

3.10.21 am

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. Looking out there's quite a number of visitors with us this morning so it's good to see you and you're especially welcome to the service and we pray God's blessing on us. Those here visiting regular and those who may be watching still online we pray that we'll know God's presence with us as we come together to to worship him.

One or two intimations you've seen them on the screen before the service began. The first to say that the evening service is at six six o'clock till seven o'clock we're just coming towards the end of the Lord's Prayer so be encouraged to come to that. Little Fish is on Tuesday as you can see well you can't see just now from 10 till 12. Monday night there is a ladies Bible study and I think there was an intimation on the screen although I don't have it here in front of me and the Road to Recovery on Tuesday night as you can see also. Prayer meeting on Wednesday and the kids clubs on Friday as intimated there on the screen. The service is next Sunday at 11 and 6. It says that they're both to be taken by myself. I'm hoping to do a pulpit swap next Sunday and I'm hoping that the Reverend Neil Lachey, my brother-in-law, will take the service here and I'll take the service in Ullipool. But there's a question mark over that so you may get a nice surprise and see him or you may be stuck with me. That'll leave you in suspense for the week. But be encouraged to come to the service next Lord's Day. These I think are all the intimations. So let's begin this time of worship and we'll sing the words on the screen, Your Grace that leads this sinner home. And we'll stand to sing in just a moment.

O'er the grace that leads this sinner home, From death to life forever, And sings the song of Christ. The grace that leads this sinner home, From death to life forever, And sings the song of Christ. And sings the song of Christ. The grace that leads this sinner home, From death to life forever, And sings the song of Christ. Your Grace that leads this sinner home, From death to life forever, And sings the song of Christ.

The grace that leads this sinner home, From death to life forever, And sings the song of Christ. It is so, that you may know, There's no way, There's no way, There's no way, There's no way, There's no way, There's no way, But I've been seen, The joy of your joy of your salvation.

[3 : 06] By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord.

In a grace that I cannot explain, not by my earthly wisdom, the Prince of life without a sin was traded for this sinner.

By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord.

Let the days rise up and overflow, my song resound forever.

For grace was me, he welcomed home to walk beside my Savior.

[4 : 33] By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord.

By grace I am redeemed, by grace I am restored, and now I freely walk into the arms of Christ my Lord.

Lord, let's unite our hearts and prayer.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day, and we thank you.

We thank you as we've sang, we thank you in prayer for your grace. We come before you this morning as those who know that we are sinners.

[5 : 53] We know that in our hearts as we look inside ourselves, and we know that from our actions and our reactions, from our words, from our thoughts.

We are those who are sinful. We are those who wander from you. We are those who are lost like sheep without a shepherd. And yet we thank you that your grace leads the sinner home.

We thank you that the Lord Jesus is the one who came for the lost sheep. He is the good shepherd, the one who calls us to follow him.

He is the one who laid down his life so that we could have our sins forgiven, so that we could be redeemed, bought back from the sin that has taken hold of us and from the enemy who would seek to hold us.

We thank you that through the blood of Christ we are redeemed. We are bought back from that bondage and given freedom in Jesus. And we thank you for the life that is abundant that we find through walking with him.

[7 : 18] We thank you for the life that is everlasting that we've sung of. The wonder of life eternal in Jesus. We thank you that he is the one who took our sin upon himself.

He is the one who overcame sin and Satan and death and hell so that we could have that salvation, so that we could be restored to the way that we were designed to be, that being walking close with God.

So we ask, Lord, that these truths that we've sung of would be realities in the lives of all of us as we bow here and as some perhaps listen at a distance in home.

We pray, Lord, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may be working in us so that we know that we are redeemed, that we are restored, because we have responded to the call of Jesus to repent, to believe, to follow him.

And for any today who may not have yet done that, we pray that even in these moments, even in this service, we may bow before you and ask you to be our Savior and our Lord so that we can have the assurance of that life everlasting.

[8 : 42] And we praise you, Lord, for that in a world where we see the reality of death and even in our own community in these past days. Our hearts are heavy.

We see those who are grieving, who mourn. And, Lord, as we think of them, we pray that you would grant your comfort to families whose hearts are sore.

Lord, we ask that you would draw near to them and that they would sense your presence, your hand upon them as the God of all comfort and the Father of all compassion.

We pray for those who may be anxious, Lord. We watch our TVs, we read the newspapers, we continue to see a country that is turbulent, unstable.

We are worried about so many things. And yet we thank you that we can come to the God who is sovereign. And we ask, Lord, that you would give us faith to trust you with every detail of our lives.

[9 : 58] May we not be blown from this way to that way, but we ask that we would fret not, we would trust you. And as a country, Lord, we pray that we would return to the book that we have firmly closed and removed from so many public places.

Give us, Lord, again, that desire, that soul thirst for Jesus. We see a restlessness and a hopelessness that mars the nation.

We pray that the scales would fall from our eyes. And that we would see Jesus. So hear our prayers. Help us, Lord, we pray, to draw near to you.

You've promised that if we draw near to you, you will draw near to us. So take away from our minds every distraction. Cleanse from our hearts every sin.

And enable us to know that you are God and that you are with us. and we pray these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please, just over here?

[11 : 14] Come forward. You want to just come and grab a wee seat around here, there's a bit more space.

So how are you all today?

Good. All good? All good. Well, I don't have, well, I do actually have something to show you as well. But I've got, first of all, I've got someone to show you.

And I think he's on the screen and he's also here in real life. So can anybody tell me who's that? Yeah? Lois? Are you? Mr. Brownie to you. Mr. John Morrison. That's Brownie, yeah.

[12 : 24] So where do you think he was there? This was last weekend. Where do you think he was? Yeah? Where was that?

Well, I'll tell you where he was. He was far away in a place called, where was it, Brownie? Berlin. Do you know where that was?

Do you know what country that's in? Anyone know what country that's in? That was in Germany.

And do you know what he was doing in Germany? What do you think? Have a look at him.

Do you think he was, do you think he was going out for dinner with Flora just at that point?

Cameron? He was running.

He was running a race. He was running a marathon. And that's 26 miles. So have you ever run 26 miles? I've never run 26 miles. But that would be, I was trying to think about it just so we can get it in our heads.

[13:26] And I think I said, yeah. Imagine, well, the daily mile in school. Do you all do the daily mile in school? Are you puffed by the end of it?

Can you imagine having to do that 26 times in a row without a break? That's a marathon. Or can you imagine leaving the church just now and running from here to the end of the Scalpy Bridge and then back to the church and then back to the end of the Scalpy Bridge and then back to the church and then to Ardazig and I think back.

Back. That's 26 miles. It's a long way. And on the day that Briony was running it was hot, much hotter than it is here and it was very tiring.

I think, I'm not going to ask him to come out because he wouldn't thank me for that but I think he was okay. He said I was okay until mile 20. I said mile 20. He was okay until mile 20 and then he felt his calve, his muscle at the back there starting to get sore and then he felt his knee getting sore but he kept on going and he kept on going and he kept on going and he got a medal.

He got a medal. He got a medal. Whoa! Yes! That's Briony. He got a medal. So well done, Briony, for running the marathon.

[15:06] And you know, the Bible talks, Paul especially, who wrote a lot of the New Testament in the Bible, he talks about the Christian life. He talks about following Jesus and he says it's kind of a lot like a marathon.

Sometimes it's like a marathon. You know sometimes you do a quick sprint and you're puffed and then it's over and that's tough but it's not too tough because you can just then take a rest.

But a marathon, you've got to keep on going and you've got to keep on going and that's what it's like sometimes to follow Jesus. We've got to keep on going.

Paul at the end of his life and he had a hard life because lots of people were very bad to him because he trusted in Jesus but at the end of his life he's in prison and he's writing a letter to his friend called Timothy and he says to Timothy, this is 2 Timothy 4, 7, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

And that's what we're supposed to do. That's what we're called to do. Sometimes following Jesus is great. It's a bit like running downhill.

[16:23] You know, it's easy. You know, like when you're at Jam Club or Connect or when you're in the holiday club and everybody's singing the songs about Jesus and we're hearing stories about Jesus and there's all these people who are enjoying the clubs and it's kind of easy to be following Jesus when you're in a place like that.

Like here, for the holiday clubs. You know, it's easy to follow Jesus when we're all singing the songs but sometimes we might be in school and some of them will say, you go to church?

It's a bit weird. Sometimes people say that. Or sometimes people might say, you're a Christian, you're following Jesus. I'm not sure about that.

And sometimes people can be swearing in school. Maybe you're saying, I'm not going to use these words and folks will say, you're a bit weird. And that's not nice.

It's hard when people can be like that. But we've got to keep on going. Following Jesus is about keeping on going.

[17:31] Brownie kept on going and there's him at the end. He's at the finish race. He's got the medal on. And that's what we're to do. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 1 and 2 says, let us run with perseverance, with keeping on going power.

The race mark died for us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus. So boys and girls, I hope that you're all running the race.

I hope we've all trusted in Jesus and we're following him. And let's pray that we'll be given his strength to keep on going as we make him our vision, as we fix our eyes on him.

Let's pray just now about that. Lord God, we thank you that you love us. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that we know how much you loved us because you kept on going all the way to the cross to save us from our sin.

And we pray, Lord, that all the boys and girls, the young ones and the older ones, we pray that we'd all be following the Lord Jesus. We know that in this world there are lots of voices that say to go the other way.

[18 : 52] But we pray that we would be following Jesus. And we pray that when things are difficult sometimes, as they can be, help us to keep on keeping on, knowing that when we finish the race, when we go from this world, there is a prize in heaven.

So hear our prayers. Take away our sin we ask. Help us to fix our eyes on Jesus. For we pray these things in his name and for his sake. Amen.

We're going to sing now. And we're going to sing that hymn about fixing our eyes on Jesus. Be thou my vision. O Lord of my heart, Thou my best thought, By day or by night, Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light,

Be thou my wisdom, Thou my true word, I ever with thee, Thou with me, Lord.

Thou my great Father, I thy true Son. Thou in me dwelling, Thou in me dwelling, Thou in me dwelling, Thou with me one.

[20 : 58] Be thou my cattle, Shield sword for the fight, Be thou my dignity, Thou my delight, Thou my soul shelter, Thou my high tower, Thou my high tower, Raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

Riches I heed on your hands Empty grace, Thou mine inheritance, Thou and always, Thou and the only, Thou and the only, First in my heart, High King of heaven, My treasure now art, High King of heaven, The perfect victory won, May I reach heaven's joy, So bright and sun, High of thy own heart, Whatever me fall, Still be my vision,

O ruler of all. Okay boys and girls, If you head to Sunday school, And we can turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 14, please.

Okay, next Moscow, How many years Luke chapter 14.

And we'll read from verse 1. One Sabbath when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.

[23 : 56] There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?

But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away. Then he asked him, if one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?

And they had nothing to say. When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable. When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.

If so, the host who invited both of you will come to you and say, give this man your seat. Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, friend, move up to a better place.

Then you will be honoured in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Then Jesus said to his host, when you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers, your relatives, or your rich neighbours.

[25 : 16] If you do, they may invite you back so that you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind, and you will be blessed.

Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.

Jesus replied, A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet, he sent his servants to tell those who had been invited, Come, for everything is now ready.

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me. Another said, I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I am on my way to try them out.

Please excuse me. Still another said, I have just got married, so I can't come. The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town, and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

[26 : 28] Sir, the servant said, What you ordered has been done, but there is still room. Then the master told the servant, Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full.

I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

We're going to sing again now to God's praise. This time we sing in Gaelic from Psalm 19. Psalm 19 was singing two stanzas, two verses of the psalm.

Verse 7 and verse 14. Really, just as we approach the word of God, we acknowledge the power within it, and we pray for God's help in speaking and listening.

God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies. God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise. Then verse 14. These two stanzas of Psalm 19.

[27 : 45] We remain seated to sing in Gaelic, and we sing to God's praise. This emerald world, ye hall the road, and Hannah, ye olde thee e'er.

Most of ye hall the road, and be bez interviewed. That's when we end up singing to you.

There are many things, my■■■■ will. Go to God's law. Boy, see you. Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji

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[31 : 57] Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Satsang with Mooji Amen.

There's a lot of things that happen over dinner. Meals are places where we get more than just food. Deals are done in business over dinner. Relationships are formed and deepened over dinner. Many proposals to marry, they come over dinner.

Families come together, or we try to, over dinner. Experiences can be shared at the dinner table. And lessons are learned at the dinner table.

And in the passage that we read, Jesus is teaching. He's in the mode of teaching. And there's five lessons, hopefully, in the time that we have.

[33 : 39] And each lesson we see comes from the dinner table. So the first point, the first lesson, is a lesson about being hated and how to respond to it.

Sometimes we can experience opposition. Sometimes we can experience somebody who's against us. And we ask the question, how do we respond to that? How do we deal with that in life?

And so we see Jesus in this situation. And that's certainly his experience. Verse 1, one Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.

Now, if we track back a few chapters, in fact, we hardly have to track back any distance at all. All the way through this gospel, we see Jesus and his encounters with the Pharisees.

And we see them constantly trying to trip Jesus up. They want rid of him. Jesus is a huge irritant to the Pharisees.

[34 : 47] He is disrupting their ideas about their religion. And so they want rid of him. And we know that there have been a few sympathetic Pharisees that Jesus has met along the way.

There's a few who would come to faith in Christ. And we'd see them at the cross. As they take Jesus' body down from the cross. But the vast majority of Pharisees, they hated Jesus.

With a passion. And Jesus knew that. So how does he deal with them? Does he hate them back? No, he doesn't. Clearly, he loves them. Does he avoid them? Because he knows that on every corner, they're trying to tip him up and take him down.

No, he doesn't avoid them either. It seems that he goes out to dinner with them. And in that culture, dinner wasn't a kind of microwave meal.

[35 : 51] Or a bacon roll and a cup of coffee for 20 minutes as we grab a quick bite over lunch. Meals were much more intimate. They were much more leisurely.

They took hours. And so we see Jesus here spending a significant amount of time with those who are very much against him.

With those who hate him. And he sets an example for us in that. If we're Christians, if we're following Jesus, it's inevitable that there will be occasions where we face opposition.

There will be occasions where people do not like us. They may even hate us because of Jesus' name. And I'm saying that because Jesus said it.

He said in John 15, verse 18 and 19, If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belong to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world.

[36 : 56] But I have chosen you out of the world. That's why the world hates you. Sometimes we experience it. Not so much here.

Not so much in this country. But sometimes we experience it. Sometimes we face opposition. Sometimes we find that people are unkind to us.

Or they may keep us at a distance. Or they may freeze us out of a conversation. Because they recognize that we're Christians. So what do we do?

Well, very often, I think what we do is we withdraw. We cut ourselves off from people who make us feel uncomfortable.

But Jesus teaches us not to do that. I mean, think about Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. These two notable Pharisees.

[38 : 02] Who come to faith in Christ eventually. How do you think they came to faith in Jesus?

Well, I think it was through watching him. And listening to him.

Because he allowed them to get close enough to him. And as they watched him. And as they listened to him. And as they spent time with him. As they felt something of the compassion he had for them.

They were drawn. J.C. Ryle says. He that desires to serve Christ.

Must make up his mind to be watched. And observed. No less than his master. He must never forget that the eyes of the world are upon him.

You know, we often talk about this in a wee island community. We say it's like a goldfish foe. You know, you can't move.

[39 : 01] Everybody knows what you're doing. You know, that's actually not a bad thing as a Christian. The world watches those who call themselves Christians.

And our calling is to let them. To be in the world. But not of the world. You know, if we're to be like Jesus.

We're to be out and about amongst people. Not hiding in a building all the time. We're to be having dinner with them. We're to be out at the shop. We're to be on the football pitch.

And if our relationship with Jesus is right. Then people will see something of Jesus in us. As we take time with them.

Sometimes we think that evangelism. Is tent missions. And Christianity explored meetings. And special outreach conventions.

[40 : 04] And God can use all these things. And he has used all these things. But the most effective evangelism. Happens when ordinary Christians like us. Get alongside people.

Sometimes people who hate us. And we try to spend time with them.

To show them something. Of Jesus. So when we're hated. How do we respond? We don't hate back. We don't withdraw.

Jesus teaches us to do things like. Have dinner with them. Second point. Second lesson. There's a lesson about hypocrisy.

One Sabbath when Jesus went to eat. In the house of a prominent Pharisee. Verse 1. He was being carefully watched. And there in front of him. Was a man suffering from dropsy. Dropsy was a medical condition.

[41 : 05] That kind of attacked the main organs. Kidneys. The heart. The liver. Would go into failure. In this illness of dropsy. The body would fill up with fluid.

So there's a man with dropsy here. In the company. But just look for a second. At the facts here. As Luke lays them out before us. It's a Sabbath day. And we know that on the Sabbath day.

Jesus would be in danger of breaking. A million and one of their. Pharisee rules. So it's no coincidence. That he's called round for dinner. On the Sabbath day.

And the second thing is. He's in the house of a prominent Pharisee. So there's some religious muscle there. And if Jesus steps out of line. On the Sabbath day. If he breaks some rules. If he is open to charges. There's some serious men there. Who can take him down. And it just so happens.

[42 : 05] That there's this man. With this condition of dropsy. Suffering. Right. In the eye line of Jesus. And what does Jesus do.

When he sees people. Who are suffering. Well he heals them. We see it all the way through the Gospels. And if he heals. This man. On the Sabbath day. He's broken one of their religious rules. And they have him. So what is this? It's a trap. It's very obvious. It's not very subtle. It's a trap. It doesn't take a genius to work out. That they're trying to take. Jesus down. But Jesus has the measure of them. And so he goes on the front foot. He challenges them.

And Jesus asked. This is verse 3. He asked the Pharisees and experts in the law. Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not? But they remain silent.

[43 : 04] Because already they know. That Jesus is one step ahead of them. So taking hold of the man. Verse 4. Jesus healed him.

And sent him away. Then he asked them. If one of you has a son or an ox. That falls into a well on the Sabbath day. Will you not immediately pull him out? And of course they would.

And so they have nothing to say. And they have nothing to say. Because Jesus has just shown them their hearts. He's shown them how hard their hearts are.

Because they have no compassion for this man. He's shown them how hypocritical they are.

Because when they act on the Sabbath. They expect no comeback. But when Jesus acts with compassion on the Sabbath.

They want to take him down. So Jesus shines a light in. And he shows them the hypocrisy of their hearts.

[44 : 12] And often this is what Jesus does. With us. He shows us our hearts. That may not be a scenario like we're reading in Luke 14.

But we all know that. There are certain times. There are certain situations. And what we expect from someone else. We don't apply to ourselves.

We know that sometimes. We can be sitting in a place. Our hearts are hard. Sometimes we see someone who's struggling and suffering. There's no compassion. And Jesus here.

He shines the light of his world. Into our hearts. And he shows us that we are. In many ways hypocrites. He leaves us speechless.

Often. Why? Not to be cruel to us. But. To show us our sin.

[45 : 18] So that when we see our sin. We'll look for the Savior. And that's what the Pharisees should have done.

The silence. That heavily filled this room. Should have been broken. With a confession of sin. The Pharisees should have said. Yes Jesus you're right. Our motivation is all wrong.

This is a setup. This is a trap. Our hearts are rotten. We're sorry. We repent. We want to follow you. And they would have been saved.

But they didn't do that. I remember hearing a story about. A minister who. Who was an apple cross. When I first went. When I first went. Over to that place. And. His name was Kenny Ban. Many of you have heard of him. And he.

[46 : 21] He told his testimony. One. One day. And he spoke about. Being in a place. Where there were many. Many people. Who were being saved. It's a revival environment.

And lots and lots of people. Were being awakened. To their sin. And coming. In faith to Jesus. And he was seeing some of his pals. Going forward. And being saved. But he was saying in his own heart.

It's not for me. These weak people. They can be saved. For me. No chance. And he talks about. He talked about. One. The church. And the church. Evening. And he went. Going into. A church. Building. I can't remember where he was. But. He went into a church. Building.

With a heart. Filled with contempt. For Christ. He went into a church. Building. With absolute. Synochism.

[47 : 15] And hardness. Against the message. Of the gospel. He had a half bottle. In his inside pocket. He was sipping away beforehand. He intended to sip away. all the way through the service, he intended to heckle the minister and cause a disturbance.

And very early on in the service, God met him in power. And in a moment, God showed him his heart.

And instantly, he was sobered up. And he repented. And on that night, he was saved. You know, lessons about hypocrisy are painful lessons.

When Jesus shows us our hearts, it's not pleasant. Not for me anyway. But it's necessary. Because it's only as we see our sin that we come to the Savior.

And it's only as we see our sin again and again that we keep on coming to the Savior. It's a lesson about hypocrisy.

[48 : 31] The third point here, the third lesson is a lesson about humility. And it's good for us, I think, to try to almost visualize ourselves in that room.

It's a dinner party. And Jesus is there. You know, sometimes you've been in a dinner party.

Sometimes you've had folks around for dinner. And there's one slightly awkward character who keeps on saying things that are just not appropriate.

And the awkwardness that there is in the room. And if you're the host, you feel every bit of it. And we can imagine that there is this awkward silence now in the room.

Because Jesus has asked the question about the ox and the son. And they've all been silenced.

And we can assume here they didn't like the fact that they were silenced.

But now the silence is about to be broken with a story that's going to make them all feel even more awkward. Especially those who'd scrambled to get the best seats.

[49 : 41] Because Jesus has been watching them as they proudly tried to get the best position. So in verse 7 it says, When Jesus noticed how his guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable.

When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host invited both of you will come to you and say, Give this man your seat.

Then humiliated, you'll have to take the least important place. But when you're invited, take the lowest place so that when your host comes, he'll say to you, Friend, move up to a better place.

Then you'll be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled. And he who humbles himself will be exalted. And we could dig into this parable. I don't have the time to do that.

But the main message, the single point that Jesus is driving at through this parable is it's an attack on pride. He's watched their movements and even their movements betray the fact that they are so full of pride.

[50 : 48] And the thing that kept the Pharisees out of heaven was pride. The thing that caused the Pharisees to clash so violently with Jesus over and over again was pride.

You know, Pharisees were the guys who were wearing the suits. They were the guys in shirts and ties. They were the religious people. They were the respectable people. They were the ones that everybody thought was holy.

On the outside, that's how it looked. But Jesus looks in and he can see that their big problem was pride.

And so as Jesus sees them jostle for position and quarrel over the top seats, he says to them, don't be like that. Repent of your pride.

You know, it was pride that blinded them to their need of Jesus. It was pride that caused them not to come to Christ for salvation.

[51 : 57] And it was pride that would keep them out of the wedding feast of heaven. And so Jesus called them and Jesus calls us to repent of our pride, to be humble.

to recognize our lowness, our poorness before God. J.C. Ryle says, the root of humility.

If we're trying to figure out how do I get to this position? It's about knowledge. It's about knowing God. It's about knowing us. Ryle says, the root of humility is right knowledge.

The man who really knows himself in his own heart, who knows God and his infinite majesty and holiness, who knows Christ and the price at which he was redeemed, that man will never be a proud man.

He will count himself like Jacob, unworthy of the least of all God's mercies. He will save himself like Job. I am vile. He will cry like Paul, I am the chief of sinners.

[53 : 08] So Jesus, in that little parable, he gives him a lesson about humility. And the fourth lesson here is a lesson about hospitality. Again, try to imagine the scene.

You know, imagine the uneasy silence that has just thickened in the room. The guests, especially those in the best seats, we can just see them squirming, wishing they were now in the lower seats. The guys in the lower seats are probably smirking at the ones in the top seats. The host is thinking, this is a total disaster. I wish I'd never asked Jesus around in the first place.

And now Jesus locks eyes with the host and says, I've got a story for you as well. Verse 12, then Jesus said to his host, when you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers, or relatives, or your rich neighbors.

If you do, they may invite you back so you'll be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you'll be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

[54 : 28] So what's Jesus teaching us here? Well, I think he's teaching us what hospitality is. He's giving us a lesson, a description, a picture of hospitality.

And hospitality isn't inviting your friends and your family around to the house for a nice cozy meal. That's friendship.

It's fellowship. That's not hospitality. And that's not a wrong thing. It's a good thing to have friends. It's a good thing to be encouraged through fellowship.

But Jesus is teaching us, Christians, you need to go further than that. You need to practice hospitality. Which means reaching out to those that you might struggle with.

You know, hospitality is reaching out to those who might not have shown kindness to you in the past and may not be shown kindness to you in the present.

[55 : 32] hospitality is about reaching out to people who have never asked you to come to their house and likely never will.

But you want to spend time with them because they need to meet Jesus. Can I ask the question, when did you and when did I last ask someone around for a coffee or invite somebody around for a meal or spend time with somebody very intentionally because you want to introduce them to Jesus? because you want them to know something of the love and the kindness and the grace of Jesus. You know, when did we last reach out to somebody because that was the driving force behind it? We want to have an opportunity to share with them something of Christ because that's hospitality. And the final lesson here is a lesson about heaven and hell.

And I suppose, again, as we look at the dinner party, things have just gone from bad to worse. Everybody is now unhappy. The guests are unhappy.

[57 : 09] The host is unhappy. Every time the silence is broken, it's broken by something that just seems to make things worse and more tense. And I think in verse 15 we have the kind of well intentioned interruption of somebody who's just trying to break the ice, make a comment to lighten things a little.

So when one at the table of verse 15 with him heard this, he said to Jesus, blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of heaven. So what's this guy saying?

Well, I think what he's saying is, let's talk about heaven now. It's going to be great to be in heaven, isn't it? What a great feast we're going to have in heaven, aren't we?

And Jesus says, well, I've got a story about that too. Brace yourselves. See, many of the Jews thought they were going to heaven just because they were Jews.

They thought all Jews, by virtue of their background, had a place in heaven. And the Pharisees were absolutely double sure that they were going to heaven because they were so religious and they did so many good works.

[58 : 22] They were certain that they had a place there. And so Jesus, in the closing section, says, let me just tell you a surprising story about those who are going to be in heaven and those who are not.

God. And so he tells a story of verse 16. A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.

And just a little bit of context for back in that day. The way things worked back in that day is that the host of the banquet would send out two invitations.

Invitation one would go to all the people saying, I'm putting on a banquet, would you like to come? And then they would respond and say, yes, I'd like to come or no thank you.

And if they responded positively, when the banquet was then ready and the date was set and the hour was set, they'd get a second invitation to say, you said you were coming, everything's ready, it's time to come.

[59 : 31] And so in verse 17, it says, at the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who have been invited, come, for everything's now ready. But they all alike began to make excuses.

The first said, I've just bought a field, I must go and see it, please excuse me. Another said, I bought five yoke of oxen and I'm on my way to try them out, please excuse me. Another said, I just got married, I can't come.

So what's happening here? Well, Jesus tells us in the parable, excuses. excuses. You don't buy a field without first looking at it.

It's an excuse. You don't go and buy an oxen without first trying them out to make sure they work well together. That would be like us going and buying a second-hand car without ever sitting in the driver's seat and taking it for a spin.

You don't do it. And being married is not a reason to refuse a dinner and invitation.

[60 : 33] He could take his wife. It's just excuses. These guests don't want to come because they don't love or respect the host.

They don't want the company of the host. They don't see their need of anything that this host has to offer. that was a picture of the Jews.

I mean, it's got application for us. We'll get there in a second. But Jesus is speaking to Jews. And all the way through the Old Testament, the Jews were being told, the gospel invitation was being extended.

They were being told, salvation is there. It's offered to you. You can have it. It's coming. And then when Jesus, the Savior, came, they didn't want him.

They didn't love him. They didn't see their need of him. They refused him. And it's a picture of many still today.

[61 : 45] In a sense, God, he holds a mirror up to us as a congregation even today. He says, can you see yourself here? Because there are still many people today who will give you a hundred reasons why they cannot come to Jesus.

I don't know enough, they say. I don't feel intensely enough about heaven and hell and salvation, they say.

I'm not good enough, they say. I can't come. It's just excuses. It's just excuses. Perhaps they just don't want Jesus.

perhaps what we're being told here is that such people see no need of Jesus. And so the host, in verses 21 to 24, my time is gone, says to the servants, go out, go far away, go out and go into the streets of the city.

Find the people who know their need. Spiritually. Compel them to come in. And not just the city, go out into the country lanes, go far away.

[63 : 13] Find these people who know their needs and make them come in. everything. Everything's ready.

The feast is there, the table is laid. Bring them in. so can I ask as we finish out, have you come in yet?

You know, the host is still calling. everything that was necessary for us to be saved has been made ready in Christ who lived and died and rose for us.

every one of us needs him because every one of us has sin in our hearts that needs to be saved. If we're ever going to get near this banquet, none of us will be forgiven without coming to Jesus.

None of us will taste anything of the banquet of heaven except through him. so come to him.

There's still room.

[64 : 29] There's still time. The host is still calling. So come. And we can respond to that in the words of the last hymn.

Mission Pays Pays 396. 396 and Mission Pays. If you have heard God calling, if you see your need of Jesus, then we can respond in the words of this hymn.

Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come. just as I am without one free, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

just as I am, and waiting not, to rip my soul of wonder brought, to thee whose blood can cleanse his spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Lord, tossed about, with many are gone to many a doubt, thy takes within and fears without all love of God, I come, I come.

[66 : 59] Just as I am, for wretched mind, sight, rich, and stealing of the mind, yea, all I need in need to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

just as I am, thou wilt receive, with welcome, pardon, cleanse, relief, because I promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love, my Lord, I've broken every barrier, God, now to me, thy, give thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, thy, come.

And I 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, now and forevermore. Amen.