our fathers is our God too. Yesterday, today, and forever.

But there's so much more to this verse than that. In many ways, it's a verse that sums up the whole of the message of this letter to the Hebrews. And the key is in that last word, forever. It's one of the great words of this epistle.

And it speaks of completeness, of the absolute finality of what God has done once and for all in the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 65 : 59 ] And so the emphasis is not so much that Jesus himself is unchanging, although of course that is wonderfully true. But it's that in his coming and through his work, he himself has changed everything.

Everything about this world. It's time, it's history, and it's eternity. And he's changed it forever.

Forever. If I may quote James Denny, whose name you may possibly have heard of.

In the death of Jesus Christ, he says, God has spoken the last word. He has nothing in reserve. The foundation has been laid of the kingdom which can never be removed.

It is this conception of absoluteness, of finality in everything Christian which dominates this book of Hebrews. You remember how the letter begins.

Long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom he created the world.

[ 67 : 11 ] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

That is the Jesus that my Father's faith leads us to. Not a mere prophet among many. Not a Jesus who is a mere example or teacher. But to the one who is himself God's ultimate word of self-revelation to mankind forever.

And that revelation is intimately bound up in God's ultimate work of salvation for man forever.

Hebrews 1 goes on, He who upholds the universe by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

And that's what this letter is about. Finality. The uniqueness and finality of what God has made known in Jesus Christ and what God has done in Jesus Christ to deal with the guilt and the sin and the death itself that afflicts this our world forever.

And that, friends, is the message of the Gospel. And what a wonderful message it is in our world of uncertainty and turmoil and fear and death. There is nothing greater to be revealed by God.

[ 68 : 43 ] There is nothing more we need in the person and in the work of Jesus Christ our Lord. We have it all. Jesus Christ and his salvation is all that we will ever need yesterday, today, and forever.

And perhaps the message of the Christian Gospel is nowhere better encapsulated than in these words that Nigel read from Hebrews chapter 9 which speak of these three great appearances of Jesus Christ our great High Priest.

His work in us in the past and in the present and in the future. His work that guarantees we might say our own yesterday and today and forever.

Let me remind you of what he says about this great and wonderful work of Christ's salvation. First, it is a work that is complete forever. And therefore it guarantees us absolute and total peace with God for all that is past.

Verse 26, he has appeared once and for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. That is why Jesus Christ came.

[ 69 : 54 ] And that's the heart of the Christian Gospel. Jesus came not to give us an example of goodness to follow. Not to be a great moral teacher that we should honour and respect although of course today none or few honour and respect his morality.

not to just be the one who gives us some divine light. Not even to be one who just by identifying with us in his incarnation shares in our pain and griefs and woes.

No! All of these things are true of course but none of these things can ever give us what we really need. The true peace of a cleansed conscience.

No amount of moral effort. No amount of religious observance. No amount of devotion or sacrifice or penance or anything else at all can ever bring us real peace.

Can ever truly cleanse the human heart. And deep down we all know that don't we? The if only I had never done that or the many many if only I had done that.

[ 71 : 04 ] Those things that plague our minds of course we willfully suppress these thoughts don't we? But sometimes perhaps in the dark and the quiet of night time perhaps in facing up to a real grief sometimes we are confronted with reality.

The dis-ease the foreboding that arises from a conscience that cannot be cleansed by anything in this world. Like the despairing cry of Lady Macbeth out out damned spot what will these hands never be clean?

The answer of course is no. All the perfumes of Arabia will never sweeten this little hand. And all the religion in the world all the priests all the sacrifices on earth cannot take away sin.

All they can do says the apostle is constantly to remind us of our sin. over the great stain and of our absolute helplessness to do anything about it.

But he says Jesus Christ appeared once and for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

[ 72 : 23 ] And it's the atonement the putting away of sin that explains the incarnation the coming into our world of God the Son. To quote Denny again in his action he does something for us which we could never have done for ourselves and which does not need to ever be done again.

He achieves something which we can look to as a finished work and in which we can find the basis of a sure confidence towards God. And that is what makes the message of Jesus Christ good news a gospel he has put away sin once and for all by the sacrifice of himself and that guarantees us total peace with God forever.

That means friends that if you are Christ's then nothing you have done no spot or stain nothing however terrible it may be nothing can ever bring back the guilt of your sin.

it is a work that is finished complete forever. But that's not all although it is a finished work secondly he tells us it is a work whose efficacy is continuous forever and therefore it guarantees us the transforming power of God for our present lives now and forever.

Verse 24 Christ has entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. You see there is nothing remote or merely forensic about this gospel of Christ.

[ 74 : 02 ] He is our ever present personal saviour our great high priest our advocate who constantly draws us into the very presence of our heavenly father through the power of his risen life.

We read in Hebrews 7 Jesus is a priest forever and therefore he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him. Why?

For he ever lives to make intercession for them. The Christ who was our substitute in death is also our substitute in life.

He appears in the presence of God on our behalf. And that is when we draw near to the father through him it's no longer our tainted lives that he sees anymore.

It is Christ's perfect life. For our life is united to him forever. And that's what guarantees our fellowship with him today and tomorrow and forever.

[ 75 : 07 ] I know that while in heaven he stands no power can force me to depart. And that's so precious. Not even the power of my own folly and stupidity and sin.

Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever. Behold him there. The risen lamb. My perfect spotless righteousness.

My life is hid with Christ on high. With Christ my savior and my God. It's no longer I and my life but Christ and the power of his risen life that pleads my position in the father's house.

There's more even than that. About this position that we have in Christ there is also in the gospel the possession of that life in our life now. It's not just that we are in Christ hidden with Christ in God. It's that he is in us. Christ is in you says Paul the hope of glory. And just as Jesus ascended bodily into heaven now to appear for us in the presence of God so he has sent his spirit into our hearts now to unite us so that we truly are his forever.

[ 76 : 24 ] And so Paul can cry out it is no longer I who live but it is Christ who lives in me. And that's what it means to be a Christian believer.

How my father used to love to preach on these words I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me. Listen to explain better than I could ever do the true glory of what that means.

It means he said that he who created the rugged grandeur of the everlasting hills may indwell a human heart to impart a similar moral rugged grandeur.

He who brought into being the beauty and the fragrance of the rose may come to lives stained and marred by sin and transform them with a similar moral and spiritual grace.

He who holds the universe in being by the word of his power may make men's hearts his dwelling place. And can it be that he will not be able to keep those hearts in order?

[ 77 : 31 ] The transforming power of God for our present lives because of the continuing efficacy of the finished work of Christ forever. The ancient 6th century hymn grasped the magnitude of it.

His the nails the spears the spitting reed and vinegar and gall from his patient body pierced blood and water streaming for earth and sea and stars and mankind by that stream are cleansed all. And, said my father, he who has accomplished and will accomplish the total reconciliation of all things in the universe will scarcely be stretched by the task of clearing up these lesser disorders of our own little personal world.

The warring instincts within us, the hopes and fears and dreads, the petty animosities that corrode our spirit, the bitterness, the grudges, the secret pride and vanity, the envies, the jealousies, the ambitions, all that creates disorder within us.

Oh, the glory of it and the indescribable astounding hope that it holds out. Do you see? He appears now for us and in us with power forever.

[ 78 : 59 ] Friends, therein is the power of the gospel. life changing power to touch the deepest springs of our beings, you and me, and to transform them and to heal them, even those parts of us that are most grotesquely misshapen and crippled by sin, the hidden corners and the tainted parts of our personalities, to transform them and make them every day, little by little, more and more truly human, more and more into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And even that's not all that this gospel implies. But thirdly, it is a work that promises consummation forever. And therefore, it guarantees the triumphant purpose of God for the future.

Verse 27 and 28, just as it is appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Our world lives in fear, especially in these days. Fear of the future, fear of the unknown, fear of death. But for those who are in Christ, all such fears are banished forever.

Even death itself has no sting left because he has released us from the fear of death and above all from the fear of judgment. I know that today that whole idea of judgment is so foreign to our modern ears, but the Bible takes it absolutely for granted and it tells us to take it very seriously.

[ 80 : 54 ] It is appointed for man to die once and then comes judgment. But do you see what a wonderful comfort and peace there is for those who have thrown everything onto Jesus Christ our Lord?

The day of judgment has become, he says, the day of salvation. Christ will appear a second time not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Someone said to me just this week, an abiding memory of theirs of my father was of him standing in this poop, mouthing the words of the prophet Isaiah with feeling and emotion as though they were his own.

He will swallow up death forever and the Lord God will wipe away every tear from all faces and it will be said on that day, behold, this is our God.

We have waited for him that he might save us. we have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. That great consummation is the purpose of God for this universe and it is guaranteed triumphantly and forever in the once and for all finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 82 : 14 ] There is a future for those who eagerly await for his coming. There is, wrote my father, a minor note in the music of the Christian life.

But this minor movement is not the final movement of the divine symphony. But it leads on to a glorious consummation whose crashing chords and sonorous harmonies remove all tensions and answer all questions.

As Paul put it elsewhere, light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

He will appear a second time not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him and to usher in the glory of the kingdom which shall be forever.

That is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and great indeed it is. And friends, that is the message that my father lived and proclaimed.

[ 83 : 29 ] It's the message that made him the man that he was and made this defunct, hopeless church the church of the living God that it became. Some of you I know heard him preach it many

times and it rejoices your heart today as much as ever it did.

but some of you here may have never heard that message before. And some of you, some of you perhaps having heard it in days gone by, have slipped away from serving the Christ that you once loved.

You've lost your first love and you know that that's true. And so I would say to all, all of us here today, what my father would say to you, and he would say it pleadingly, with eyes full of love and full of compassion, don't hold back from this Jesus Christ.

Don't let this opportunity even today pass you by. Give him and keep on giving him the unreserved submission of your heart.

And you will find the joy of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. The joy that he looked for and eagerly awaited and has now himself entered into through the mighty gates, flung open forever by our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is the King of glory.

[ 85 : 08 ] And one day, you also will share in that joy with him. Remember, you are leaders who spoke to you the word of God.

Consider the outcome of their way of life, whose faith follow. Amen.

And to God be the glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. Just a couple of things before we draw to a close.

First of all, can I say to you on behalf of Mary and William and Jennifer and all the family there, thanks for your presence here today at this Thanksgiving service.

And I know as well for all the many letters and cards and tributes that they've received over these past few days, they would want me to thank you on their behalf, and I'm glad to be able to do that.

[ 86 : 31 ] They would also want to express their thanks for the statutory services that did so much to help Jim over the past few years.

The GP practice, the district nurses who couldn't have been more helpful or supportive, the occupational therapists and the social workers in East Lothian who provided so much support and so much help and all the equipment that Jim needed for call-in-home care, whose carers have supported and helped the family over these past six years and now that the family regard them as friends.

Dr Colin Currie and the staff, first in Macallum and then Fraser Ward at the Astley Ainsley Hospital where Jim was regularly admitted for respite care.

For all their sensitive care and support, not least over these past few days and for all the help that they provided that enabled Mary to have Jim at home.

And then finally and above all, the family would want me to express their thanks for the love and care and friendship and prayers of their beloved Holyrood Abbey over the past 50 years and more.

[ 88 : 07 ] They would want me to thank you and I'm glad to be able to do that. Then secondly, perhaps taking Jim's words upon my lips, I want you to invite you into the church hall for fellowship over a cup of tea.

But you need to receive some instructions to do that. If you could just be patient for three or four minutes as chairs are removed from the hall and then if you follow the instructions of the stewards, those in the gallery should go outside and come round this way and those downstairs will come through this door to my right and will come back into the hall through this door to my left.

in, out, back into the church. Well, what should we do now? Let us worship God.

The earth belongs unto the Lord, to the tune Dumferlin, and then ye gates lift up your heads on high to St. George's Edinburgh.

God bless you. We'll... spend... now with the ph... a hand... gone on high R.

[ 89 : 45 ] You Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 94 : 21 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal come, through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will.

And may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the help and the strength

and the comfort and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all this day.  
And until that day when Jesus comes again, and then forevermore. Amen. Amen.  
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
[ 95 : 57 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.  
Amen.