

16.5.21 am

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Date: 16 May 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] you'll have a testimony that Neil Cameron, who's just coming in just now, will share. So this evening at six o'clock, Neil Cameron will be sharing his testimony.

So be encouraged to tune in for that. I'm sure it will be a great encouragement. YF, I think, is on tonight at half past seven online. So you know what to do, those of that age.

And the prayer meeting will be on Wednesday at half past seven on Zoom, as usual. One further intimation is just to say that on the first Sunday in June, that Sunday, the 6th of June, we hope to have communion services, one in the morning and one in the evening.

So we've kind of worked out the logistics of how that can be done within these restrictions. And I think it should be possible for everybody who wants to take communion to be able to do so the way things are worked out.

So that's the 6th of June. We hope to have a communion service in the morning and in the evening. And if there are those who may be here or those who may be watching online who haven't taken communion before, haven't come forward and professed faith in Christ, and who would wish to do so, then be encouraged to come and speak to me or any of the elders at this point.

[1 : 24] But that's the date for your diary. It's a few weeks away. But the 6th of June, we hope to have two communion services, one in the morning and one in the evening. So these, I think, are all the intimations.

And we'll begin now this time of worship. And we'll hear God's praise sung from Psalm 51. Psalm 51 and from verses 7 to verse 13, this great psalm of repentance.

Do thy with hyssop sprinkle me. I shall be cleansed so. Ye wash thou me. And then I shall be whiter than the snow. Down to the end of verse 13.

Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be. And those that sinners are shall then be turned unto thee. So these verses, and we'll hear God's praise being sung.

And Stuart will lead us. Amen. And of joyfulness Make me to hear the voice That so these very bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

[3 : 21] All mine iniquities blot out Thy face hide from my sin.

Create a cleat, but Lord renew I'll right spread me within Cast me not from thy sight nor take Thy Holy Spirit away Restore me thy salvation's joy With thy free spirit me stay Then will I teach thy ways unto Those that transgressors be.

And those that sinners are shall then be turned unto thee.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father we thank you for this your day.

We thank you for the psalm that we have heard sung. And we thank you Lord for the fact that we are able as sinners to be turned unto thee.

[5 : 20] We thank you that you have opened up a way through Jesus Christ your son, our saviour. And we thank you for the psalm and we thank you that although we are sinners as the psalmist was and as the psalmist confess we would add our amen to that as we look back over our lives as you look back even over the last week we are conscious of the things that we've done that we shouldn't have the things that we've said and thought that we shouldn't have and we're conscious also of the things that we have left undone and that we've been silent over.

We're conscious Lord that the praise that you are due that we often are slow to give. We're conscious that often our lives become more about self than they are about Christ.

And so we confess Lord that we are sinners but we thank you that we can be turned to you that the way is opened through Jesus. We thank you that once more on this Sunday morning we turn to the cross and we remember that Jesus died on that cross to pay the price for our sin.

We thank you that he took the punishment that we were due and we thank you that he rose from the dead on that Lord's day that first Lord's day and the promise of salvation the promise of an open way into your presence was secured in and through the finished work of Christ.

And we thank you Lord for that once more. We must never drift from the cross. We must never take our eyes off that open tomb. We thank you Lord that that is where our hope is and Christ alone our hope is found.

[7 : 08] So enable us to know the joy of that hope the joy of your salvation this morning. We know the joy of the Lord is our strength and so we pray that we would know your strength that we would know your presence.

We pray Lord that we would not resist your call that we would not stand back and hesitate but we pray that as we hear the call of salvation that you would enable each of us to come those who may never have responded to the call of Jesus.

We pray that there might be someone even here today that would confess sin and come to Jesus for the first time. We pray for any who may have been wandering of late as we are prone to do.

We thank you Lord that as we return to you you promise that you will return to us and we pray that if there are any in that place that we would come to you.

And for those Lord who are walking with you we acknowledge that we need your strength we need you every hour and so we pray that you would help us to trust you to obey you and to know that happiness of walking with Jesus.

[8 : 23] We pray Lord for all those who are in need this morning we think of those who grieve and we pray for your comfort for them think especially of Shona and we ask that you would minister to her where she is this morning Lord that she would know your presence with her and that abiding sense of peace that has been in the home over these weeks.

We miss Ian but we thank you Lord that there is hope into eternity a hope that he took hold of in Christ. We pray for the McKellars as well as they feel that sense of loss with Kirsty's father Dr Hay going from time to eternity.

We thank you for the brightness of his witness but we pray Lord that the family would know your comfort and would know your hand upon them. We pray for those who struggle with loneliness those who haven't been able to come back to church yet and who have felt a long period of isolation and we ask that they would know your presence that they would be still and know that you are God and that you are with them today.

We pray for those who are battling with addiction some who are battling and struggling and falling at this point and we ask that you would help them Lord. Give to them the strength that only you can give.

And Lord we thank you for the encouragements and the blessings that you give to us and we thank you especially for Joseph John with us for the first time today and we pray your hand of blessing to be upon him.

[10 : 04] We love to hear just these gentle noises and we ask that he would grow up to know you and to trust you and again we pray for your hand on Andrew and Iona and the wider family.

Bless them we pray and bless all our young people those who will be at Sunday school those who will watch at home those who will meet this evening on Zoom for YF those who gather in school at SU.

we pray for them all we pray for the students those who are preparing to go back to university those who are coming to an end of their training and wondering what comes next.

We commit each one to you Lord those who are young and those who are slightly older and studying as well and we pray that you would guide them and as they acknowledge you that you would direct their path.

So hear our prayers and bless us in this day we pray. We thank you Lord for your goodness to us. We thank you for the peace the security that we enjoy in this country.

[11 : 07] We pray on for places where there's far from that. We think of India we think of Nepal at this time where we see so much suffering and we thank you that we can connect with these countries through prayer.

Lord as we think of them and as we think of those that we cannot reach physically we pray that you would reach them in the power of your spirit and through your people as we bring them to you in prayer.

So hear our prayers take away our sin keep our eyes on Jesus we pray and we ask this in Jesus name. Amen. Boys and girls there's a few of you here today so it's good to see those who are in the church and good to know that there's some who are watching at home as well.

Anything doing this week? Katrina it's her birthday today so happy birthday Katrina. We would sing to you but we can't at the moment.

Now I want to tell you a story today and I'm going to tell you a story about an uncle that I have. I don't think he's ever been to Harrah so none of you will have met him and I'm not going to mention his name because I've got a fair idea that he's probably watching but he lives in Aberdeen that narrows it down to one uncle and he was a taxi driver and he absolutely loves his cars and his cars were always the cleanest shiniest cars that you'd ever see.

[12:44] Do you know any people who are always washing and polishing their cars? I'm not sure if there's any people like that I can think of in Harrah's but my uncle I was almost going to say his name there he was always washing and he was always polishing this car and it was always the cleanest car in the whole street and he retired from taxi driving I think maybe three or four years ago now but his car is still super super clean.

Still out there every day washing it. I mean every day washing it and polishing it and hoovering it and dusting the inside and you might think well there's people like that that's not that's not a huge story but have you ever heard of somebody who does this when he washes his car he opens the bonnet before he washes it and he gets towels and he spreads the towels over the engine just so that no drips of muddy water that might come through the bonnet might stain the cover underneath the car so do you know anyone who does that?

Don't think so. Loves his cars. But do you know what happened last week or two weeks ago now actually it was. He was driving from Aberdeen to Glenelg to say hello to my parents in their garden and it was almost a disaster because he drove all the way from Aberdeen to Glenelg which I think this may be a four or a five hour drive and when he got there he was chatting away to my dad and they were having a yarn about this and that and then my dad says oh your car's looking good and he looked at the car and it was shining as usual and he was showing him this and showing him that and dad said what kind of engines in this car?

Is it a big engine? Oh I'll just pop the bonnet he says. Pop the bonnet. Looked underneath the bonnet. What do you think he saw? What do you think he saw?

He saw the towels. After he washed the car before he headed to Glenelg he forgot to take the towels out. So he had driven all the way from Aberdeen to Glenelg and the towels were there.

[15:13] Which is super dangerous because as the engine heated up the towels could have caught fire or they could have got tangled up inside the engine and the engine could have just ground to a halt.

Then the car would have been a write off. So that's what happened with Uncle No Name in Aberdeen. Now why am I telling you that?

What do you think the message is? What do you think the message is behind that? Why am I telling you that story? Michael's usually good at guessing my sermons before I give them.

Well I'll tell you why I'm telling you that. I'm telling you that because sometimes we can be so busy trying to keep what's on the outside of our lives clean that we forget about the heart.

Is that not true? It says in 1 Samuel chapter 16 of verse 7 people look at the outward appearance but the Lord. Can you finish it?

[16:21] People look at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart. Exactly. He looks at the heart. And so I'm wondering this morning as we think about this message and as we think about our own hearts because only we can see our own hearts.

I wonder is there something in our hearts this morning that shouldn't be there? These towels shouldn't have been under the bonnet as you drove all the way from Aberdeen but is there anything in my heart this morning or anything in your heart this morning that shouldn't be there?

Emily? Sin. That's right. And every one of us have sin in our hearts and we might be thinking just now about the last week and thinking you know what?

I'm a bit angry about somebody. You know sometimes we can fall out with our friends and we can be quite angry in our hearts and we see them and we say hi. But we're boiling underneath.

or maybe we see something that somebody else has and we're not happy for them but we want it for ourselves.

[17 : 36] And so we say nice car but we're thinking I wish you didn't have it. See sin takes all kind of shapes and forms doesn't it?

And so I think this morning what we should do is we should do what David the psalmist did. He could see sin in his heart and so he said to the Lord he said sorry.

He said sorry for the bad things that I've done. Sorry for the bad things that I've thought. Create in me a clean heart Lord and renew inside of me a right spirit.

And if we pray that prayer then God promises that he will work inside our hearts. He'll do a work that maybe nobody else can see at first.

But he'll start to change us. He'll wash us clean and he'll make us more and more like Jesus and people will start to see it because it comes from the inside and then it comes out.

[18 : 50] So let's pray that God will work in our hearts. Lord God we thank you for your word. We thank you that you search us, you know us and you love us enough to tell us about the sin that's in our hearts.

And as we think about our own hearts today there might be things that through your spirit you're reminding us of that aren't good. and we pray that you would forgive us.

Pray that you would wash us in the blood of Jesus. We pray that you would put your spirit inside of us and we pray that you would make us more like Jesus. Man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart.

So help us Lord in our hearts to be made more like you so that soon people might be able to see more of Jesus in us and through us. And we ask all these things in Jesus name.

Amen. Thank you boys and girls for listening well. You're going to head through to Sunday school now. And we'll turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 9 please.

[20 : 30] Luke chapter 9 and we'll read from verse 37 through to the end of the chapter. this is God's word.

The next day when they came down from the mountain a large crowd met him. That's Jesus. A man in the crowd called out teacher I beg you to look at my son for he is my only child.

A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. I begged your disciples to drive it out but they could not.

One believing and perverse generation Jesus replied how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here. Even while the boy was coming the demon threw him to the ground and in a convulsion but Jesus rebuked the evil spirit healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did he said to his disciples listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you.

[21 : 45] The son of man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men but they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them so that they did not grasp it and they were afraid to ask him about it.

An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus knowing their thoughts took a little child and made him stand beside him.

Then he said to them whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me for he who is least among you all he is the greatest. Master said John we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he's not one of us. Do not stop him Jesus said for whoever is not against you is for you.

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem and he sent messengers on ahead who went into a Samaritan's village to get things ready for him.

[22 : 48] But the people there did not welcome him because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they asked Lord do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?

But Jesus turned and rebuked them and they went on to another village. As they were walking along the road a man said to him I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied foxes of holes and birds of the air of nests but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

He said to another man follow me but the man replied Lord first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said let the dead bury their own dead but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

still another said I will follow you Lord but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family. Jesus replied no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of

God.

Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us. Pray just for a moment again. our heavenly father we thank you for your word.

[23 : 59] We thank you also for the promise that you will help us to understand and we acknowledge that without the help of your spirit we cannot understand we're like the disciples. Everything is hidden from us.

So open our eyes Lord we pray as we look at the words of scripture. Open our ears as we hear the words of Jesus and stir our hearts. open them and enable them to be like the soft good ground into which the seed of God's word went.

So hear our prayers. Help us Lord as we look to you and as we listen to you. We pray for the children. We ask that you would be with them too as they hear the message of the gospel simply in Sunday school.

We pray for the churches around us as well. We thank you that in all the churches around us the gospel message which is being proclaimed here. And we ask Lord that you would add your blessing.

We pray that you would use your word to seek and save the lost. We pray that you would build your church. And we pray all these things in Jesus name and for his sake.

[25 : 07] Amen. I want to look at a fair chunk of text today as we've read through.

And so I'm conscious of time and I'm also conscious I've been a bit too long the last few weeks. So I'm going to skip the introduction and just get straight into it.

So if you could open your Bibles at Luke chapter 9 and verse 37. And the context there if you can remember back two weeks is that Jesus has come down from the mountain where he was transfigured.

and something of the glory of heaven on that mountain broke through into this world. The disciples who had had this promise they saw something of the kingdom of God in a powerful and a special way on the top of that mountain.

And so that's the transfiguration we looked at a couple of weeks ago. and then Jesus and the disciples they come down from the mountain. Peter doesn't want to go but Jesus says they have to come down from the mountain.

[26 : 26] And he takes them in a sense back to the classroom. And Jesus continues to teach the disciples what it actually means to be a disciple of Jesus.

So that's our theme today. We've kind of had this theme over the course of studies and look and it kind of comes and goes. But I want to look today at various lessons that we need to learn if we are disciples of Jesus.

And the first lesson is a lesson about power. So for those taking notes point number one it's a lesson about power. Verses 37 to verse 40 The next day when they came down from the mountain a large crowd met Jesus and a man from the crowd called out teacher I beg you to look at my son for he's my only child.

The spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams and throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and it's destroying him. This distraught father says I begged one of your disciples to drive it out but they could not.

And we can imagine the disciples embarrassment confusion and their frustration at what had happened here. Because if you glance back to the beginning of Luke chapter 9 and at verse 1 we read that the disciples they had power and authority to drive out demons.

[27 : 58] They'd been doing this but now it seems they have no power. A bit like the lights in the prayer meeting room. You know we have the fittings on the wall or the ceiling and we have the bulbs inside the fittings but when you flick the switch nothing happens.

There's no power getting through. And that was like the disciples. There's no power coming through them. So we have this distraught father who rushes to Jesus for help for his son.

Because the disciples have no power to help. And the question I think that comes to our minds as we think about this is why? Why is it that the disciples are able to cast out demons in chapter 9 verse 1 but when you get to chapter 9 verse 40 they can't.

And the answer to that question is that in chapter 9 verse 1 it says that Jesus gave them power. to cast out demons. But in chapter 9 verse 40 they're trying to do things themselves.

And you might wonder where we're told that and we have to go to Mark's gospel to find that out. You don't need to go there just now but Mark kind of takes us behind the scenes. And Mark allows us to hear this conversation between Jesus and the disciples in Mark 9 verses 28 to 29.

[29 : 33] it says after Jesus had gone indoors his disciples asked him privately why couldn't we drive it out? Why couldn't we drive this demon out?

And Jesus says this kind can only come out by prayer. So Jesus says to his disciples you don't have the power to cast out demons.

only God can do it. And because you didn't pray, because you didn't ask God to do it, because you didn't seek the help, the power of God, you couldn't do anything.

But Jesus who was and is the God-man, he had power. Verse 41 Jesus rebukes him, he says oh unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I stay with you and put up with you, bring your son here.

And even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. This is something the father had seen so many times.

[30 : 43] We can imagine the distress that that caused as he sees his son once more being thrown to the ground by this demonic force. And starting to convulse and foam out the mouth.

He sees his beloved son being destroyed from the inside out. And that was the pattern. The convulsions thrown to the ground, foaming at the mouth and another increment of destruction. But when God intervenes, when God the son steps into this situation, the evil spirit is disabled, destruction is reversed and the boy is healed.

Jesus, verse 42, rebuked the evil spirit, he healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the greatness, at the power of God.

God. And you know, what we see at the micro level, the personal level in this encounter, is true on a larger scale.

[32 : 00] The sin that Emily told us about, the sin that's in us, that destroys us from the inside out. The enemy who attacks us at any given opportunity, we have no power to overcome these things.

we can try religion, we can try good works, we can try any manner of self-help programs, but we don't have power to be able to reverse that destructive process.

We have no power to overcome sin. We have no power to overcome Satan. But Jesus has that power. and Jesus promises that he will save, that he will bring eternal healing to everyone who calls on him, to everyone who comes to him, as this father did on behalf of his son.

father. Have you come to Jesus yet for this forgiveness, for this power, for this healing?

father's and fathers and mothers, are we coming to Jesus, asking for his power, his salvation to be given to our children, to those that we love?

[33 : 35] God. So that's rule number one for the disciple. Always remember, power comes from God.

We don't look inside ourselves for some inner strength because we won't find it. Power comes from God.

Apart from me, says Jesus, you can do nothing. we can't even keep on going. Never mind resist the devil. So we need to stay connected to God.

We need his power. That's lesson number one, a lesson about power. Lesson number two, we have a lesson about patience. So who needed patience in these verses as we step through them? Well, first of all, we see that Jesus needed patience in dealing with the disciples and we see secondly under this heading that Jesus' disciples needed patience as they followed Jesus.

[34 : 38] So first of all, Jesus, he needed patience to deal with the disciples because in verse 44 and 45 we see Jesus trying to get through to the disciples again the fact that he must suffer and he must die.

While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, Jesus said to his disciples, listen carefully to what I'm about to tell you, the Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men.

But they did not understand what this meant. And if you just flick back for a moment to verse 22, we see Jesus has a first attempt in that verse to explain to his disciples that his mission was to be this mission of being betrayed, of suffering, of dying.

But they just don't get it. And Mark again gives us a bit more detail in Mark chapter 8 verse 32. He tells us that Peter, not only did he not get what Jesus was saying, but he didn't like what Jesus was saying, and so he rebuked Jesus and said, stop saying it.

It's not the way it's going to be, Jesus. You're not going to go down this path of suffering. You're not going to go to a cross. Stop talking like that.

[36 : 06] And yet, if Jesus had done what Peter had asked and avoided the cross, then today Peter would be in hell and we would still be in our sin.

I'd have nothing to preach. No good news. See, the disciples just didn't seem to be able to grasp that the Messiah needed to suffer and needed to go to a cross and die and rise for our salvation. They just didn't get it at this point. But note that Jesus doesn't get mad with them. And how quick we are to become frustrated when we have to say the same thing two and three times.

Jesus has these disciples who are so slow to learn on so many fronts. But he doesn't get furious with them. He doesn't go looking for a smarter team of disciples to make some progress with.

He's patient with them. Just as he's patient with us. just as we should be patient with each other.

[37 : 27] So Jesus is patient in his dealings with the disciples and we see secondly here that the disciples needed to be patient as they tried to follow Jesus.

Because we find them in verse 45 and they're scratching their heads. They just don't understand what Jesus is saying. But Luke tells us why it is that they don't understand.

He tells us in verse 45 it was hidden from them so that they did not grasp it and they were afraid to ask him about it. now we know those of us who have children and grandchildren they love to ask questions.

Question after question after question and that's a healthy thing we like to hear the questions it's how they learn but sometimes they ask questions that their little minds just aren't yet ready to grasp and so we might say to them well I will tell you but just when you're a wee bit older not today and for the disciples of Jesus with their finite minds they needed patience because at this point they weren't yet ready to grasp what Jesus had to say to them they wouldn't understand until later and yet even though they didn't understand everything they still kept following Jesus they didn't throw everything up in the air and say this is useless

I can't understand I'm finished no they don't understand but they they keep on following and we're often there with them in that area there are parts of the Bible I'm sure that we struggle to understand there are aspects of God's character we just can't grasp with our finite minds there are some of the ways and works of God the providences of God what he allows to come into our lives and what sometimes he doesn't take away from our lives and it's a mystery to us it's hidden from us so what are we to do when we're with the disciples scratching our heads not understanding what God is saying or what God is doing in our lives what are we to do we're just to trust him trust him with the things we don't understand and keep on following so a lesson about power a lesson about patience thirdly we have a lesson about pride and we see in verse 46 that an argument starts among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest it's one of these situations where you kind of listen in here and you want to look away you just want to cringe as you overhear this conversation because let's remember the context let's remember the context so we'll see just how inappropriate this conversation was

[41 : 08] Peter and James and John they've just been on the mountain of transfiguration they've seen the glory of Jesus the greatness of Jesus with their own eyes and then the remaining nine disciples at the bottom of the mountain they've seen so much of the greatness of Jesus through the signs and the miracles that he's performed and so one would think they would be humbled in the presence of Jesus one would think that they would just be transfixed with the greatness of Jesus and they wouldn't be thinking about themselves but that's not the case see pride and self preoccupation you know goes right down deep some people have been at some point in their lives to the dentist for root canal treatment

I've never had that thankfully but those who have described it to me it sounds excruciating they have a pain somewhere deep in the root of the tooth and so the dentist has to go in and in and in and call them back on various occasions to drill right down to get to the very bottom of the infection somewhere deep in the roots and pride in the disciples back then and in us today it goes down deep much deeper than we think J.C.

Ryle says of all the sins there is none against which we have such need to watch and pray as pride no sin is so deeply rooted in our nature it cleaves to us like skin its roots never entirely die they are ready at any moment to spring up and so here that's what we see happen pride springs up in this argument and Jesus he doesn't just turn away and shake his head Jesus he doesn't he still doesn't allow pride to go unchecked we tend to think of pride as maybe one of the lesser sins but it's not

what we find in biblical terms pride is at the root of almost every sin and so Jesus he deals with it Jesus verse 47 knowing their thoughts he took a little child and had him stand beside them then he said to them whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me for he who is least least smallest among you he is the greatest see kingdom values turn everything upside down millen the commentator says Jesus taught them that small is great in his kingdom children in Jesus society had no voice in public life nor were they consulted when important decisions were made nor did they seek greatness or power themselves and so

Jesus takes this little child and he says here is an example of who you're to be childlike humble small small remember the quote from Winston Churchill when he was battling with one of his political enemies he spoke about I can't remember the name of the man that he was criticizing but he said he's a humble man with so much to be humble about that was his insult he dismissed his opponent with he's a humble man but he has so much to be humble about think about Jesus the most humble man who ever walked on this earth who was he he was God he was the God man and yet he humbled himself

Paul reflects on that in Philippians chapter 2 verses 3 to 8 he says do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit but in humility consider others better than yourselves each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross test you know if we are disciples of

[46 : 46] Jesus if we're followers of Jesus we need to learn day by day hour by hour even to put pride to death to walk humbly with our God to humble ourselves like Jesus did you know we'll never be effective ambassadors for Christ ever if we harbor this pride in our hearts and for those who are not yet in Christ any who may be here any who may be watching you know what is it that holds you back you know nine out of ten times I think it's pride you know we like to pay our own way we like to we like to earn our own place we like to put something into the the things that we benefit from we don't like charity but to become a Christian we can't pay our own way

Jesus had to pay our own way for us if we want to become those who are in Christ we we have to come with empty hands and simply ask him to give us his charity his grace it's humiliating tumbling but it's wonderful it's grace I heard Adam playing it just before I came through nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling naked come to thee for dress helpless come to thee for grace see to come to Jesus we need to repent of pride and to be followers of Jesus we need to keep on repenting of pride so lesson about pride that's the third point fourth point a lesson about being peacemakers

Jesus called his disciples without compromising the gospel without going soft on truth he called his disciples to be peacemakers Matthew 5 9 Jesus said blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God James in his little letter in verse 16 to 18 of chapter 3 says for where you have envy and selfish ambition there you find disorder and every evil practice but the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure then peace loving considerate submissive full of mercy and good fruit impartial and sincere peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness the disciples sometimes they were far too trigger happy and we see two examples of that here first of all in the way that they deal with other Christians and secondly in the way that they deal with those who are not Christians so in verse 49 and 50 we have this scenario where the disciples see other Christians working for Jesus and they don't like it

Master said John we saw a man driving out demons in your name we tried to stop him because he's not one of us doesn't have a bad saying disciple of Jesus like we have when we were called do not stop him Jesus said for whoever is not against you is for you see the disciples they were again their pride was hurt as they watched this man who who's casting out demons the very thing that they couldn't do and they're so annoyed that they go to this man and they try and stop him and they try to stop him because verse 49 he's not one of us he's not in our little club he's not in our denomination and they seem to think that Jesus is going to be happy with this but he's not happy with this he rebukes them for it and he makes clear to them that they weren't to go into battle with those who were not one of them rather they were to be peacemakers

Millen the commentator says Jesus' aim was to free the disciples from a narrow and judgmental spirit they needed to understand and accept that there were true disciples outside the circle of the twelve and what they needed to accept back then we need to see and keep on seeing today and every Christian in every age in every place needs to see this there will always be other Christians who are a bit different to us who do things a bit different to us who may be in a different denomination from us they might do things that we're not entirely comfortable with but when God uses them we're to rejoice in that not resent it we're to be at peace with them and love them and not be battling with them one commentator says there's a wideness in God's mercies that we would do well to emulate on earth for we will certainly find it in heaven

[52 : 29] Ryle says we must praise God if souls are converted and Christ is magnified no matter who the preacher may be and to what church he may belong happy are those who can say with Paul if Christ be preached I rejoice yes yes and will rejoice so Jesus gives them a lesson about being at peace being peacemakers with those who are believers but are slightly different to them and then he gives them another lesson on how to be at peace in verses 51 to verse 56 you can scan the verses times disappearing and in these verses we see James and John the sons of thunder and their fuse is lit Jesus is passing through Samaria and Jesus is looking for some hospitality in Samaria but he doesn't get it and so James and John they have their finger not so much on the trigger they have their finger now on the nuclear button and they essentially say to Jesus will we call down fire from heaven will we blast them let's bring some judgment here and wipe them out and Jesus rebukes them for that attitude and sometimes

I think it's fair to say that we we feel something of that attitude when the name of Christ is trashed when God's word is set aside and cast out of every public place where those who are in authority over us are so determined not to acknowledge the fact that God is there sometimes it makes us mad sometimes we want judgment to fall we want these people silenced we want these people removed from the positions that they may be in but Jesus rebuked the disciples for that attitude see Jesus came on a mission not to blast sinners with God's judgment but Jesus came on a mission to take the blast of God's judgment for us and from us

Jesus came not to make war with sinners but through his grace he came to offer terms of peace so let me ask you this morning are you do you have peace with God do you have peace with God the Savior came he went to a cross he lived he died he rose so that we can have peace with God so that we can go to have eternal peace when we die and that offer is still open but on the day that Jesus calls us from this world or on the day that Jesus returns if we have refused that offer we will not meet a Savior we will meet a judge and we will face the judgment that Jesus offered to take in our place but we refused a lesson about being peacemakers fifth point we're almost done a lesson about poverty verses 57 and verse 58 as they were walking along the road a man said to Jesus I will follow you wherever you go Jesus replied foxes have holes birds of the air have nests but the son of man has no place to lay his head and it's not here that Jesus was teaching that every Christian is to be homeless and to live in poverty there were times when Jesus stayed in nice places like Bethany with Mary and Martha and Lazarus there were times when the apostle Paul stayed in nice places like Lydia's house where he would have been well lived after but the point is that if Jesus calls us to leave behind nice places and riches and live in poverty we must do it remember the rich young ruler he wants eternal life he wants all the blessings that God can give he's knocking at the church door he wants to become a member I think we'd have been trying to get him in the door as quick as possible

Jesus looks into his life and he sees that he loves his money more than he loves Christ so he says to him all your stuff sell it give it to the poor then come follow me and he wouldn't do it and so he couldn't be Jesus' disciple and he walked away sad unless he changed he's still sad he'll be forever sad sometimes following Jesus means material poverty sometimes following Jesus in a world that increasingly is hostile to the gospel it means reputational poverty people will not take you seriously they'll think you're some kind of a crank but even when we have to face poverty of different forms there's joy in it many people do you know that have riches fame popularity power and they're the most miserable people that you'll ever meet

[58 : 49] I can't help thinking about young lads in India I visited there several years ago now they had nothing nothing but they were in Christ they were training for a few years to become ministers they were going back to the north of India knowing fine well that likely they would lose their lives when they shared the gospel and I've never met lads that had so much joy absolute poverty

materially but this deep eternal joy and Jesus is teaching the disciples about that as some were coming and saying we want to follow you Jesus and he's saying well do you really want to follow me you're willing to pay the price sometimes the price seems high doesn't it but if you think the price seems too high think again about Jesus 2 Corinthians 8 verse 9 for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ that though he was rich heaven rich glory rich yet for your sakes as Paul he became poor so that through his poverty you might become rich a lesson about poverty final word a lesson about priorities this is a kind of uncomfortable place for us to finish but it's where we're going to finish because this is where the chapter finishes Jesus said to another man verse 59 follow me but the man replied Lord first let me go and bury my father Jesus said to him let the dead bury their own dead but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God I'm going to hit pause there just for a second so we get a little bit of cultural insight here William Barclay the commentator says Jesus words sound harsh but they need not be so in all probability this man's father was not dead and not even nearly dead his saying most likely meant I will follow you after my father has died whenever that might be many years from now then I'll think about following you

Jesus still another said verse 61 I will follow you but first let me go and say goodbye to my family and Jesus replied no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God priorities it's kind of shocking stuff this isn't it uncompromising but it's meant to be because through this we're being taught about the absolute priority that we're to give to Jesus when we call him Lord he comes first before work before profit before hobbies before friendships before even family we're being taught here about priorities and I need to take this on board as much as you do because I have to sit with it for longer than you do but how are our priorities today we're calling ourselves disciples of Jesus if we're calling him

Lord is that reflected in our time is that reflected in how we use our talents is that reflected in the things that we make our priorities because Jesus is teaching us it should be and again I think if we think this is too demanding we need to get back to the cross and think about what Jesus did to prioritize your salvation and mine he left heaven the glory the comfort of heaven to come to this sin cursed earth knowing he would be despised knowing he would be rejected knowing that he would head for a cross and he did it so that you and

I can be saved so we need to survey that cross every day as we hear the call of Jesus to follow him and as long as we are surveying the cross we'll be able to say with Isaac Watts and we'll finish with these words in a second where the whole realm of nature mine that were an offering far too small love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all can we sing it I think we'll just sing this to conclude him Stuart please 755 in mission praise we'll hear this hymn being sung and we can prayerfully listen and respond when I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died when I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died my richest kid I count but lost and for contempt on all my pride forbid it

[66 : 23] Lord that I should boast safe in the death of Christ my God all the big things that charm me move I sacrifice him to his blood see from his head his hands his feet sorrow and love flow may go down they dare such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown where the realm of nature line that world and offering are to store love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all we'll stand for the benediction now please and now may the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forever more Amen