2 Peter 1:12-21
Feilding Baptist
1.11.26

Call to Worship
Welcome to worship with Feilding Baptist Church!

We begin today with Jeremiah 31, a chapter of great hope. At that time it was hope for Israel, but as you read, you can see the restoration and renewal, and hope that was to come through Israel, with Jesus.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NLT)
31 "The day is coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 32 This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the Lord.

33 "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the Lord. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 And they will not need to teach their neighbours, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the Lord. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

Father, thank you for your restoring of things that are out of kilter. Thank you for your renewal. Thank you for Jesus, who came through Israel, to give us hope. Holy Spirit, please help us to worship with gratitude this morning, Amen.

Message – Jesus is Unique
Remember, the unique things of Jesus, to lift your spirits and bring you hope.

Simon Peter might have been talking to a home group?

2 Peter 1:12-15 (NIV – UK)
Prophecy of Scripture
12 So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. 13 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, 14 because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

'As I look back over my life, I admit, I have not received my just desserts. 30 years ago, there I was, a struggling fisherman. The pressure the Romans were putting on me to pay their taxes meant I did some things that weren't very honest. Strange really, I'd always been lucky, the coin had always landed the right way up, I'd always landed on my feet.

There was a night, with my back totally to the wall, one last chance, when we had to have a catch to survive. But we landed not one fish. My mood, my despair, I had never felt so low. Where to from there I did not know? I would lose my boat. Would I lose my wife? And what about my life, prison it would surely be.

As we pulled in the nets, not as carefully as normal, as we didn't expect to be using them again, here was a teacher, and a crowd (Luke 5:1-7). My usual form would have been to tell them to get out of my sight. But the teacher beat me to it, asking to sit in my boat! He used it as a preaching platform. I was a stunned mullet!

We pretended we weren't interested, but we were listening as we cleaned the nets for something to do. After the benediction, the teacher who was still in my boat, suggested, though it was more of a command (Luke 5:4), that we should go out into the deep and put out our nets. Just the sort of stupid thing a townie would say! This was no game. It was the wrong time of the day to catch fish.

The boys could not believe that I took Him seriously, and did as He said.

Look, sorry for the tears in my eyes, but the catch we got was enormous! I had been saved!

Muscle memory kicked in and we yelled for the brothers to come and help, the nets were so full they were tearing! We got all the fish in the boats, which nearly sunk them! And then it hit me, that this guy wasn't just a teacher. And if he wasn't just a teacher, He would know a lot more about me than I wanted Him to know.

I was ashamed. And I was scared. I fell at His feet and suggested that he leave me, and my uncleanness (Luke 5:8). I didn't deserve any of this, His presence, or the fish. All my debts were now paid! I couldn't have received a better demonstration of grace!

And then He said to the three of us, "Come, follow Me." Well, that put us on the spot. What a decision! A fresh start or same old? Stick with the fishing or turn over a new leaf? An opportunity! We didn't have a night to sleep on it. We didn't have a chance to check with our wives. We chose to follow. And we learned, and learned.

Like when we were rowing across the lake one night. We had had an incredible afternoon where we fed 5000 people with virtually nothing. Then Jesus sent us off, and the wind got up, and it was wild! Us fisherman were right at home. But none of us knew what to do when we saw a person walking toward us. On the water!

I'm embarrassed now with what I did, but I said to the person, "Hey, if it is you Jesus (Matthew 14:28) call me to come out to You." He did, and even I walked on the water, until I thought about what I was doing. It was Jesus!

But if that wasn't enough, when we got into the boat, the wind and waves just calmed, like they were respecting Him. Again, I was on my knees, with the others, as we realised that Jesus had to be the Son of God.

We travelled quite a bit, on foot, by boat, into and out of Gentile territory, back and forth. We were on our own, up at Caesarea Philippi on the Day of Atonement. As we fasted and prayed Jesus asked us an awkward question; "Who do people say I am?" Imagine a politician asking that?! Some people are complementary, and then there are others…

Some of the boys were quick to answer, some had said Jesus was John the Baptist, some had said He was Elijah, some thought He was Jeremiah or one of the prophets (Luke 9:20). It was all predictable, and possible. Jesus was being interpreted in light of the past, in light of what they knew. For some reason they couldn't consider Jesus in terms of Himself and His own uniqueness (JR, 292).

Then Jesus looked at us, and asked, and what about you, who do you say I am (Matthew 16:15)? All our heads went down, none of us wanted to look. Again, it was me who spoke first (Matthew 16:16), saying to Jesus, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

We didn't see the significance at the time, but way down south in the temple in Jerusalem, on the same day, the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would have been entering the Holy of Holies in the temple. This was a once a year time when God's name YHWH would be said out loud. My answer to Jesus', was a little coincidental!

Then Jesus said some things about me being a rock, and that on my understanding He would build His church. It was a bit embarrassing.

Five days later was the next festival, the Feast of Tabernacles. We were still up north. Jesus took three of us up the mountain. We felt a bit like being with Moses and his three leaders as we climbed (Exodus 24:1). We could sense God's closeness. The views were amazing, the air was so pure, the birds and the insects were making a contented racket. It was just so good!

And then, quite out of the blue, Jesus' clothes began to shine. They were so white, whiter than any fresh washing. And again we thought of Moses, and his face shining when he came down from being with God (Exodus 34:29ff). But this was different. As we looked we realised that Jesus wasn't reflecting the light of God like Moses. Jesus' clothes were shining because He was shining. He was light! The light was going through His clothes.

And as if it couldn't get any better, then suddenly there were Moses and Elijah. Moses representing the Law and Elijah the Prophets and their message of hope and renewal. And then the cloud, just like (Exodus 33:7-11) when Moses would set up the tent of meeting, the tabernacle, outside the camp. The people would watch Moses go inside, and the pillar of cloud of God's presence would come down as God spoke to Moses.

That's what we saw, God's presence as a cloud descending. But where was the tabernacle? And suddenly it was there, it was Jesus! Jesus was the tabernacle, God's very presence.

Then we heard the voice. It was like at Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:11). Except, this time we heard God say, "Listen to Him." (Mark 9:7). And it was so clear to us. Moses had descended Mount Sinai with the Torah, the early books of the Bible, and the Ten Commandments. Jesus would now descend the mountain as the Torah. And, as the prophets spoke of a positive hope filled future, Jesus was the positive hope filled future!

And Jesus is, so much more. Jesus is unique!

2 Peter 1:16-18 (NIV – UK)
16 For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. 17 He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'[a] 18 We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

2 Peter 1:17 Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35

"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!" (Mark 9:7)

And that's the strange thing to many. You see, just before we went up the mountain Jesus has said to us (Matthew 16:21-23) that He would suffer many things, and even be put to death. At the time we were appalled, and I said so. But Jesus' way is not the way of earthly power and glory, but the way of the Cross. We understand now that while being in very nature God, Jesus stepped down, as a slave, emptied Himself, going even to the Cross (Philippians 2:6-7).

And that's what I was getting at the start of this letter (2 Peter 1:1), I have taken that way as well. I'm no longer into earthly power and glory. I too will follow Jesus as a slave, a servant. Because I have seen in Jesus, hope, and a positive future. Yes, there is darkness around, and I have experienced plenty of that. But there is nothing that darkness can do to me, when I'm following the Light.

Yes, my life is about to end, but only in the here and now. Jesus is my evidence that I will live beyond what we can see here and now.

I have no regrets. I could have, and should have ended up in prison. I could have died long ago. It's only through the grace of God that I have this second chance. I hope I've made the most of it.

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NIV – UK)
19 We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

So I want you to remember, the uniqueness of Jesus, and to allow that knowledge, to lift your spirits, and live with much hope.

The grace shown to Peter, is the grace offered to us too.

Let's pause and pray, as we give thanks.

Lord Jesus, we have so much to give you thanks for. Thank you for your grace, giving us a second chance, beyond what we deserved. Thank you for the hope of a positive future. Thank you for life.