

**Sermon Transcript**  
**May 18, 2024**

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I don't know about you, but I'm thankful for our kids.

Especially today, they made my job easy.

And I know some of you are looking at the clock and saying, "Oh no, the pastor's just getting up."

We have potluck today.

How long is it going to be?

It won't be long, I promise.

We planned ahead.

We planned in advance for this.

But I do, I appreciate our programs for our kids and what our kids bring to the worship service.

It was a blessing to me to be able to sit and watch them and do what they do.

It's just good.

As you know, I'm a proud papa of one of them.

And so it's very nice to sit here and let him lead service.

Next year maybe we'll get one of the kids up here to preach.

What do you think?

Well, yeah, all right.

We kind of talked about this year and got a resounding, "Nope."

Maybe next year I'll work on them.

We'll get a preaching on or going or something.

Anyway, as you know, a couple of months ago I went on a trip to Maryland.

I almost said Maine, that's this fall.

I went to Maryland and once the picture gets up there, I'll show you.

I got to visit some lighthouses.

I got there a little bit early.

And so I took some time and I drove up.

And this is Turkey Point.

The first one will be Turkey Point Lighthouse.

It sits on the edge of a cliff that's like 100 feet up in the air and overlooks the water there.

Really beautiful setting.

The one thing is I really didn't dress for a hike and it's a couple miles hike to go from the parking lot to the lighthouse.

So by the time I got there and back, I had my steps in for the day.

But that was all good.

It was worth the trip.

But on my way back, there was another one and I took a chance.

I saw I had a little bit of time before it got dark, so I took a chance and I went.

And this one is the Concord Point Lighthouse in a little town called Auvray de Grasse.

Pardon my French.

I don't speak French and my accent's off, but that's as close as I can get.

So Auvray de Grasse, which means Haven of Grace.

There's a real interesting story how it got its name.

There was General Marquis de Lafayette, another French name, but he used to stop by this place and he was so amazed at how much it reminded him of Auvray de Grasse in France, this little seaport town that he used to go to.

And so he always commented on that and they decided to change the name to Auvray de Grasse.

And so it's a beautiful little setting.

It was so nice when I got there because that actually sits, there's a little park that's all the way around this lighthouse.

And it was like going to a citywide picnic because there were people, they were picnicking in the grass, there were people sitting on benches, sitting and having conversations.

And it just, it was like going into a different world when I went there.

And so I was pretty picture happy because it was all so beautiful.

And I didn't, I'm not sharing nearly all the pictures I took, but it was just a fantastic place to go.

It was quiet.

I really enjoyed myself.

I walked around.

There was even a guy playing the bagpipes while I was there.

And I shared with my Irish friend, Scottish friend, sorry, that he was playing the bagpipes and it was just real beautiful.

And of course I don't think he knew all of one particular song.

So he would play three-fourths of a song and then suddenly he'd stop and start a new one.

And that was okay because it was just kind of cool to see him walking around with the bagpipes.

But the neatest thing out of all the things historically that was there, I mean, George Washington has been there.

Captain John Smith has been there.

There's been all kinds of names, there are famous names, but the one that really got my attention was the one related to this cannon.

That cannon, I believe is from the war of 1812.

Now it may or may not be the actual one, but that's what it's supposed to represent.

And from the looks of it, it looks like it is rather old.

But this cannon represents an attack in the war of 1812.

It was actually May 3rd of 1813.

And the village had this little militia that manned what was called the Potato Battery.

I did not learn how it got its name, the Potato Battery.

But it gives a whole new meaning to the potato gun, right?

But anyway, the Potato Battery, they have one nine inch cannon and two six inch cannons.

That was it.

And these cannons were set there to defend the town from the British who were coming in from the sea and up the river there.

And this being one of the key places of transportation, this was where they were supposed to, the militia was supposed to defend the town.

Unfortunately, as the British came through, the militia decided they wanted no part of defending the town.

And so they all fled.

Except for one.

His name was Lieutenant John O'Neill.

He was a second lieutenant.

And he stayed and by himself, he manned those three cannons.

So if you can imagine just for a second, the little cannonballs, a six inch cannonball weighs a lot more than you think it would.

And he's picking these up, he's loading them in, stuffing them down, you know, gunpowdered a whole nine yards, and he fires that runs over to the next one and loads it up and goes to the next one.

I mean, you can just imagine the workout this guy is getting.

But in the process, as he was doing this, he got in the way of one of the cannons and got hit by the recoil.

That was the end of his defending the city with the cannons.

But he didn't stop there.

He ran back into town, which is right behind the lighthouse.

Lighthouse wasn't there at this time, but town was right behind where this sits.

And so he runs back into town, he grabs a musket, and he's trying to round up the rest of the militia to defend this little hamlet.

They would not do it.

So by himself with a musket, he started defending.

Now, I would love to say this was a big glory story.

And he stood there by himself and defended the town.

It didn't happen.

He was finally arrested.

The British burned about two thirds of the buildings down.

And they took him and the rest of militia, and they took them back out into the sea.

I think I got one more of the cannon.

A little bit easier, better to see there.

They took them back out to their frigates.

And on the main frigate, they were tried and they were accused, they were tried and convicted of being traitors to the British crown.

It was the frigate HMS Maidstone, which was led by Admiral Cockburn.

They were sentenced to hang, guilty of their crimes, all the militia men.

John O'Neill had a daughter, 15-year-old daughter, just a kid, Pathfinder age, who decided that she wasn't satisfied.

And she got into a rowboat by herself, and she rowed all the way out there to the main frigate, and she approached this British admiral.

And there she interceded on behalf of the militia men.

This admiral was so touched, so moved by her love for her father, and respect and support of these other militia men, not only did he grant them freedom, but he also gave her this gold-mounted snuff box, if you will, as a token because he admired what she brought in courage coming out and standing before him and pleading for the case of these people.

So they got set free because of her actions.

Interestingly, her father, John, was awarded a special sword from the city of Philadelphia for his act of bravery.

They ignored hers, I guess, but for his act of bravery, he got a sword.

She got the snuff box.

I don't know what she was going to do with it, but it was a token anyway.

But later, he wound up being appointed by President Adams to be the keeper of the lighthouse once the lighthouse was put in.

And not only was he appointed, but his family continued traditionally taking over subsequently for almost 100 years.

Quite an honor.

Take your Bibles and turn with me to Titus chapter 2.

Titus chapter 2, and thank you, Zia, for reading for us this morning.

You did a good job.

Verse 11 says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself his own special people, zealous for good works."

Paul's writing this letter to Titus, and all through it, it's a letter of instruction on how the people should be living their lives.

You have instructions for church leaders.

You have instructions for the older gentlemen, for the younger men, for the older ladies, for the younger ladies, and what they should be doing and how they should be doing it.

And it all centers on, "Because the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men."

Salvation has been promised to mankind since the Garden of Eden.

We see it from the very first, in Genesis chapter 3, we see that first promise of salvation.

And it continues all the way through the Old Testament history.

It's passed down from generation to generation.

Someone is coming, the Messiah is coming, a Savior is coming.

And they're looking all the way through it.

It transitions from all people to the Hebrews, who carried this and were supposed to be preaching

this to all the world, but they carried it all the way up until the day that Jesus Christ came and died on a cross.

When Jesus died on that cross, that was like a bright light shining through the darkness of the world, amen?

It was like a lighthouse, wasn't it?

It was this manifestation of God's grace.

Suddenly it all makes sense.

Everybody was looking for this warrior king to come and deliver them, and instead he comes and dies for them.

And so it was like this bright light shining through the darkness of a foggy, stormy night as a lighthouse would do.

Matilda was just a young girl, but her actions to save her father and those other men are a reflection of the grace of God.

They're a reflection of what Jesus did for each one of us.

Pathfinders, adventurers, you guys are young too.

There's going to be people who look at you and say, "Yeah, they're just kids.

They got nothing."

Maybe when they grow older.

But history has shown time and time again that God works through children.

God works through children, and by the way you live your life, by the things that you do, your actions, you can be a lighthouse for somebody so that they can see the love of Jesus Christ, so that they can see God through you.

Pathfinders, adventurers, my challenge to you, you may never see a lighthouse.

I was 52 before I saw my first lighthouse. 52 years old.

You may never see one.

You may never row a boat.

You may never go out and see a British frigate.

You may never even be in the Navy.

But you can let God use you to be a blessing, to shine a light out into the dark world so that they can see the love of Christ for themselves, so that they can have a relationship with him, and so that Jesus sets them free too.

So my challenge to you, pathfinders and adventurers, continue doing what you're doing.

Continue learning all about Jesus, continue living and doing the actions, the things that shine Jesus' love out into this dark world.

Congregation, I'm gonna challenge you to do the same.

Be an example for our pathfinders and our adventurers because you too can be a lighthouse.

You too can shine a light out into your world so that people can see Jesus and be saved.

If you would like to be that lighthouse, young people and more mature people as well, would you stand with me as we pray?

Father in heaven, we thank you for your lighthouse, which was Jesus on the cross.

The beacon that shined through, that pierced through the darkness to show a better way, to show salvation for mankind.

Lord, we pray we can't be a lighthouse in the same way that Jesus was.

But Lord, we can be a lamppost.

We can be a candle.

We can be a flashlight.

Lord, use us however you see fit, no matter what our age is, to be a light for those who need to see you.

We pray in Jesus' name, amen.