11.10.26 pm

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Date: 11 October 2026

Preacher: Reverend Donald Smith

[0:00] Well, good evening everyone and a very warm welcome to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our service of worship this evening.! My name is Donald Smith. If you don't know me, it's great to be with you. Anna and Kiki's son-in-law, I think is the way we're more generally known.

But it's wonderful to be back with you again this evening as we come before God to worship him in spirit and truth. I hope you have seen the notices cycling through on the screens. Just been asked to highlight a little bit. The prayer meeting will be on Wednesday at half past seven.
It's a wonderful thing to gather together in the middle of the week as God's people to come before him in prayer. So if you can, let me encourage you to be here at half past seven on Wednesday evening.
We do come now to worship the one true living God and we're going to do that beginning by singing to his praise. Praise the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation. Mission Praise number 564.
Let us stand together as we sing these wonderful words to God's praise. His praise is to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation.
[1:11] Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation.

O my soul, the King of creation. O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation. O ye who hear, brothers and sisters, go hear, praise him in blood and adoration.
Praise to the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, all things so wondrous he reigneth.
Shelters the earth and his wings, his so gently sustaineth. Has thou not seen all that is needful hath been granted in what he ordained?
Praise to the Lord, the Lord, all things so wondrous he reigneth. Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee. Surely his goodness and mercy yielded thee at hand thee.
[2:49] O good and knew what the Almighty can do. Who with his love can befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, the Lord, all things so wondrous he reigneth. Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore him. All that hath life and death come down with graces before him.
Let thee amen, serve from his people again. And we forgive thee, we adore him.
Amen. Let us come before God in prayer together. Let's pray.
Almighty and everlasting God, our great Father in heaven, we come before you once more this evening, at the end of this your day, to worship you, the Lord of all creation, the King of things and God of gods, the one who reigns in majesty and wisdom and in power.
[4:18] We come before you this evening to praise you for your greatness as the one who has made all things, the one who sustains all things by the power of your words, the one for whom all things exist for your glory.

Father, you are worthy of all of our praise and we rejoice that we even have this privilege this evening of coming into your presence through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
Now we thank you for the words that we have just sung calling us to praise you, the almighty King of creation. Truly you are our health and salvation, our refuge and our strength.
You rule over all things in your sovereign goodness. And yet, although you rule over everything, you are gracious and near to each and every one of us, your people.
You have not dealt with us according to our sins, but have shown us mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, we praise you that the Lord of glory is also the good shepherd who knows each and every one of us sheep.
[5:29] The good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep and who calls us to follow you.
Lord, as we come before you again, we also confess again that we have so often failed to follow you as we ought to have done, to honour you as you alone deserve.

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That though you are worthy of all of our hearts, we have often given our affections to lesser things. That though you have called us to trust in your sovereign care, we have been anxious, for we too often trust in ourselves and not in you.
You have commanded us to love you, but so often we have chosen instead to love the things of this world. You have called us to follow you, but too often we have followed the sinful desires of our hearts.
Father, we confess our sin before you this evening, but we also thank you that our hope does not rest upon our faithfulness, but upon the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, the one who fulfilled your law in all righteousness.
We thank you that he offered himself as the perfect sacrifice, that he died for our sins as we were hearing this morning, that he willingly took the path to the cross in order that he might bear the guilt that once belonged to us.
[6:53] And we thank you also that having given his life as a ransom for many, for all those who would put their trust in him, Lord, having given his life, that then the grave held no power over him, so that we come this evening to worship a risen Savior, one who rose again from the dead to life everlasting and lives and reigns even now as our perfect High Priest, ever interceding for us.

And so we pray now as we continue in worship, drawing near to your throne in confidence because he is our great High Priest. We pray that now everything that is said and done would bring glory to your Son, Jesus Christ.
May your Spirit lead us into truth, strengthen your church here in this place, cause us to grow in love for our Lord and Savior whose voice we long to hear and whose footsteps we truly do desire to follow.
We ask these things in the precious and mighty name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and King. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing once more. This time we're going to sing from Psalm 103.
We're going to sing verses 8 to 14 of this wonderful Psalm, praising the Lord who is merciful and kind, slow to anger and full of grace. Let us stand once more as we sing these words to God's praise.
[8:11] Let us stand once more as we sing these words to God's praise. The Lord is merciful and kind to anger slow and full of grace.

He will not constantly reprove, for in His anger hide His face.
He does not punish our misdeeds, forgive our sins and just reward.
How great is love as I have said, towards all those who fear the Lord.
As far as He is from the West, so far His love has borne away.
[9:18] Her many sins and trespasses, and all the guilt that on us lay.

Just as the Father loves His child, so God loves those who fear His name.
For He remembers we are dust, and well He knows our feeble frame.
And well He knows our feeble frame. If you have a Bible, please do turn with me to John chapter 21.
John chapter 21. We're going to read the whole of this chapter together. The words are on the screen if you don't have a Bible in your own, but it will be helpful late in the service if you do want to have that passage open in front of you.
[10:22] John chapter 1. John 21. We're going to read from verse 1 right through to the end of this Gospel.

John 21, reading from verse 1. Let us hear the word of God together. John 21, reading from verse 1. After this, Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and He revealed Himself in this way.
Simon Peter, Thomas called the twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, I'm going fishing.
They said to him, we will go with you. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.
Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore. Yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, children, do you have any fish?
[11:36] They answered him, no. He said to them, cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. So they cast it.

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And now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, it is the Lord.
When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment for he was stripped for work and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish.
For they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place with fish laid out on it and bread.
Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish that you have just caught. So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore full of large fish, a hundred and fifty three of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn.
[12:45] Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. Now, none of the disciples dared ask him, who are you? They knew it was the Lord.

Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them. And so too were the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.
When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?
He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said to him, feed my lambs. He said to him a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love me?
He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. He said to him, tend my sheep. He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me?
[13:55] Peter was grieved because he said to them the third time, do you love me? And he said to him, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.

Jesus said to him, feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted.
But when you were old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.
And after saying this, he said to him, follow me. Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them.
The one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you? When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man?
[14:52] Jesus said to him, if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me.

So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not going to die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die. But if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?
This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things and who has written these things. And we know that his testimony is true. Now, there are also many other things that Jesus did where every one of them to be written.
I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. This is God's word. We'll turn to that passage in a moment.
Before that, we're going to sing again. We're going to sing this time in Gaelic from Psalm 32. A psalm about coming into confession, knowing the assurance of forgiveness when we do so.
[15:54] This morning we saw Peter's sin. Today we will see him come before Jesus and have that sin removed. And this is a wonderful psalm that preaches that truth of confession and assurance.

We'll sing in Gaelic, so we'll remain seated as we sing to God's praise together. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[18:39] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Let us join our hearts together in prayer once more. Let's pray. Father, we do come before you once again thankful.
Thankful in our hearts for the privilege it is to draw near you in prayer together. For although you are the Almighty, the King of all creation, we come here this evening also with the privilege of calling you Father.

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And so we come now to you as those who have been born again and adopted as sons and daughters of the Most High God. Thankful that we can come to you, that you hear our prayers, that you love to hear our prayers, that you beckon us in before your throne so that we might bring before you all that is on our hearts and minds.
Lord, we do that even now, laying before you all that is heavy on our hearts, the burdens that we bear, the needs that we know, our own, those of our church, our loved ones, our families.
[20:14] Lord, we know you are the one who binds up the hearts of the brokenhearted, who does not snuff out a smouldering wick nor break a bruised reed.

But you take us gently in your loving arms and bear us as each one of us needs. Father, we do bring before you this evening those in this congregation who are suffering, who are struggling, those who are battling with ill health, those who have been bereaved of loved ones, those perhaps who are weary in the faith, those who are wondering, those who feel lost and do not know how to find their way.
Lord, you know each and everyone's needs. You know the troubles of our hearts, and we know you are a God of all comfort and compassion. Lord, we pray that when life does not take the turns that we hoped it would, that you would help us to continue to trust in you in those circumstances, to trust in your provision, to listen to your voice and walk by faith, even when our sight might lead us to despair.
Lord, look after your people here and continue, we pray, to make yourself known in this place. We do pray for the people of North Harris. That those who are walking in darkness would see the great light.
That they would see the light shining from this church and from all those who faithfully preach the one true gospel. We ask for eyes to be opened, for hearts to be softened, for souls to be saved and lives transformed.
[21:50] That people might have life in the name of Jesus, having come to believe in him. Lord, we pray that even now, as we come to your word together, that you would build us up in our faith, build us up in our love and in our hope.

That you would equip us, not only to follow Jesus, but to make disciples of him. So that our lives may be offered as living sacrifices, giving all to bring glory to him.
The one in whose name we pray now. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, please do have that passage that we read in John's gospel open in front of you.
If you can, it'll be helpful to have that there. We're going to just work through it together this evening.
I wonder if you've ever found yourself feeling a little let down by an ending.
Maybe you've been watching a long-running TV series repeatedly for years and years, eagerly anticipating the finale, only for it to not quite live up to expectations.
[22:54] Maybe you get to the end of a great book, only to find the author seems to have carried on longer than they needed to. I remember having that feeling the first time I read through The Lord of the Rings.

The last installment of the trilogy is full of epic moments, as every kind of thread of the last three books is brought to its climax. Huge battles are fought.
The great enemy is defeated. The ring of power is destroyed. An epic voyage is completed. The long-awaited king is coronated. But then, just before you get to the end, you turn the page, and there's this whole chapter, basically about hobbits squabbling in the shire.
And the first time I read it, I was thinking, why is this here? I think Peter Jackson, the director, had a similar reaction, and so never included the chapter in the films, because on first reading, it doesn't feel like it fits.
It feels like the story should have ended a chapter earlier. I'll wait you to read through the whole of John's Gospel. You might feel the same way.
[24:11] Because chapter 20, it feels like a great ending. Jesus has risen from the dead. He has just appeared to his disciples. And then John brings it all to what feels like a fitting finale by saying, John 20, verse 31, I have written all these things, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

End scene. Roll the credits. Fade out the lights. The perfect ending. But then you look down, and there's this whole other chapter.

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And at first, it can maybe feel like a bit of a letdown. The disciples go fishing. They have a bit of breakfast. And then John tells us the answer to an ongoing game of Chinese whispers, so that you might think, are you sure, John?
Are you sure this is how you want your Gospel to end? But just like in The Lord of the Rings, when you take some time to think about what is going on, you realise that these endings are no mistake. But this is no anti-climax. It's been a while since I've watched one. But at least in the old, I don't know if you're familiar with them, the old kind of Marvel superhero films, I think kind of Iron Man, Thor, Spider-Man, and all that, the film would kind of reach its finale.
[25:43] The credits would roll. In a sense, it really was the ending. But then if you stuck around long enough, the credits would come to an end, and another scene would play out.

Just a little snippet of something more to come. Now, those kind of post-credit scenes didn't leave you feeling let down by an insufficient ending.
Instead, they leave you looking forward to something more to come. Those post-credit scenes, they tell you that the end of the film you've just watched is not the end of the story.
There is more to come. That is John 21. That chapter that we just read together. John ends chapter 20 calling every one of his believers, every one of his readers, sorry, to believe in Jesus.
The credits roll. But then this screen lights up again. Why? To get us excited for what is still to come. A glimpse into what this life of believing in Jesus will look like.
[26:52] So that John 21 is not an anti-climax. It is a launchpad into a life of discipleship. I hope you can already see why this is a great passage for us to think about.

But I thought it would be particularly good to think about tonight because of where we were this morning. In Peter's failure in the courtyard of the high priest, we saw, don't we, something of our own failure.
This morning, we saw Peter's failure. Here, we see his restoration. And so I hope this passage will serve as an encouragement as well to those of us who are conscious of our own failing.
Knowing that our past failure does not define our future discipleship. We'll get into that in a little while. But with our time this evening, we are just going to walk through the whole of this chapter this evening.
There are little bits we have to skip over. There's a lot in it. But three points we're going to work through as we go. Really just three things we need to do as we set out on a life of discipleship, one of believing in Jesus, having come to believe in Jesus and have life in his name, what do we do now?
[28:01] First thing we do now, point number one, depend on him. We need to depend on Jesus. In verse one, John takes us to the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

It's called the Sea of Tiberias here, but it's the same place. And there on the beach, we find seven of the disciples. We've got Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James, John, and two others. And instead of idly sitting around, they all decide to go fishing.
Out they go on the boat. But after 12 long hours of fishing, they managed to catch absolutely nothing. It makes me feel a bit better about my own fishing experiences.
These guys were professional fishermen. They were out there for 12 hours. Nothing. Nothing at all. But then, verse four, day begins to break.
Through his gospel, John kind of uses a theme of light and dark constantly. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore. But, the disciples don't yet know it's Jesus.
[29:10] So you can imagine, can't you, the conversation that followed was probably a little strange. They're exhausted after a long, fruitless night on the lake. And then this apparently random guy on the shore shouts to them, children, do you have any fish?

They answer him, no. The random man on the shore shouts back to them again. You'll get some fish if you try the right side. Now you can imagine, the disciples, can't you, we've been here all night and now we've got this random guy calling his children and telling us to try the right side.
Does he not think we've tried the right side already? But they've got nothing to lose. So over the side goes the net one more time. And all of a sudden, a desperately unfruitful night gives way to an unbelievably fruitful morning.
Before Jesus was there on the shore, they had nothing. Now that he is there, they have more than they can carry. What has changed?

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They've been there 12 hours. I think we're supposed to assume they'd already tried the other side at some point. Only one thing has changed. Jesus. Now earlier in John's gospel, back in chapter 15, Jesus says plainly to these disciples, apart from me, you can do nothing.
[30:36] Now Jesus isn't saying you'll never be able to catch a fish unless you believe in him. His words in chapter 15 were in the context of bearing good fruit, of doing good gospel work.

You might well be able to catch a fish without believing in Jesus, but what Jesus was saying six chapters earlier is that truly fruitful labor can never happen apart from him.
And that is what we are getting an illustration of here in chapter 21. But more than a real world illustration of Jesus' earlier teaching, this is significantly, isn't it, the disciples abundantly fishing in complete dependence on Jesus.
Famously in the gospels, right, Jesus earlier called these men to be fishers of men. And so the disciples going out to fish post-resurrection was it, we are getting a picture of how they will go as apostles.
I think we are also getting something of a kind of fulfillment of what happens in Ezekiel chapter 47, one of the Old Testament prophets, where Ezekiel has a vision of a river flowing from the temple, water flowing from the dwelling place of God, and it is bringing life to everything it touches.
[31:54] And on the shore of this river that brings life everywhere it goes are fishermen casting their nets from one end to the other. Life going out from God's dwelling place on earth.

The word in John's gospel who became flesh. Life going out from God's dwelling place on earth. Fishermen gathering in very many fish. The point here in John 21, right, is much bigger than just a few fish.
It is pointing to the gospel work the disciples are to carry out as they believe in Jesus. Gathering countless people for Jesus. But as they go out fishing, foreshadowing their ministry of fishing for men, what do we see?
They are completely and utterly dependent on Jesus. They get nothing without him. With him they have more than they can pull in. When it comes to truly fruitful labor, we will get nowhere without Jesus.
We can do nothing apart from him. It's only at this point in the story that John clocks on to who is standing on the shore. Peter, just look with me there at verse 7, it is the Lord.
[33:07] John recognizes the Lord and immediately Peter, what does he do? He jumps straight in the water, presumably to swim to Jesus just as he ran to the empty tomb.

But just as at the tomb John is still John and Peter is still Peter, at the empty tomb a few days before this, John arrived first and peered imponderously. Then Peter comes charging by and dives straight in.
The resurrection of Jesus has completely transformed their world. In a very real sense it has completely transformed the disciples. But they are still John and Peter. John is the first to think, to recognize what's going on.
Peter is the first to act. They still have different personalities that God will use in different ways. I just want you to tuck that thought away just for a few minutes later on because we will come back to it.
For now though, see how they all arrive on the shore. It's a slightly amusing scene in verse 7 and 8. Peter arrives completely drenched while the others sort of sail serenely in on the boat. But what do they all find when they get there?
[34:12] I think this is my favorite detail in the whole chapter. They get out of the boat and Jesus is there in front of the fire. And they think, great, Jesus, you've lit the barbecue.

We've got the, oh, right, hang on a minute. Look at verse 9. Jesus has the fish.
Right, they spend all night getting nothing until Jesus appeared. Then they get out the boat and there Jesus is. And what's he doing? He's already cooking some fish.
pictures speak a thousand words. Jesus said it back in chapter 15, but it couldn't be more obvious than it is here. The disciples need Jesus.
Jesus does not need the disciples. But he still says to them, verse 10, bring some of your fish too.
[35:19] he could do it on his own. He chooses not to. Not because he needs our help, but because he wants our help.

I remember how Jesus called to the disciples in verse 5. what does he say there? Children. Children. We've spent the last few weeks with Kiki and Anna.

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It's been wonderful for many reasons, one of which is the new coffee machine that Kiki bought Anna for her birthday. I like coffee and so I've gotten very familiar with it over the last month or so.
It's the point that I am perfectly capable of making a cup of coffee on my own. A cup of coffee is exactly what I need when I wake up at half past six in the morning and come slumping down the stairs, accompanied by a three-year-old who is far too awake.
As I arrive in front of the coffee machine, there is no part of me thinking, I really need some help here. I cannot do this on my own.
[36:33] I absolutely can do it on my own. But then, quite often, a small toddler appears by my side. And he wants to help. And I love him.

And he loves me. And so I don't tell him, go away and do your own thing. I've got this perfectly under control. I don't need his help, but I still want his help.
Not because it makes things easier, it's a lot more stressful. Not because it makes things quicker, it takes at least twice as long, not because it's more cost effective. Beans get spilled everywhere, coffee grounds are wasted, coffee spills.
You show an accountant the cost-benefit analysis of getting a toddler's help with anything, to be honest, and they'll tell you, won't they, that's a terrible idea. But while the pragmatic benefit is non-existent, there is, isn't there, a massive relational benefit.
I don't need his help, and he definitely wouldn't manage to make a coffee without me. But doing it together, well, it actually brings both of us great joy.
[37:48] Jesus does not need us. He could make his own disciples just like he can get his own fish, but he loves us.

And he loves to work with us. But we are dependent on Jesus just as children are with their parents. Parents don't need their children's help, but they do want to love them and be loved by them.
And so you do things together. For all the fruitful gospel work that we are called to, we can do none of it apart from Jesus.
And yet for all that Jesus can do it apart from us, he still calls us to have the joy and privilege of helping him, working with him, and for him.
Not because he needs us, but because he loves us. and he wants us to know the joy of loving him and living with him. As we depend on him to do what we cannot manage on our own.
[38:56] And it is the case that as you depend on him, you grow in your love for him. And you know his love for you more and more. And you will grow in your love for him through that.

And it is that love we are to have for Jesus. That is exactly where the conversation here in John 21 moves on to after breakfast. We've seen first of all that we need to depend on Jesus.
That's our first point. Secondly, we see the call to love Jesus. I said earlier that disciples would have come ashore and probably been thankful at the smell of the barbecue that Jesus had got going.
No one likes waiting around for a barbecue to heat up, do they? But one disciple would have had a very different feeling when he got a whiff of the charcoal coming through his nostrils.
Because smells often bring back memories, don't they? You smell cinnamon or nutmeg and you start thinking of Christmas. Maybe there's a distinctive perfume that reminds you of a loved one.
Well, when the smoke from the charcoal fire blew towards Peter, there's no mistaking what memories would have come rushing back.
[40:10] there are only two occasions in the whole of the New Testament where this kind of specific Greek word for charcoal fire is used. One is here, the other is in John 18.

We didn't actually get this detail in our passage in Matthew this morning, but John tells us three chapters before this that there in the courtyard of the high priest, where we heard Peter deny his Lord three times this morning, John tells us that there in that very courtyard after Jesus' arrest, right in the middle, was a charcoal fire.
fire. The only two times in the New Testament that that word is used. Jesus knows exactly what he is doing here. And so after breakfast, he turns to Peter in verse 15 and asks him directly in front of the other disciples, do you love me more than these?
Yes, Lord, Peter says. And we might think, oh no, right, here goes overconfident Peter once again. But actually, just look at what he says next. You know that I love you. He doesn't say, does he, I think I love you the most?
[41:38] He just says, you know that I love you. every time Jesus asks the question, Peter responds this way. It's a confession of sorts, isn't it?

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A confession that says, I know I cannot point to my own actions as proof of my love for you. But I can point to your knowledge.
To believe in Jesus is to love Jesus. repentance. And I think this is a really helpful picture of what repentance really looks like. We saw Peter fall terribly this morning.
What does repentance look like? Well, it's not, is it? It's not just feeling guilty and remorseful of our past actions. It's a good start, but anyone can do that, right?
You don't need to be a Christian to feel bad about what you've done in the past. But to repent, to believe in Jesus, is to turn from our sin and then turn to Jesus and say, I love you.
[42:54] And be able to say, you know that I love you. You know that I love you, even when my actions in the past say otherwise. You know that I love you, even when what I have done, even just a few days ago, even this very morning, is an absolute mess.

But Jesus, I love you and you know that I love you. The whole interaction maybe seems a bit uncomfortable, but Jesus asks these questions to publicly restore Peter.
To say to him and to the rest of the disciples watching on, Peter's past failures are not going to define his future discipleship.
He is wiping the slate clean so that Peter would know the past has been dealt with and that Jesus only wants him to look forward.
And he doesn't say, does he? Jesus doesn't say, well, you failed so that you can come back in at the bottom of the food chain. No, he gives him the most privileged task.
[44:08] Feed my sheep. Tend my lambs. Feed my sheep. The direction forward that Jesus points Peter is to shepherd his flock.

walk. And there is an element of truth in all that. Peter has given a specific task here as an apostle to go and shepherd the church. But I think we can say that for all of us, a declaration of love for Jesus, it does mean a commitment to caring for his people.
people. I wonder if you can say this evening, Jesus, I love you. It's a very personal thing to be saying, isn't it?
It's more than just believing in an abstract truth. It is confessing our love for a person. And to be able to say with the confidence that Peter does, Lord Jesus, you know that I love you.
And be ready to go and show that love for Jesus by loving his people. Like I say, we're not all called to the kind of teaching ministry that Peter was given, but we are all called to love God's people, to point one another to Jesus, to prefer the needs of others over our own, to love our neighbour, to do good to everyone, as Paul says in the Galatians, especially to those of the household of faith.
[45:34] So I've had two points so far. Believe in the risen Lord Jesus means depending on Jesus. It means loving Jesus. And then thirdly and finally, it means following Jesus.

In verse 18, Jesus gives Peter a glimpse of the path that lays before him. And the path that lays before Peter is not pretty. Peter is going to be carried away to his death, where his own arms would be outstretched.
And then Jesus says to him, look there at the end of verse 19, after saying this, Jesus said to Peter, follow me. The crucified Christ predicts Peter's death and says to him, follow in my footsteps.
footsteps. They are sobering words, aren't they? And as they walk along the shore, Peter looks over his shoulder, and there is John a few steps behind.
And I wonder, you know that thing when you're kind of growing up and your mum or dad asks you to clean the dishes after dinner, and then they don't say anything to your brother or sister? What do you say?
[46:49] Maybe you're a more godly child than I was. I wasn't skipping to the sink, I'd be pointing across the table and saying, what about him? What about him? Peter has just been told his hands are going to be stretched out like Jesus so that he might glorify God in his death.

It is not a joyful prophecy, it's a lot worse than having to wash up after Sunday lunch. Peter sees John behind him and says to Jesus, what about him?
What about him? to which Jesus replies verse 22, what is that to you? What is that to you?
If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me. Remember back in the boat where we saw John see Jesus and Peter jump straight in the water where John was still John and Peter was still Peter.
I think we see some of the pay out here. God uses each of his people as he has made them for his purposes to glorify him.

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[48:10] Yes, all of us together as God's people should be growing together in love, in joy, peace, patience, kindness, and much else besides. But that does not mean we are all going to become robotic replications of one another, all living exactly the same life as those in our church.

Now, I think there is a comfort in that, but also a great challenge. Comfort, I think, in that coming to Christ, following the risen Jesus, does not mean kind of leaving behind your personality, your DNA. It does mean leaving behind your sin, the old flesh. It will change you, but not in a way that loses you. Living for Jesus means a renewal, a fulfilling of who you are and who God made you to be. But the challenge, the challenge that just as we are each different, so God's plans for our lives will be different. And I think that is a challenge because we love, don't we, we love to think the grass is greener on the other side.

When you're in school, you often wish you were a student. Then when you become a student, you wish you were working and have an income. And then when you're working, you probably wish you were a student again.

[49:37] If you're a mum, you probably look longingly at people whose work day ends at five o'clock. If you're single, you might look longingly at a mum spending time with her children.

If you're young, you might wish you were tired and didn't have to go to work. If you're retired, you probably wish you were young. Whoever we are, whatever stage of life we're at, whatever we are going through, we almost always look at someone and think, wouldn't that be better?

What about them? Can't I be in their shoes? The grass is always greener, but here's Jesus' point. He doesn't say whether or not the grass is actually greener on the other side. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. Peter was probably looking into his death and thinking, why couldn't I have a long and peaceful life like John?

John lived into old age and probably wished he got to go and live with his Savior decades earlier like Peter. But Jesus says, what is it to you?

[50:49] Because you are to go wherever Jesus leads you. You are to serve him wherever he has placed you in life and with whatever he has given you or whatever he might have taken away.

However much better his plan for someone else might sound, Jesus says, you are where I've placed you. So it's okay. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, you just make sure that you are following me.

Believing in Jesus does not mean living out the same life you see another Christian live. It means following Jesus, whatever he has in store for you. Jesus is saying to Peter, I've got plans for John and I've got plans for you and because you are Peter and he is John, my plans for each of you will look very different.

But both of you, wherever I take you, follow me. You follow me. I've gotten to know a few of you a little over our various visits here but I don't know you that well.

So I don't know what life has waiting on the horizon for you. Maybe there are things waiting around the corner in your life that you wish weren't waiting for you.

[52:19] But that is the path that Jesus is leading you on and whatever it looks like, however much more appealing someone else's lot might look, Jesus says to you in the midst of it all, follow me.

Depend on me, love me, follow me. That is what a life of believing in Jesus will look like. John, at the end of his book, paves the way for a new beginning.

It is a launch pad into a life of discipleship. But just before he puts his pen down and just before this sermon ends, John has one final thing to say, because he wants to end with the greatness of the one we depend on love and follow.

Verse 25, now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

The whole world would make too small a library to contain the greatness of Jesus. And that is why this chapter is just the beginning. Just the beginning.

[53:31] A launch pad into a life, an eternity of discipleship following Jesus because gloriously there will be no end. No end to depending on him. No end to loving him.

No end to following him because there is no end to his greatness. Jesus. So let me just encourage you this evening, perhaps this is a path here in John 21 that you need to step onto depending on Jesus, loving Jesus, following Jesus.

Perhaps you just need to correct course or maybe you just need to encourage to keep on pressing on. But whatever life has in store, whatever this week has waiting for you, let me exhort you to

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depend on Jesus, love Jesus, and follow him.
And surely the good shepherd will definitely lead you home. Let's pray that we would do just that before we sing our final hymn together. Father, we do give you thanks once more for the Lord Jesus Christ, that as we abide in him, as we depend on him, we are able to do all that you have called us to do.
That as we depend on him, we will be able to go out into the world with the gospel. That as we love him, we will love his church, his sheep.
[54:56] Help us to follow him wherever he would have us go, knowing that he is the good shepherd who loves his sheep. And we thank you above all that Jesus is so much greater than we yet know.

So help us as we go out from here to grow in our knowledge and love of him for our goods and for his glory. Amen. We are going to respond to God's word by singing our final hymn together, The Lord's My Shepherd.
Let us stand once more as we sing these words to God's praise. The Lord's my shepherd I am of heart He makes me lie in blaster's green He leads me by the still water His goodness bescoach my soul And I will trust in you alone And I will trust in you alone love For your endless mercy follows me Your goodness will leave me whole He guides my ways in righteousness And he anoints my head with oil And I come it over flows with joy I faced on his beauty light And I will trust in you alone and I will trust in you alone For your endless mercy follows me Your goodness will lead me home And though I walk the darkest time
I will not fear He is alone For you are with me and you rod and stop are the comfort I need to know And I will trust in you alone And I will trust in you alone For your endless mercy follows me Your goodness will give me home Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all both now and forever more Amen

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