

24.10.21 am

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Date: 24 October 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Service is next Sunday, and I'll take the morning service in English, and the evening service is the monthly gathering service. So, Reverend Kenny Ferguson, we'll conduct that service.

So these, I think, are all the intimations, and hopefully now we'll be able to see the words for the first stand coming up on the screen. I'll just pause for a second to see if they do.

Sorry, they do. So, we're singing from Psalm 84, and we'll sing from verses 1 to verse 9 of the psalm.

How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, the tabernacles of thy grace are pleasant, Lord they be. My thirsty soul longs be with me, ye fainth thy courts to see, my very heart and the flesh dry I, from the living God for thee.

Now, verses 1 to verse 9 of Psalm 84, and we'll start to sing. To God's praise. God's praise. Amen. Amen.

[1 : 04] Amen. The lovely is thy wedding place, O Lord, the host to me.

The time I will fall by grace, how blessed the Lord may be.

My thirsty soul comes with me, yet it bents thy courts to see.

My heavy heart, unquestioning, O living God for me.

Behold, the sparrow findeth out an house where interrest.

[2 : 11] The swan of us, the poor of ourself, that bentseth set a nest.

In thine of the church's way, she said, her young ones for me bring.

O thou almighty Lord of hosts, whom art my God and King.

Blessed are you in thy house and family. The Lord of hosts, whom art my God and King.

The Lord of hosts, whom art my God and King. The Lord of hosts, whom art my ways.

[3 : 16] Who passeth thou, O wicked's will, therein to dig up wells.

O soul, the rain that falleth down, The pools with water fills.

The Lord of hosts, whom art my sins. So day from strength and miracle Still forward unto strength.

And chance I on day appear Before the Lord of hosts, Lord God of hosts, my prayer near, O

Jacob's God give ear.

See God a shield upon the face Of thine anointed ear.

[4 : 33] It wouldn't be normal if I hadn't forgotten at least one intimation.

And I remembered that. Also, I wanted to just on behalf of the Jam and the Connect folks to say thank you to those who made donations for the shoeboxes.

The Blystwood shoeboxes that are going out to various places. Thank you to those who donated to that work on Friday afternoon. The kids in Jam and Connect, they spent a few hours putting together these shoeboxes.

And so we look forward to hearing of them going out to different places and we pray that the Lord will use them. So let's now unite their hearts in prayer.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. And we thank you that this is your day.

[5 : 39] A day that's been set aside from every other day. Every other day. A day when we are told to stop our normal work.

And take time to rest our bodies and to rest our minds. And to rest our hearts in your presence. And we thank you, Lord, that that's something that we're able to do even as we come together in this place in this way.

We thank you that you've promised that when your people come together in the name of Jesus, you're here with us. And your promise is that you will bless us.

That you will draw near to us and minister to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. And we thank you that you're the God who listens to our prayers.

We sang of that just a moment ago. You're the God who hears us. We thank you that we can pour out our hearts to you in prayer. We cannot wear any masks before you.

[6 : 46] We cannot hide anything of ourselves before you. Because you're the God who made us and who knows us. And who sees us in the deepest places of our being.

And yet we thank you that you're the God who loves us with that unconditional, eternal love. A love which was so great, Father, that you sent Jesus, your Son, our Savior, into this world.

To make it possible for us as a people who had wandered far from you in sin. To be drawn back into a close walk with God.

We confess, Lord, that we are sinners. We know that as we look at ourselves. We fail and we fall in many ways.

Sometimes they can be seen. Very often they cannot be seen by anyone but you. But in our minds, in our thoughts. With the things sometimes that we say.

[7 : 53] The things that we leave unsaid. With the things that we do. With the motivations of our hearts. We confess, Lord, that we are not what we would want to be. We are not what we should be.

We sin. But we thank you that there is forgiveness. Forgiveness in Christ. We thank you that the blood shed at the cross.

Is powerful. And is able to cleanse us from every sin. Every shortcoming. And we thank you for the promise that if we will confess, you will forgive.

So we pray, Lord, now that as we confess our sin in the silence of our own hearts. Cleanse us, we pray. In that blood.

And give us the assurance of forgiveness and the joy of your salvation. We thank you, Lord, for that salvation. We are saved from sin.

[8 : 55] We're saved from death. We're saved from an eternity that's lost. And we're saved for Christ. To be able to walk with him.

To be in relationship with the God who loves us. The God who is wisdom. The God who is our strength and our shield and our protection.

The God who is able to give us a satisfaction for our souls that no one else and nothing else can. So, Lord, receive us, we pray.

As we confess sin. And as we look to Jesus. And, Lord, we pray for those who are struggling this morning.

We thank you that we have the health and strength and the desire to be here. We pray for some in our fellowship who are not here. Who are struggling with ailments and illness and different things.

[9 : 57] We pray for those who are anxious this morning. Awaiting tests next week. We commit them to you. And we ask, Lord, that you would give them that peace of God that passes human understanding.

We pray for those who have been in hospital in the last few days. And had procedures and are recovering. We think of Shona Davidson especially. And we ask, Lord, that you would speed her recovery.

That you would protect our Lord. And enable her to know that you are close and that you are with her. You are with her. We pray for Hannah in hospital this morning as well as they try to get her bloods under control.

And we ask, Lord, that you would give skill and wisdom to those who care for her. And enable Hannah as well to know where she is just now that you are close to her.

We pray for those who are in care homes and who are struggling perhaps in the latter years in life. We think of Mary Sheena. And others like her.

[10 : 57] And we pray for her. We struggle at this stage to be able to connect with her in communication. But we thank you that you are the God who is able to reach everyone. And we ask, Lord, that she too would know your presence with her this morning.

And for others, Lord, who are struggling in different ways, we pray that you would be near to them. With those who struggle with addictions, Lord. Give them strength to break free.

With those who struggle with anxiety. We pray that they would know the courage of God with them. For those, Lord, who struggle with COVID.

We pray for them also. We think of Barney and Margo at this time away. For Barney as he's contracted the illness.

We ask that the symptoms wouldn't be too fierce and that you would recover quickly. And we pray your protection over Margo and the family. And we ask that you would minister to them where they are.

[12:00] And we thank you, Lord, for your presence with us and your hand upon us through a difficult year. Help us, we pray, as we continue to try to navigate through this.

To be given wisdom and patience and your protection. So hear our prayers. Continue with us in this service.

May we know your presence with us always. And we ask all this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

I'm hoping the pictures are going to be on the screen, are they? Is that okay, Andrew? Yeah. Good. There's a good squad of you today.

It's good to see you all. How are you? You can sit on that wee bench there, Katrina, if you want. How's everyone today?

[13:11] Good. Well, I... Sorry? Great. Great, says Michael. Finley's got an interesting toy today. Where are you, Finley?

You disappeared? Where's he gone? Oh, there he is. What have you got there today? Is that a dinosaur? Oh, wow, that looks like a good one. And Ailey's got a sloth. Good stuff.

She's got a face just now that says, don't look at me. Look at the sloth, just don't look at me.

Anyway, I wanted to show you one or two things this morning.

A couple... Well, three pictures, I think. And I wonder if you have seen any of these things that you're going to see on the screen in a second.

And I wonder if you know anything about them. And if you don't, maybe some other people who are in the congregation might, they might know about this. Does anybody know what this is and where it is?

[14:08] Is that a castle? Pardon? Is that a castle? The one in the... This is the one... I'm talking about the one on the right. Not the big tower, but the one on the right.

Do you know what that is or where it is? It's an old bridge. It's not an old bridge. Greece. Greece. It was actually designed to look like something from Athens, but didn't get very far. It's not Greece, no? Any ideas?

Okay. I'm pretty sure some in the congregation are going to know where this is and what it is. Anyone want to be brave enough to shout an answer? Where is this?

Edinburgh. Edinburgh, yeah. And do you know what it's called? Any idea? Well, I'll tell you what it's called.

[15:06] It's called... It's called... It's called Edinburgh's Folly. Which... Do you know what folly means?

It means kind of silliness. So that thing there has a name and it's called Edinburgh's Silliness. Glasgow people would love that.

But do you know the story behind it? Well, there was... There was... Somebody who... I can't remember who it was, but somebody had this grand plan to build a monument like something they saw from Athens.

And so they started building this amazing monument with these big pillars. But what do you notice about it? It's not finished. It's not finished. It's not finished. That's why I was given the name. They gave up.

They gave up. I'm not quite sure exactly the story. They gave up. I don't think they had enough materials or money. They were tired. They were tired. Let's just make the story up.

[16:06] They were lazy. Whatever. They drank too much coffee. They drank too much coffee. Let's leave it there. We don't know the precise details of what happened, but they started this amazing monument, this amazing building, but halfway through they gave up.

So there it is on the top of the hill in Edinburgh, and everybody looks and says, what's that? And you say, oh, well, that's Edinburgh's folly. One more.

Well, no, two more. Another picture. Does anybody recognize this one? That's from Rome. That's from Rome. It's close. Not quite Rome, but... It's not Edinburgh, no?

It's not Edinburgh, no? That's Edinburgh. It's not Edinburgh. First of all, boys and girls, do any of you recognize that? Because some of you will have actually seen that when you've been on your holidays.

In Brines? Not Inverness. Not Inverness. The only one who has to know what's here is. Yeah. I was there in Brines. Yeah, yeah. That's another story.

[17:08] Another day. Henry, do you know where that is? No. No? No? Okay. Right. I'm going to ask this side, because I know definitely there's somebody over there who knows where this is.

Where is it? It's from Oban. It's from Oban. To Oban. And the first thing you see, I've never actually been to Oban, but the first thing you see, Russell will tell me if this is true, as you come into Oban, is you see this huge big tower on the top of the hill.

What's the strange thing about this? What do you think about that? It looks like one of the arenas. It looks like one of the arenas, yeah. But what do you think is special about this?

Or strange about it? Henry? Military. Military. Pardon? Military. Military probably were designed to use it. I'm not quite sure. But... What do you think, John Roddy?

It looks like the Coliseum. It looks like the Coliseum. But again, the thing about this is it's not finished. So if you look closer, you could see it's like a big round monument, but it's not finished.

[18:17] There's glass broken. There's glass broken, yeah. Yeah. The point is, it's not finished. And so, do you know what that's called? Oban's Folly.

It's not called Oban's Folly. It's called McCaig's Folly. McCaig. The man was called McCaig. He started building, ran out of money, and had to be abandoned.

One more. Now, do you know where this one is? That looks like an old house. Is that an old house? Is it an old house? Is it in Harris, John? Yes, it is in Harris. It's somewhere in the area. It's Harris, yeah. It's not Scalpy. It's not Lewis.

It's not Shilabost. It's Leib. It's Leib. Who said Leiburah? It's, that's right, Lily. It's Leiburah. And I think it was Lord Leiburahum who started building a house, and I don't know the story, but it never got finished.

[19:24] And so it's there, and it's just half done. Did he even put floor in it? Did he even put floor in it? I don't know. You can go and look at it one day. But, you know, Jesus spoke about this kind of thing.

And we're going to come to this in the passage. You can ask your parents or whoever over dinner what we're talking about. He's going to build a huge town of the church. Well, no, not that story, but listen to what Jesus said.

This is Luke 14 and verse 28. He says, speaking to his disciples, speaks to a big crowd, and he says to them, suppose one of you wants to build a tower.

Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? And you know, if the people who were building these towers that we were looking at had sat down and done a proper estimate at the beginning, maybe it would have been finished.

And so Jesus says, if you're going to build a tower, sit down first of all, work out how much it's going to cost, and then make sure you've got enough money to complete it. Now, what do you think Jesus was talking about?

[20:34] He's not talking about building towers, really. What do you think that Jesus was talking about that can be costly? Jesus is the way to heaven for free.

That's grace. That's absolutely right. But you know, sometimes it can be costly to follow Jesus. It can.

We have to trust him. We have to trust him. But sometimes it can be hard to follow Jesus. We're in a safe country here. We can meet like this. We can have quite a lot of people in church today.

And we're not worried about the police coming in. We're not worried about somebody closing the meeting down. We're not worried about any of these things. But there are some countries, and those who are trusting in Jesus, if they get caught, they can even be killed.

It can be very costly to be trusting in Jesus. And sometimes, even in school, you know, people might say to you, are you a Christian?

[21:44] And you might think, oh, how am I going to answer this? Because maybe they'll laugh at me if I say yes. I'm afraid to say yes, but you say yes.

You say yes, and that's the right thing to do. I'm afraid to say yes. You say yes. But sometimes it can be hard to be a Christian. Sometimes it can be hard. It can be costly.

And so Jesus, he says to us, count the cost. Think about it, what it's going to cost to give your life to me.

Because it can be costly. Otherwise, you might start. Then the first time somebody says something bad to you, you think, oh, I'm not going to do this anymore.

Jesus says, no, if you're going to follow me, count the cost. But follow. Because there's no better life, is there? Than a life following Jesus.

[22 : 42] And there's no better one to follow because there's no one who loves us like him. Because he went to the cross to die. So that our sins can be forgiven.

So that we can have everlasting life. So yes, count the cost. But maybe more than that even. Think about the cost that Jesus paid.

So that we can be saved and then follow him. And we'll pray now. Lord God, we thank you for the fact that you love us so much.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you went to the cross. You paid the ultimate cost. You laid down your life. So that we can have everlasting life. So help us, Lord, to follow you.

To trust you. And even when sometimes people might think we're strange because we're Christians. Help us to keep on going. Even when sometimes it can be hard to be a Christian.

[23 : 42] Help us to keep on going. And we pray for people who are far away from here in countries that are dangerous to be Christians in. They have a huge cost to pay.

Hear our prayers for them. And help them to keep on going. To keep on trusting. Because you, Lord, are worth it. And we thank you that a life lived close to you is the best life we can ever live.

And we thank you for that. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now. And we're going to sing the words on the screen. It's from Mission Praise 1075.

And it's the hymn, Jesus. All for Jesus. All I am unto, I never loved you need.

Jesus, all for Jesus. All I am and have And ever hold you need O Lord of my ambitions Gobs and plans I surrender these To your hands O my ambitions I surrender these To your hands For it's only in Your will and I am free

[25 : 58] For it's only in Your will but I am free Jesus All for Jesus All I am and have And ever hold you need Okay boys and girls If you head now through to Sunday School And we can turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 14 We've got Bibles and the words will be on the screen also Luke chapter 14

And we're just going to read a short section from it We're going to read from verse 25 Through to verse 35 And we'll focus on 25 through to 32 33 We'll look at maybe verses 34 And 35 on Wednesday evening All being well So Luke chapter 14 and at verse 25 The title here in the Bible is The cost of being a disciple Large crowds were travelling with Jesus And turning to them he said If anyone comes to me And does not hate his father and mother His wife and children His brothers and sisters Yes even his own life He cannot be my disciple And anyone who does not carry his cross And follow me He cannot be my disciple Suppose one of you wants to build a tower Will you not first sit down And estimate the cost to see

If he has enough money to complete it For if he lays the foundation And is not able to finish it Everyone who sees it will ridicule him Saying this fellow began to build And was not able to finish Or suppose a king is about to go to war Against another king Will he not first sit down And consider whether he is able to With 10,000 men Oppose the one coming against him With 20,000 If he is not able He will send a delegation While the other is still a long way off And will ask for terms of peace In the same way Any of you who does not give up everything he has Cannot be my disciple Salt is good But if it loses its saltiness How can it be made salty again It is fit for neither the soil Nor for the manure he put his throne out He who has ears to hear Let him hear Amen And may God bless that reading of his word to us We're going to sing again to God's praise

That a prayer from Psalm 25 Verses 4 and 5 In Gaelic I'll read the verses in English Show me thy ways O Lord Thy paths so teach thou me And do thou lead me in thy truth Therein my teacher be For thou art God that thus To me salvation send And I upon thee all the day Expecting to attend So we sing these two verses in Gaelic And we remain seated And we remain seated This thing in Gaelic Thank you Thank you Imao th Filmu And I think what the last one was to get and you Thank God.

Thank you. You are my young.

[30 : 35] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[33 : 05] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Let's just pray as we turn back to God's word. Lord God, we pray that you would show us your ways, that you would show us yourself, you would show us who you are, or that you would show us who we are and how much we need you.

We pray for wisdom, we pray for wisdom, we pray for the help of the Holy Spirit as we speak and as we listen and as we respond. And what we pray for ourselves here, we pray for the congregations around us, the different denominations that gather here and elsewhere.

We pray for Gordon as we pray for Gordon as we pray for God's word through God. We pray for God as we meditate upon these difficult verses.

Help us to understand and to hear your voice and to follow you. And we pray for God's word through God's word through God's word through God's word through God. Amen. Amen.

[34 : 28] I remember very clearly being on Holborn Street, Aberdeen, 387 Holborn Street on the 11th of May, 1983.

I would have been aged nine, not quite aged 10. And Aberdeen were playing Real Madrid in Gothenburg in the final of the European Cup Winners' Cup.

And the match was tight. I was watching it on the television, I think, with the rest of the city. It was 1-1 at full time. And so it went to extra time. And in the 112th minute, John Hewitt, he was then known as Super Sub, he came on and he scored the winning goal.

And even though I was in my house in Aberdeen, miles away from Gothenburg, it seemed to me like the whole city shook with the shouts and the cheers that you could hear from all the surrounding houses and the streets.

And then when Aberdeen flew home a few days later, having won the Cup, I remember the streets being lined with tens of thousands of people who were out to cheer them on and to celebrate with them.

[35 : 54] But, you know, not everybody who went out to see them after they won the Cup, not everyone who lined the streets were true fans. I mean, I wasn't a true fan.

I'm not an Aberdeen fan. And there were many people on the streets that day who were cheering, but they weren't really fans. It's easy to cheer when the team is winning and there's a kind of a frenzy of activity and celebration.

But when the chips are down, when the team stopped winning, the crowds thinned and Potaudri Stadium kind of emptied a bit.

And that's when the real followers of Aberdeen Football Club could be seen. Now, we're in Luke chapter 14. We've been going through Luke for some period now.

And Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem. And we read in verse 25, which is where we've got to, that large crowds were following with Jesus.

[36 : 57] And we can imagine them just lining the streets. There was a huge buzz about Jesus at this point. The miracles that he was performing, the healings.

So many people were being healed. So many people were being transformed through the touch of Jesus. And so crowds of people followed him.

And the way he preached, the way he taught was unlike anything they'd ever heard before. It was compelling. And the way he stood up to the religious leaders, the powerful men of that day who kind of kept everyone under their thumb, and yet Jesus squared up to them.

And the crowds just loved us. So there was a huge throng of people who were around Jesus.

And in all likelihood, many of these people were at this point considering following Jesus. Many of these people were likely considering responding to the call of Jesus to become a disciple.

[38 : 08] And I wonder maybe today, is there anybody here? Maybe there are some here. Maybe there are some who are watching online at a distance.

And you're in the same position as many in that crowd on that day. You read about Jesus. You see the miracles he performed. You read these eyewitness accounts of the healings that Jesus performed.

And you're drawn to him. So much so that you're even thinking about becoming a Christian. You're thinking about following Jesus.

And I want to say to anybody who's in that position, be encouraged to follow Christ. You know, there's no better thing, no better life, than a life lived following Jesus.

It won't be easy. You know, there's a cost. We'll come to that. But there's no one else who can bring us the true satisfaction that the soul, the thirst our souls have is quenched only in and through Christ.

[39 : 32] Augustine, I've quoted it so many times, our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee, in Jesus. There's no one else who can forgive us our sins.

There's no one else who can make it possible for us to walk out that door this morning, knowing that the record of our sins has been wiped. There's no one else who can take the sting and the fear out of death, who can give us the assurance that we will not go to a lost eternity, but we'll have a place prepared in heaven for us.

It's only Jesus. It's only as we respond to his call to trust and follow him that we can know these things. So be encouraged.

If you're part of the crowd and thinking these things through, be encouraged to trust and follow Jesus. But as you mull these things over, I think the message that comes through this passage is think it through carefully.

Because the decision to follow Jesus is not a decision that we are to take lightly. It's a, it's an eternity changing decision.

[40 : 56] It takes us from hell to heaven. But it's a life changing decision. Because it changes the whole direction of the way that we live.

And Jesus makes that clear as he, as he stops walking, we can see him in our minds that he's traveling. And then he stops. And it says in verse 25, he turns around to the crowd.

And he then takes a moment to tell them what he expects from them. If they're truly going to be his disciples. So that's what we're considering today in the time that we have.

We're, we're looking at discipleship as Jesus defines it. Not as we might have it in your minds, but this is discipleship as Jesus defines it. He's the one who determines what a disciple looks like and what a disciple doesn't look like.

So there's three points following the track of the verses. And the first point we see really grounded in verse 26.

[42 : 07] And the point will be on the screen in just a second. Disciples of Jesus are to love him more than we love anyone else. That's the first requirement.

That's the first demand that Jesus places upon us. If we're to be his disciples, we're to love him more than we love anyone else. And the way that Jesus presses this in on us is he uses very strong language.

You know, we, we can highlight things. We can change the font of things. We can underline things for effect. That's not available to the writers of the Gospels.

And so when a point is to be made forcefully, it's made in strong language. And Jesus speaks with strong language in verse 26. He says, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife, his children, his brothers, his sisters, yes, even his own life, cannot be my disciple. And we might kind of, we struggle with that strength of language. We, we might ask the question, why does Jesus speak in this way?

[43 : 17] And the answer, I think, is so that we'll take attention. So that we won't go to sleep during the sermon. But we'll listen to this and we'll hear this point that he's making.

So, so what is the point he's making? Is Jesus teaching us literally from verse 26 to hate our families? Is Jesus teaching us to, to treat our families with disdain and contempt?

Well, of course he's not. I mean, the Bible teaches that very clearly. You know, we're to, we're to honor our father and our mother. It's one of the commandments.

We're to love and care for our children. You know, we're to cherish and not despise the families that God has blessed us with.

But we're to love Jesus more. That's the point. William Barclay, the commentator, says, Eastern language is always as vivid as the human mind can make it.

[44 : 28] When Jesus tells us to hate our nearest and dearest, he does not mean that literally. He means that no love in life can compare with the love we must bear to him.

Disciples of Jesus are to love him more than we love anyone else. So as we think through the implications of this, just for a moment, you know, where there's a situation where we have a decision to make about who we're going to please, and it comes down to a choice between pleasing Jesus or our families, Jesus comes first.

Or where there's a situation where there's a clash between the priorities that Jesus has for our lives and the priorities that our families or our friends or our employer or whoever has for us, Jesus comes first.

Martin Lloyd-Jones was a, he was a top-rate medical doctor.

I think he, he was a, the doctor to the royal family back in the day. He was in, he had a lucrative career in medicine and he felt the call to ministry. He went into ministry and he, he went first of all to a little charge in Wales, I think.

[46 : 00] And during the period he was there, there was a, a kind of small scale revival. Quite a lot of people began to, to be awakened in their souls and, and come to faith in Christ.

And as a consequence of that, the prayer meeting, there was a resurgence in the prayer meeting. So there was lots of people, even during the week that wanted to meet to pray. And there was one prayer meeting on a Monday night and this man who had, who had really come, not to faith, but he'd come, he'd come from being lukewarm to, to zealous again.

And he used to go to the Monday night prayer meeting and he loved going to it. But his wife, who wasn't a believer, hated him going to it. And one Monday night as he came back in, his wife, I met him at the door and she said to him, I would rather you came in drunk on a Monday night than came in from the prayer meeting.

Now what does a man do? Does he say, well, you know, this is causing too much conflict? Does he, does he say, well, I'll limit my, my activity to just going out to church on Sunday, let's just try and keep the peace.

And that would be an easy thing to do. But the right thing for him to do was to carry on going to the prayer meeting out of love for Christ. Even though it did annoy his wife.

[47 : 33] J.C. Ryle is helpful on this point, I think, certainly at least he was helpful to me in trying to work this all out. And I'll just share his words with you rather than me trying to put it in my own words.

He says, our Lord did not mean us to understand that it is the duty of Christians to hate their relatives. This would be, this would have been to contradict the fifth commandment.

He only meant that those who follow him must love him with a deeper love even than their nearest and dearest relatives or their own lives. He did not mean that it's an essential part of Christianity to quarrel with our relatives and friends.

But he did mean that if the claims of our relatives and claims of Christ come into collision, the claims of relatives must give way. We must choose rather to displease those we love most upon the earth than to displease him who died for us on the cross.

Experience, Ryle says, shows that the greatest foes to a man's soul are sometimes those of his own house. A collision of opinion takes place frequently as soon as grace enters into a family and then comes the time when the true Christian must remember the spirit of our Lord's words in this passage.

[48 : 49] he, she must be willing to offend their family rather than to offend Christ. So that's the first point.

First requirement, the first qualification for discipleship is disciples of Jesus are to love him more than we love anyone else. the second point is disciples of Jesus are to love him more than we love ourselves.

More than we love self. More than we allow self to dictate our movements and our moods and our life pattern. And that really is grounded in verse 27.

Jesus says, anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. I think we read a verse like that and we've almost become numb to the idea of the cross.

We think of the cross today as a piece of jewelry. We think of the cross today as a symbol of love. And you know it's right that we do.

[50 : 05] But if we go back to the day that Jesus first spoke these words, remember that those who are hearing Jesus speak they knew that the cross was an instrument of death.

That's what it was. And if they saw somebody on their way to a hill with a cross on their back they knew that that person was on their way to die.

Jesus had a cross to carry. That's why he's in Jerusalem. He's heading for the cross and he carried that cross for us.

He died there in my place in your place. He died to pay the price for our sins so that we could be saved.

And that's a cross that only Jesus could carry as the hymn goes there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

[51 : 12] So that's the cross that Jesus had to carry. But what cross do we have to carry? When Jesus talks about us having to take up our cross what cross do we have to carry?

well what needs to die in me if I'm to follow Jesus? And the answer to that question is self selfishness that sinful inclination in me to want to put me before anyone that has to die.

The me first attitude day by day has to be put to death if I'm going to follow Jesus. One commentator Bentley says if any of us are to be true disciples of Jesus then we must die to selfishness ambition and pride.

And it's that kind of when he uses the word ambition he's talking about that kind of me first ambition. I get to the top doesn't matter what happens to anybody else as long as I'm on the top of the tree that has to die.

And we sang that in the hymn Jesus all for Jesus all of my ambitions hopes and plans I surrender these to your hands.

[52 : 49] That's the song for disciples to sing. Disciples of Jesus are to love him more than we love ourselves our plans our ambitions our hopes.

This is demanding stuff. Jesus sets the bar high. for disciples he says if you want to follow me if you want to be my disciples self has to die.

Day by day by day by day selfishness has to die. Has to be nailed to the cross. Weerspey the commentator says salvation is God's gift to us because Jesus died for us on the cross.

So Michael was saying in children's talk the salvation it's free God did it for us. Salvation is God's gift to us because Jesus died on the cross for us.

Discipleship is our gift to him as we take up our cross die to self and follow the Lord in everything.

So let me ask the question to those of us who would say that we are Christians.

[54 : 21] let me ask the question to myself first and all of us who would profess to be disciples of Jesus. As we read this and as we think about what Jesus is pressing in on us is this the way we're following him?

Are we following Jesus closely? Sacrificially? Self sacrificially? Or are we kind of happier on the fringes?

You know one foot in one foot out? The kind of low cost discipleship option. When I was preparing this my mind went back 15 plus years to a conference I was at for trainee ministers it was before I was qualified as a minister and we were being spoken to by a more mature minister at this conference and I always remember what he said he said to us you know we live in an age that is commitment phobic that was 15 plus years ago I think it's worse now and he says and because we live in that age and because that's the nature of the society and the church that we're part of don't expect people to really commit to Jesus in an old fashioned kind of way that's a thing of the past when people would be converted and then commit their lives to

Christ don't expect that anymore that's what he said you know somebody wants to come to church one Sunday a month and spend the other weeks in the month playing Sunday football and having family days going for picnics catching up on work they want to be members of the church but just be in every six weeks that's fine take that now it seems to me as I contrast that with what we're reading in this passage Jesus is saying something very different to that isn't he Jesus makes clear that there are not categories of disciples there aren't the kind of super holy SAS style disciples and then the more nominal lower level disciples there's not different options of discipleship there's just disciples and non disciples those who are following

Jesus and those who are not so the question for us is not are we church members not even are we enthusiastic adherents who come out regularly the question is are we disciples of Jesus and only you can answer that question prior says to be a mere nominal Christian and go to church is cheap and easy work but to hear Christ's voice and follow Christ and believe in Christ and confess Christ requires much self denial it will cost us our sins our self righteousness and our ease and our

worldliness all all must be given up disciples of Jesus are to love him more than we love ourselves more than we love anyone else and thirdly finally disciples of

[58 : 25] Jesus are to love him more than we love our stuff our possessions because I think that's what Jesus is getting at when he when he speaks in verse 33 and says if any of you in the same way any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple he's talking about our stuff our possessions our riches our materials I remember I think probably 1997 buying a video cassette recorder from Dixon's in Inverness I just started working it's probably one of my first paychecks I thought I'm going to get a video recorder so I went to Dixon's and I saw the one I wanted and I signed the papers and I took it home I think it cost me about 20 pounds to take it home it wasn't that much but I had a weekly incremental payment to meet after that to pay for the thing

I think it was paying £9.97 per week and I seemed to be paying £9.97 for decades to come you know I thought I was going to be in my retirement before I would pay off this video recorder and if I realised on day one how much it was going to cost me over the contract period and I've never bought it but the slick salesman on the day that I was in the shop kind of blindsided me to the true cost and what's very clear in this passage is that Jesus does not operate that way Jesus outlines the cost of discipleship on front and he couldn't make it any clearer and my time is gone but if you look at verse 28 down to verse 33 there and you can see the illustrations that Jesus uses to outline the cost of discipleship he talks about the tower and says somebody who's building a tower they work out it's going to cost and they don't commit to start and build the tower if they don't have enough money to pay for it so count the cost says Jesus if you're going to follow me then he uses the illustration of the king going to war and he says you know think this through carefully can you finish what you start count the cost do the sums before you before you head off into battle and in the same way says Jesus verse 33 any of you who does not give up everything he has can not be my disciple he's talking about our stuff already he's talked about our relationships and the fact that he must come first and he's also talked about our own hearts and how he must come above us ourself and now he he says if you're going to follow me you have to be willing to give up your possessions if I ask you to does that mean that we should own nothing no it doesn't mean that because we could go lots of places in the Bible and see where God's people were well off and used the things they had for God's glory so there are many cases where Jesus says you can have your stuff just hold it loosely use it wisely so what's

Jesus saying here I think he's he's simply saying you shouldn't love your stuff more than me and if I call you says Jesus to leave it all behind and go on mission or go into ministry or whatever you need to be willing to do that you know I know people in Scotland who have left big houses big salaries and posh areas their children are nice schools and they've gone to live in some of the roughest poorest schemes in the country to be part of a church plant they're taking their kids out of a very protected sheltered environment into a dangerous place for Jesus sake I'm working with a guy just now who is just really waiting to head out to Vietnam he's hoping to be out by now but the borders haven't opened quite yet he's got a wife and two very young children about to head to Vietnam I mean you can remember when the children were wee it was a massive expedition even to go to Tesco's imagine going to Vietnam and the world would say what an upheaval what a cost what madness but Jesus says that's discipleship that's what I'm asking him to do so count the cost and follow me I need to finish but just as I finish I want to just ask the question and answer the question why why should we follow Jesus why should we love him more than we love anyone else or ourselves or our stuff there's two answers to that question one because he is God God is speaking to us if anyone else were to demand this from us rightly we would be outraged if Jesus was just a good moral teacher but just a man like us and he was making these kind of demands it would be ridiculous but Jesus didn't claim to be just a man he claimed to be the God man he claimed to be God the son the one who came from heaven to earth so that sinners like us who trust and follow him could be saved and so it's God who is speaking to us it's God the son that's why we should listen to that's why we should follow him and the second reason we should follow him is because he is gracious this is not a tyrant shaking his fist in our direction and saying follow me or else the one who calls us is both

[66 : 03] God and he is gracious and the love that Jesus expects from us is nothing it's pale it's poor in comparison to the love that he has shown to us we are sinners we established that and sin requires punishment but Jesus went to the cross for us and from us so that if we're trusting him we

will not be shown judgment but we will be shown grace the one who calls us to follow him he is gracious he is loving he went to the cross for us we sing the hymn this the power of the cross son of God slain for us what a love what a cost we stand forgiven at the cross and if we can see that surely even though it is costly surely we will not hesitate to follow him let's pray Lord Jesus we thank you for these words which have been recorded for us and preserved for us and which come to us today in the power of the Holy Spirit Lord thank you for the privilege of being able to follow the one who made us and who loves us who laid down his life for us and who promises to save us eternally if we will respond to the call to trust him enable us

Lord yes to count the cost yes to realize what it means to call you Lord but enable us as we see the cross before us and not to hesitate but to trust you and we pray this in Jesus name Amen we'll sing to conclude the hymn Mission Praise 1209 my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who bore my pain who came the heart is filled with thankfulness to him whom all I pray who who calmed the depths of my disgrace and gave me life again who crushed my curse of sinfulness and clothed me with his light and wrote his roar of righteousness with power upon my heart my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who holds beside who floods my weaknesses with strength and causes fears to fight whose every promise is enough is enough for every step

I take sustaining me with arms of love and crowning me with grace my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who reigns above love whose wisdom is my perfect peace whose heavenly thought is mine for every day I have honored is given by the King so I will give my life my all to love and follow 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 now and forever more Amen