

Communion Service 6.6.21pm

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening, those who are in the church and also those who are watching in on the live stream.

Good to see some visitors with us tonight and you're especially welcome. And I want to also give a welcome into the congregation to Alistair Morrison, who's obviously been worshipping for a long time here.

But Alistair met with a session just about half past five and he professed his faith in Jesus. And so we're thankful for the encouragement of hearing that.

And we're very much grateful to have you in the congregation and the fellowship here, Alistair. So we thank God for the encouragement of his work, which continues in us.

We'll begin the service by singing to God's praise. I'm happy to be able to say that tonight. I've been trying for the last year and a bit not to say we're all going to sing to God's praise.

[1 : 08] But at last we can say once more, we can unite our voices and sing to God's praise from Psalm 40. Psalm 40, we've had a problem with the screens today.

So we've got the books. You should have a book close to you. So Psalm 40 verses 1 to verse 5. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

A length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay. And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

And we'll sing down to the end of verse 5. We'll stand to sing and we'll sing to God's praise. We have to sing with masks on, but we can sing out loud to God's praise.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

[2 : 17] At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay.

And on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

He put a new song in my mouth.

A God to magnify. Many shall see it and shall fear.

[3 : 34] And on the Lord rely. O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies.

Respecting not the proud nor such. As turned aside to lie.

O Lord my God, full many are. The wonders thou hast done.

Thy gracious thoughts to us were far above all thoughts are gone.

In order none can reckon them. To thee if them declare.

[5 : 08] And speak of them. I would they more. Than can be numbered are.

Do you also say it's good to see some back in church today who haven't been in church for a long time.

Over the course of lockdown. So I won't embarrass anybody by my naming names. But it's good to see some returning tonight for the first time also. Let's unite.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer now. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father we thank you once more for the privilege of coming into your house.

We thank you for the privilege once more of being able to lift our voices to you in praise. We thank you that you have given us that desire.

[6 : 24] And that opportunity that freedom. To be able to sing praises to God. And we thank you Lord that for those who are in Christ.

What we have sung in that psalm is the testimony of our hearts. You are the God who has heard our cries. You are the God who has lifted us from the mud and the mire of the sin that we were sinking into.

And you are the God who has set our feet on the rock of our salvation which is Jesus Christ your son our savior. And we thank you Lord once more for the grace of your work on our behalf in and through Christ.

We acknowledge as we did this morning that there is nothing that we can do for ourselves to save ourselves. We often sing these words.

Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling. Naked come to thee for dress. Helpless come to thee for grace.

[7 : 40] Foul I to the fountain fly. Wash me savior. Or I die. We thank you for the blood of Jesus.

Which washes us from all sin. We thank you for that fountain. For that place that we can go. To receive that forgiveness of sin that we need.

And that salvation which is eternal. And we ask Lord that you would enable each of us this evening to join our voices and to praise from our hearts with the psalmist.

We pray that we would be able to sing. That we have been saved. We have a new song of salvation that's been put in our mouths. Help us Lord we pray.

To be able to praise the Lord Jesus. We pray for anyone yet who may be here or who may be listening at a distance who has not yet seen Jesus as Savior.

[8 : 44] Or trusted Christ as Savior. We pray for anyone who may be listening and who has not yet seen the reality and the danger of the condition that we are born into as sinners.

We know Lord that we cannot see that unless you work in the power of the Holy Spirit. So we pray that you would be doing that even now.

For all who are within earshot. We pray Lord that you would help us to see what we cannot see. In and of ourselves. We pray that we would as we heard the tune earlier playing.

We pray that we would hear the voice of Jesus saying. Come unto me and rest. And we ask Lord that we may find that rest in Christ.

Cleanse us from our sin we pray. As we confess it. As we think about our own hearts. As we examine ourselves. As we see the sin that you enable us to see.

[9 : 50] Cleanse us we ask. In the blood of Christ. And enable us as we come to the table in due course. To remember his body broken for us.

And his blood shed for us. So that we might be saved. Fill us with that thankfulness. That sense of wonder.

Love and praise. That we receive as we bow at the cross. And help us we pray. Not just in this hour. But with our whole lives.

To express our love for you. Through the things that we say. The things that we do. Help us to live for your glory.

Be with those who are in particular need tonight. We pray for those who are sick. And who are struggling. We ask that they would know your healing touch.

[10 : 47] We pray on for those who are grieving. Whose hearts are sore. Who feel that sense of loss. Of loved ones. And comfort them we pray. And Lord we pray that.

You would be with those who. Who may be healthy. And who may be. Well off in terms of this world. But who are poor. In the spiritual sense. Enable them to find riches.

In Christ. We pray for Alistair tonight. Especially as we've prayed for. Mihaila also in the course of this day. We thank you for the encouragement.

Of seeing and hearing. More people coming forward. To profess faith in Christ. We thank you for the work of salvation. That you alone are able to do in our heart.

And we pray for your blessing. Upon Alistair and the extended family. Those here and those elsewhere. May they know your presence. Your peace. May you work Lord.

[11 : 49] We pray powerfully. To bring glory to your name. To bring salvation. To each member. And to bring. That sense of encouragement.

To your people. So hear our prayers. Take away our sin. Lead us and guide us in worship. We ask. We ask this in Jesus name. And for his sake.

Amen. We'll sing again to God's praise. And we'll sing this time from. Mission Praise 1164. Mission Praise 1164.

Come O faint of every blessing. Tune my heart. To sing your grace. Streams of mercy. Never ceasing. Call for songs of loudest praise.

Songs of God's abundant treasure. Sung by angel tongues above. Songs that tell the boundless measure. Of my Lord's unchanging love.

[12:50] Suching love. Love. Come O fountain.

Of every blessing. Tune my heart. To sing your grace. Streams of mercy. Never ceasing. Call for songs of loudest praise. Songs of God's abundant treasure, sung by angels tongues above. Songs that tell the boundless measure of my Lord's unchanging love. I remember God's great mercy, by his help I safely come.

And I know he will not fail me, but will surely bring me home. Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering far away from God.

[14:07] And to rescue me from danger, shed for me his precious blood. Through God's grace I am his debtor, daily I this thought renew.

Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to you. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love. Take my heart, oh, take and seal it. Seal it from your courts above. If you could turn in your Bibles, please, now to Luke chapter 10.

Luke chapter 10.

[15:20] Maybe I'll just tell you a wee story, boys and girls, whilst we're heading to the chapter. I was out running the other day.

Let me just check with all the boys and girls there. Are you going to answer my questions? Yep. Yep. Just get ready to answer the questions. I want you to think about something just now. I went for a jog.

It was earlier last week. And I went down from the house, down the hill, and I went off out west, out toward Ardazig.

And so I ran out towards the petrol station. And then I was jogging back in. And so I was jogging along the road quite slowly, because that's about as fast as I can jog.

I can't jog very fast. And one minute it was fine, and I was just jogging along. And the next minute I heard a noise. And it seemed awful close to me.

[16:20] And I went like this. Ah! And I thought, what on earth was that? And then I looked up. And just as I looked up, I heard this.

Ah! And do you know what was coming down at my face? Guess, Andrew. What did you think was coming down at my face? A big, angry crow.

He just came flying down towards my face. I put my hands up in the air. It went back up like that. I thought, thank goodness for that. I looked up again.

And two seconds later, it wasn't flying that way. It was flying back down towards me. Ah! So I was waving my hands about. I hope nobody saw me.

I was waving my hands about. And I went from a gentle jog to a sprint as fast as I could. And after I was about 100 yards up the road, the thing just went. Ah! And it turned back.

[17:22] And it flew back to a tree. Now tell me this. Why do you think that crow did that? Any ideas?

Andrew? No. Okay. What do you think?

Alistair, Ailey? Any ideas? Emily? Do you think I was having a bad morning? Do you think the milk was sour and the cornflakes and it was just in a bad mood?

And I thought, oh, I'll annoy this boy. Alistair? I think. What were you going to say, Emily? A nest. I don't know for sure. I didn't have a chat with the crow. But I think that crow must have had a nest up in that tree. I don't know if it's at the time of year when young crows are coming.

[18:22] But I think there must have been young crow children up in that nest. And when it saw me plodding along, it thought, here's some danger.

So it went swooping down. Ah! And it frightened me away very, very quickly. So I think the crow wasn't just having a bad day.

I think the crow probably attacked me, which is much bigger than the crow, because it loved its young children. And it was pushing me away.

And after I go over the shock of it, I was running back home. And I was thinking, well, I wasn't very happy with that crow.

But that crow, actually, it was doing a good thing, wasn't it? And it made me think about God's love for us.

[19 : 23] What did God do to show us? Well, when we trust in Jesus, the Bible tells us in Ephesians chapter 1 that God takes us into his family.

We become his children. And when we're his children, he loves us so much. What did he do to show us how much he loved us?

What do you think? Really? He went to the cross. He died on the cross. Now, that crow was trying to keep its young safe.

And for our safety, for our forever safety, for our salvation, to use the big word, what God did, God the Father sent his Son, Jesus, into this world, and he went to the cross to die for our sin, to beat the devil, and to make us safe forever, if we trust in him.

So, let's be trusting in Jesus. He's one that we should trust in. He's one that loves us so much that he did all us for us to be safe.

[20 : 48] And if you're ever jogging out our dasik, be careful. So, let's read now from Luke chapter 10. And we'll read from verses 38 to verse 42.

Just a short passage. Luke chapter 10 and at verse 38. As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.

She came to him and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me. Martha, Martha, the Lord answered.

You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.

[22 : 07] Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. Let's just pray for a moment as we come back to it. Heavenly Father, we thank you once more for your word.

We thank you that we have the opportunity in that sense that we read of, to sit at the feet of Jesus, as Mary did. And we confess, Lord, that there are many things that would distract us, many things that may come into our minds from the week past, many things that may cause anxiety as we think about the week ahead of us, many thoughts, many circumstances that would take our focus off Christ, would cause us to be preoccupied with other things rather than to sit at the feet of Jesus. But we pray that you would help us. Help us, Lord, to look to Jesus, to listen to Jesus, to know the presence of Jesus, to enjoy communion with Jesus.

Minister, Lord, to us, we pray, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and help us to know more of the wonder of who you are and what you have done for us in Christ.

We pray this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. There's lots of visitors on the island now.

[23 : 50] If we think back a few months, Harris was so quiet. We could go to beaches and we'd be the only person on the beach. We would be out walking on the road and there was hardly a car to be seen.

But now, Harris is very busy. There's lots of visitors now on the island. And when I go out for a walk with Shoros the dog, I always tend to see somebody. And I'll always, in conversation, ask the people that I bumped into the same thing.

I don't mean to. It just comes out every time. I'll say, where have you come from? They'll tell me where they've come from. And I'll quite often say, and where are you heading next? Are you just stopping here for a while?

Or are you heading somewhere next? Speaking to a man just there at the end of last week. And he came off, remember the big tall pirate-style ship that was docked down at the harbour for a couple of days.

And I got speaking to this man and he was part of the crew of that ship. So I said, where have you come from? And he said, I've come from South Wales. I said, where are you heading for? He says, I'm heading to Aberdeen.

[24 : 58] We're on our way to Aberdeen and we expect to get there whenever it was. Now, as we open our Bibles here at Luke chapter 10, we see Jesus and the disciples in verse 38 and they're on their way.

They're on a journey. They're moving. They're moving at this point. They're in transit. They're on their way. That's our first point for those who like to take notes. We find Jesus and the disciples. They're on their way. And we're told where they're headed for. They're headed for Jerusalem. And we're told also by Jesus twice in the previous chapter why they're going there.

And the reason they're going there is that Jesus is heading for the cross. And we can look at Jesus' life and ministry at any point and we see that his life and his ministry were always full of purpose and direction.

But the commentators, the scholars, they had agreed that Luke chapter 9 and verse 51 is a milestone within the gospel.

[26 : 14] It's a turning point within the gospel. And it says there at that time Jesus, at the time Jesus approached, as the time approached for Jesus to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

And so we see prior to that Jesus. He stops here, he stops there, he goes this way, he goes that way. He's healing people, he's preaching, he's ministering in all kinds of ways. And then at Luke 9.51 there comes that point and it's as if Jesus, he sees the cross crystal clear and he heads forward with great resolve to Jerusalem.

The word that's used is that Jesus, he's set fast for Jerusalem and no one and nothing will take him off the course that he is set on.

He looks forward steadfastly to the cross. Now sometimes we can resolve to do something, we can resolve to go somewhere, we can make a plan and we set off to follow that plan.

We could say, well this afternoon I think I'll climb the Clesham. And so we set off in that direction and as we drive along we think, well I thought the weather would be better than this, the cloud seems lower than I expected.

[27 : 46] Then we might start to climb the hill but as we start to climb the hill we realise our legs are sore, this is actually quite hard work, the terrain up ahead looks a bit tricky, even dangerous.

So what do we do? Well when we see how hard it is we say, well I think we'll change our course. Let's just go for a wee walk, we don't have to go to the top of the mountain.

We are people who are very often changing our course. But this evening I think we need to be thankful that as Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem, as Jesus approached the cross and began to see it more and more clearly, as Jesus realised more and more of what he would have to do, of what he would have to suffer for our salvation, as Jesus thought about the prospect of having to live through Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, as Jesus thought about the cry that he would soon make, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

As Jesus began to feel the weight of my sin and yours upon his shoulders, he did not change course.

he and his disciples persevered on their way to the cross because there was no other way for you and I to be saved.

[29 : 37] And so in spite of the suffering, in spite of the horror of what Jesus would have to go through, he is on his way, he sets his course, he will not deviate from it.

He's going to the cross. And I want to ask the question, have you been to the cross yet? we can't be saved without going to the cross.

We can wander off in all kinds of directions in terms of dabbling with this religion and that religion, this philosophy and that philosophy, but there is no salvation any other place but at the cross.

remember the story or the film, the boys and girls will remember this probably more clearly than many of us, Pilgrim's Progress. Have you seen Pilgrim's Progress, the film?

You remember a Christian in Pilgrim's Progress, he finds these pages of the Bible and he hears God speaking to him about his sin. He comes under this weight of sin, it's like a big burden that's on his back.

[30 : 56] He wants to be rid of it and he's desperately trying to find out how to be rid of this burden of sin and so he meets an evangelist and evangelist speaks to him and points him to the place where he can find peace.

Evangelist points him to the place where he can find that burden lifted and there was only one place that he could go, wasn't there? It was the cross. Sometimes we sing that old hymn, burdens are lifted at Calvary.

There's no other place that we can go to be saved but the cross of Jesus. There's no other name through which salvation comes but the name of Jesus.

So from the very beginning of this service, it's important that our focus is the same focus that Jesus had. We need to be looking to the cross.

All who are saved must go there. And once we are saved, we must not drift from there.

[32 : 13] so we see point number one, Jesus and his disciples on their way to the cross. And then as they travel, they come to a village.

We know from the other gospels that the village was Bethany. And there it says a woman named Martha opened her home to him. And that takes us to our second point, where we find an open home.

So Jesus and his disciples, they're on their way to the cross, to Jerusalem. And on their way, a home is opened up to Jesus. And quite often we see this kind of thing in the gospels.

Jesus, he's on the move. And Jesus is passing by a certain way. And there's opportunity as he's coming close to meet with him.

But for that opportunity to be taken, there needs to be an approach to Jesus. Otherwise he passes by. Grace, my middle daughter and Mary were in, I think it was Glasgow airport a little over a year ago.

[33 : 27] And it was one Saturday morning and it was quiet. And just along from where they were sitting when they were waiting for the plane, there was a famous singer just sitting alongside them, a man called Lewis Capaldi.

And Mary spotted him and she said to Grace, listen to lots of his songs, you should go and speak to him. I can take a photograph, you can get your photograph taken with him, but Grace was having none of it.

She wasn't keen, she was making no approach and within five minutes Capaldi and his bodyguards were gone and the opportunity was lost forever, which is no big deal. No great loss, not having actually met Lewis Capaldi, but we take this back to the text.

To miss the opportunity to meet with and to trust in and to be ministered to by Jesus, to miss that opportunity is a huge loss.

promise. I was speaking to Alistair on Friday. He was speaking to me about that awareness that he had, that he had an opportunity to trust Christ, to obey Christ.

[34 : 47] He said to me, I don't know how long I'll have that opportunity for. It was that sense of urgency that God places in us. when Jesus comes close, there's opportunity to come to him.

There's opportunity to be ministered to by him, but we need to take it. And for Martha and for Mary, they were going to take this opportunity to spend time with Jesus.

And so Martha, she opens her home to Jesus, and she entreats Jesus to come in, spend time with him. And sometimes Jesus waits for us to do that.

He never kicks the door of our house down. He never batters his way into our hearts and into our lives. He comes close and he waits for us to call upon him.

Think about blind Bartimaeus in Mark chapter 10. Here's a man who's in a state of great need in that culture. And he hears on this particular day that Jesus is passing by.

[36 : 04] So what does he do when he hears that Jesus is passing by? Well, he cries out, Son of David, have mercy on me. The crowd shush him, and he has none of it.

He persists saying, Jesus, come to me. Have mercy on me. Jesus hears his cry, comes to him, ministers to him.

Or think about when Jesus walked on the water in Mark chapter 6. The disciples are toiling in rough seas, and it says in the text, Jesus was about to pass by them.

Strange kind of term in the text. Jesus was about to pass by them, but when they saw him, they cried out to him. And he heard her cry, and he got into the boat with them.

Or think about the Emmaus road, after Jesus is resurrected. He walks along the road with these two believers, although they don't know who he is in the first instance.

[37 : 13] and it says in Luke 24 that Jesus acted as if he were going further, but they urged him strongly, saying, stay with us. Stay with us.

And Jesus did. He stayed with them. When he broke bread, he revealed himself to them.

And very often, this is what Jesus does. He waits for us to call to him, to open our homes, to open our lives, to open our hearts to him.

J.C. Ryle says, let us mark how much Christ loves to be entreated by his people. And that's what Martha did here. She doesn't want Jesus to pass her by, so she opens her home to Jesus.

She entreats Jesus to spend time with them. And so we have a picture of how God works through all the ages.

[38 : 27] It's God who sets the course. It's God who always takes the initiative with us. He's the one who comes to our villages.

He's the one who comes into our services. He's the one who comes into our lives and passes by our lives unless we call to him.

We need to call upon the Lord when he is near. we need to open our lives in faith to him. And there's some who are watching, there's some who are listening.

And I know Jesus has come close to you in the past. And I know there's been opportunity to trust him. And yet there's been no response, there's been no call.

There's been a closing of the heart rather than an opening of the heart and he's passed by. But tonight, if you hear his voice, you sense his presence, you see his cross, call out to him.

[39 : 54] Seek the Lord, Isaiah 55, 6, while he may be found. Call on him while he is near. That's what Martha did. Come in, she says.

Come into our house. Spend time with us. She opened her home to Jesus. very direct application here.

Can I ask, are our homes open to Jesus? As people come into our homes, do they see Jesus? Do they hear Jesus? Do they sense the presence of Jesus? us? The reality is our homes today are open to all kinds of influences that were never a factor in our lives in the past.

Through these little boxes, there are all kinds of voices and people and influences coming into our homes. there is the voice of Jesus heard.

[41 : 01] It's the presence of Jesus felt. Are our homes places where Jesus knows he is welcomed? So we see Jesus, he's on his way to the cross and Martha, she opens her home to him.

And then the third point is we see Mary here and she has ears that are opened to Jesus. We have open ears to Jesus. Verse 39, Martha had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

There are some phrases in the Bible that sometimes need to be unpacked a little. Sitting at the Lord's feet is one of these phrases. Some of the older boys and girls from the Sunday school or the YF age are beginning to think now about university.

But the thing about university is you can't just turn up at university. You need to. You can't just turn up one morning and say I'd like to go to this lecture and that seminar.

That's not possible. Or I can't go to Ceree Scott school tomorrow morning and say I'd like to sit in the higher maths class. Because they would say well I'm sorry you're not a student.

[42 : 21] You need to be accepted as a student onto these courses and you're not accepted. You can't just wander in here. And in Jesus' day you couldn't just sit at the feet of a Jewish teacher.

You couldn't just go in and learn from one of these Jewish teachers. You had to be carefully selected. To sit at the feet was like the equivalent of being accepted as a student.

And only carefully selected students could sit at the feet of a teacher. Everyone else would have to stand back somewhere in the shadows. And in that culture at that time Jewish teachers would only accept male students.

Female students were an absolute no-no. And yet here as we look at this text we see Mary, and she's sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Which was a shocking thing for people to see in that day and age. Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus. God the word is giving her her own private lesson.

[43 : 39] And she's open ears. She's not disengaged. She's not thinking about something else. She's not looking here, there, everywhere. She's not having a snooze.

She's open ears. She's drinking in every word that Jesus speaks. Do we have open ears this evening?

do we have open ears? Do we have open ears? We sit in our rooms in the quiet of the morning with a cup of coffee.

We turn to the passage that we're due to come to in that day. Do we have open ears? Or are we just ticking off something that's part of our morning routine?

when we listen to a sermon or a podcast or we switch on some YouTube channel to listen to a passage being opened up, do we have open ears to hear what God's going to say to us?

[44 : 48] When we go to Jam or Connect or to SU or to one of the children's clubs, do we have open ears to hear what God's going to say to us?

Do we expect God to meet with us here? And that's a huge question to consider. We put our gear on, we come out to church.

We know we're going to see this one and that one and the next one. We have a glance at the list as we come in the door. Where am I going to be sitting? Who am I sitting near? But in our minds, are we thinking about the fact that God will meet with us tonight in and through his word?

Because he promises to. See, Mary is sitting intently listening to Jesus at his feet.

She has open ears to the Lord Jesus. And I think we just need to ask the question of ourselves. Do we have that same openness to Christ?

[46 : 07] We began with the psalm, didn't we? I waited for the Lord my God. There's an expectation as we wait that God will meet with us.

As we listen that God will speak to us. And we see that in Mary. And I wonder if Jesus sees that in us.

Mary has open ears. And the next thing we see here is there's an open conversation. Sometimes you can go into a home for a visit and there's no open conversations.

You know what that's like. you can go in and you can spend time in a home. And things feel stiff.

And everything's very polite and everything's very buttoned down.

It can be a bit tense. It can be a bit awkward. There's polite words but nothing is open, nothing is free. It's only when there's love and there's trust and there's friendship that conversations open up and become honest and become real.

[47 : 23] And that's what happens in verse 40 and 41. There's a very open conversation that indicates the love and the trust and the friendship that Jesus shared with his sisters.

And it's clear in this passage that both Mary and Martha are followers of Jesus. Both Mary and Martha are converted.

This is not a case of Martha who's too busy and unconverted versus Mary who's converted. No, both these sisters are trusting in Christ. Both these sisters are converted.

Ryle says the two sisters of whom we have read in this passage were faithful disciples. Both had believed. Both had been converted. Both had honored Christ when few gave him honor.

Both loved Jesus and Jesus loved both of them. So they're Christians, Mary and Martha. But Martha just wanders a bit off course here.

[48 : 34] She gets a wee bit off track. And that's a teaching point in itself for our instruction, you know, and in a way for our encouragement.

just because we're Christians, if we're Christians, doesn't mean that we have everything sorted.

I think as we examine ourselves, as we come to the Lord's table, we see that we don't have everything sorted. we see our sin.

We see the things that we struggle with, and sometimes that causes us to almost hold back. But we see here a believer in Martha, but she's struggling in this moment.

And all of us, if we're honest, we still struggle as Christians. we still sin. We, as we sang, are prone to wonder.

[49 : 45] And so as we examine ourselves, before we come to the table, we see sin, and we need to repent of the sin that so easily entangles us. Now the interesting thing here is to consider what sin is Martha wrestling with?

and the sin that she's wrestling with, the thing that caused her to go wrong, is that she is distracted from Jesus through the work that she's trying to do for Jesus.

She stops resting in Jesus, and she starts trying to do things to make her acceptable to Jesus.

Jesus. It says in verse 40, Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made.

And we can just imagine the scene. Jesus is passing by, and Martha intercepts him, she opens her home, she calls him in, and Jesus comes in.

And the Lord Jesus is in her house. and she's going to feed him. She's going to give him the best meal that he ever tasted.

[51 : 04] And so she's in the kitchen, and she's excited to be preparing this meal for Jesus, and she's just delighted to be preparing this meal for Jesus, but she's only delighted to be preparing it for about five minutes.

And then she starts to struggle. Because there's a lot of work to do when you're preparing this big meal. And there's all these pans in the kitchen, and they're all on the go at the same time.

And the temperature in the kitchen is rising, and one sauce is starting to burn, and the potatoes have just boiled over, and where's Mary? Martha's in the kitchen, she's saying, I'm doing all the work here, where's Mary?

And she looks in, and Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus. No word at the dinner. She's just sitting contentedly at the feet of Jesus.

And rather than being happy to see Martha intimately sitting with Jesus, Mary sitting with Jesus, Martha is infuriated. not only is she not helping, but she's gaining, and I'm losing, says Martha.

[52 : 30] And before you know it, Martha's gone from being happy in the presence of Jesus as he comes into her house, to being angry as she tries to prepare dinner for Jesus with no help. And the anger spills out in verse 40.

she came to Jesus and asked, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me. Tell her to get off her backside and come through to the kitchen and do some work.

Because I'm doing all the work around here for Jesus. That's the gist of this. And I think we can surmise that Jesus didn't ask Martha for a five-course dinner.

In fact, Jesus didn't come into their house at all because he was desperate for their cooking. Jesus wanted their company.

But Martha is so distracted by the work that she has decided to do for Jesus. that she's actually lost out on the company of Jesus.

[53 : 52] Moody Stewart, the commentator, says, absent from Jesus, Martha was working for Jesus. Her burden was one of choice, not necessity.

That's a word for us all. It starts with me. it's very possible to be working for Jesus and neglecting our walk with Jesus.

It's very possible to be so busy, so distracted, so preoccupied with seemingly urgent things that our diaries are full of that we miss the most important thing, and that's to be with Jesus.

Mary Slessor was a missionary who came from Aberdeen, and she went out to Nigeria in 1876, and at one point a young missionary girl came out to be with Mary Slessor, and after a few days, spending time with Mary and reading the Bible and praying together, this missionary girl, she said to Mary, well, it's been nice to be out here for a few days, but what am I supposed to be doing here? Where's the list of stuff to do? And Mary's response to this girl was, Lassie, you're not here to do, you're here to be.

[55 : 35] you're here to be with Jesus, and you're here to show the people around us what it looks like to live with Jesus. And that's the word that Jesus gave to Martha, and it's the word that he gives to us.

Yes, there's work to do for Jesus, but we can't do anything for Jesus. if we're not with him. Martha, Martha, the Lord answered in verse 41, you're worried and upset about many things.

Your head is buzzing, Martha. Note the tenderness with which Jesus speaks to Martha. Martha, Martha, he says.

he could have spoken sharply to her, because she kind of deserved the rebuke. And she says to Jesus in verse 40, don't you care?

Which was a terrible thing to say to Jesus, because Jesus had come from heaven to earth because he did care. And Jesus was on his way to a cross because of how much he cared.

[56 : 56] So for Martha to say, don't you care, was an insensitive thing to say. And then for Martha to say to Jesus, who is Lord, Lord, I'm telling you what to do.

Tell Martha, tell Mary to get out of the living room and into the kitchen and help me. Now Jesus could very easily and rightly have said to Martha, this is not the way to speak to me.

Who do you think you're speaking to? But instead Jesus, he speaks so tenderly and he says to Martha, you've got so much going on in that kitchen.

You've got so many things buzzing around in that head. And I can see you're stressed. And I can see you're upset. But Martha, in this instance, you've got things wrong.

It's not Mary that's in the wrong. Martha, it's you that's in the wrong. I'm not sending Mary into the kitchen to do many things. because Martha, you need to see only one thing is needed.

[58 : 06] Verse 42, only one thing is needed, says Jesus. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her. And the final point we see here is the one thing that's needed.

So what is the one thing that was needed? What is the one thing that was needed that Martha missed out on and Mary got?

What's to be sitting at the feet of Jesus? God's need to need to be that's the one thing that's needed in our lives.

We don't need a whole lot of money. We don't need some high-flying job. We don't need the biggest house in the area.

we don't need the best business. If the Lord gives us these things we can be thankful for them and use them to his glory but we don't need them.

[59 : 18] There's only one thing that you and I need and that's to be sitting at the feet of Jesus. To be close to Jesus. To be spending time with Jesus.

Or to wrap it up in one word communion with Jesus. Sometimes we overlook the privilege of this. Sometimes we are so busy and distracted even doing church things things. That we lose sight of the blessing it is to be in communion with Jesus.

And for some of us if we've drifted, if we trace back the drift to day one, almost certainly it begins here. Life gets busy.

we get distracted. We take our eyes off Jesus. We stop sitting at the feet of Jesus and before we know it, we're a million miles away.

[60 : 43] And we don't know how to get back. how do we get back? Simply by crying out to him and saying forgive me for my wandering.

Forgive me for my busyness. Forgive me for the preoccupation, the distraction, the years of drift. Return to me Lord as I return to you.

And we're promised when we pray that way, he takes us close once more and we receive the one thing that is needed.

The one thing that we can take from time into eternity because everything else we're going to leave behind. is communion with Jesus.

So let me ask the question as I finish. Do we have it? Do we have that saving relationship with Christ?

[62 : 02] Do we have that intimacy with Jesus? Are we sitting at his feet? God because it's offered.

It costs us nothing. We just have to ask for it. But Jesus went all the way to the cross to suffer and die so that we might have it.

communion with Jesus. Need to finish. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for the simplicity of this message.

We thank you that we see that the only thing that we need in this world, that we can take from this world into eternity, is communion with Jesus.

We pray for any who may not yet have it. We ask, Lord, that they would cry out, as so many have done in the past. We pray for others who may once have had it, but who may have drifted.

[63 : 33] We thank you that, Lord, as we cry out also, we are promised that intimacy will be restored. We pray that on this evening we would not allow you to pass us by, but we pray that you would draw us close, and that we would have lives which are open to a close walk with God.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now from Mission Praise 1008. Mission Praise 1008.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. And then the refrain and the chorus, and I will trust in you alone. Lord's The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

He makes me lie in pastures green. He leads me by the still, still waters.

His goodness restores my soul. And I will trust in you alone.

[65 : 05] And I will trust in you alone. For your endless mercy follows me.

Your goodness will lead me home. He guides my ways in righteousness and he anoints my head with oil and my cup it overflows with joy.

I feast on in pure delight 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 path, I will not fear the evil one.

[66 : 27] For you are with me and your rod and staff are the comfort I need to know. And I will trust in you alone.

And I will trust in you alone. for your hand of mercy follows me.

Your goodness will lead me home. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.