

21.11.21 am

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Date: 21 November 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. And those who, I don't know if there's anybody who's visiting, but there's some who have been away and who are back home just now.

And there's some who've been away for a while and are back perhaps today for the first time in a while. So it's good to see you especially. The intimations have been going around on the screen before the service began.

I'll just take a second to highlight a couple of these. First, just to encourage you to come out to the evening service tonight at 6. And we don't see quite as many of the children as we used to in the evening service.

So young ones, be encouraged to come out in the evening as well. At 6 till 7. And tonight we're starting a new series where we're looking, we're taking a first look forward towards Christmas. The ladies' fellowship on tomorrow evening, and that's as usual. Little fishes as usual, road to recovery as usual. Prayer meeting in the church building, also possible to zoom in for those who are not yet able to come to the church.

[1 : 11] And this Wednesday and Saturday, and going into next Sunday as well, we'll have the theme of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. So this is generally Thanksgiving week.

And so we'll have the theme of Thanksgiving from Wednesday through to Saturday and then into Sunday. And you can see that there's no jam and connect clubs this Friday due to the long weekend, but rooted meets as normal.

There's a Thanksgiving meal. So I don't know that it did say Saturday night, but it was corrected. So it's Saturday night at 6 o'clock, a Thanksgiving meal here in the church.

There's still a sign-up sheet at the door for those who are able to help with food. So please check that as you head out of the church this morning. And the service is next Sunday.

I'll preach myself, God willing, in the morning. And Gaelic service in the evening. Hamish Taylor. A couple more things. The first is to say that Connect Club are looking to contribute to the Western Isles Volunteer Centre, Light Up a Life Initiative.

[2 : 20] And they would appreciate any donation of small gifts suitable for a man or woman aged over 50 years, such as a scarf, a hat, gloves, toiletries, and non-perishable food.

Donations can be left in the box in the foyer outside the door. And there's two more things. One is the subscription for the church magazine. You've got details there. And the last thing is to note that the Free Church is looking for volunteers in terms of safeguarding.

And again, I think there are details, or there has been details up there. If you need to speak to anyone about that, I would suggest probably Gordon, who'd have the details on that, or Lucy Tour. So these, I think, are all the intimations. And we'll begin now this time of worship by singing to God's praise. And you'll see in just a second the words on the screen of Mission Praise 51.

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart.

[3 : 37] Not be all else to me, save that thou art. 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 die to start.

Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one. Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight.

Be thou my dignity, thou my delight. Thou my soul shelter, thou my high tower.

[5 : 03] Raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power. Richest I heed, nor nor man's empty praise.

Thou mine inheritance, now and always. Thou art thou only first in my heart.

High King of heaven, my treasure thou art. High King of heaven, after victory won.

May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun. Heart of my own heart, whatever befall.
Still be my patient, O ruler of all. We'll join our hearts together now in prayer.

[6 : 31] And just before we pray, just a little bit of news. It's good to see Christian and Andy here this morning. Most of you probably heard that Anthony became unwell over the last few days, Dr. Latham.

And he was admitted to hospital yesterday. He underwent emergency surgery about six o'clock last night.

The operation went well. He's recovering at this time. And if we can be praying for him, he's in Stornoway in hospital. We'll pray for his recovery. He'll probably be in hospital for a few more days, I think.

And then hopefully we'll get home to be cared for by Christian. Every whim that he wants will be answered by Christian over these days.

So let's be praying for Anthony and the family over this time. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can call you our Father.

[7 : 35] We thank you that we are your children if we are trusting in Christ. We thank you that we have that steadying assurance that we are loved by our Father.

That we are cared for by our Father in Heaven. The God who is interested in every detail of our lives. And yet the God who is sovereign and supreme, authoritative in every way.

We thank you that there's nothing that we can bring before you, Lord, that is too big for you. To be able to handle and work through. You are able to do more than we can ask or imagine.

And we thank you that you call us as finite creatures, grasshoppers in the grand scale of things. You call us to come before you.

And to bow before you in worship. And we thank you that you love us. That we are each created individually by you. That we are precious to you. And we can call you our Father.

[8 : 36] So we rest in your presence, Lord. We pray that each of us would know you as Father. I pray if there's anyone here this morning or anyone watching at a distance who doesn't know the care of a Heavenly Father.

That even today they may trust in Jesus. We thank you that the call to trust Christ is a call which is made each day that we are given life and breath.

We thank you that every time we open the Scriptures we hear that same call to come to Jesus. To have our sin forgiven.

To receive the gift of eternal life. And to be brought into this relationship which brings satisfaction to our souls. And that steadiness to our lives here.

And the promise that we are secure eternally. So Lord we thank you that we can sing the words of that hymn. We thank you that you are our vision. We thank you that you are the God who sees what's up ahead of us.

[9 : 43] We don't know what this week holds. We don't know what a day holds. But yet we thank you that you are our vision. You are the one who sees all things from beginning to end.

And we can cry out to you. Asking Lord that you would lead us. And that you would guide us. That as we acknowledge you. That you would direct our path. We pray Lord for Anthony at this time especially.

As he recovers in hospital. We thank you that the surgery last night happened so quickly. We thank you that it went well. And we thank you that he is recovering in hospital at this time.

And we pray for that recovery. We pray Lord that you would bless him. That you would be near to him. We thank you for those who are caring for him. And we ask that you would be with them also. We are conscious that our lives here are so fragile. We are conscious in times like that. That everything, every plan that we have. Can change in just an instant.

[10 : 43] But we thank you that we can come to you. The God who knows all things. And we can commit ourselves to you. As we commit Anthony to you.

Be with them and be with Christian. And be with all the family at this time. Uphold them. We pray. We thank you Lord that you are our wisdom. We confess that we do not have wisdom.

Not in ourselves. We confess that very often we come to places in life. And positions in life. Where we don't know which way to go.

We're not sure which way to turn. But we thank you that you are our wisdom. We thank you that you have promised that. As we ask for wisdom. You will not withhold it.

But you will give it to us. So we ask Lord for that wisdom. We ask for that wisdom for ourselves. We ask for that wisdom for those. Who are in authority over us as well. As we think about the nation.

[11 : 40] And as we think about the nations. We acknowledge Lord that you are the sovereign God. The one who reigns over all. But those who are in positions of influence.

You have allowed them to be there. You have called us to pray for them. And so as we pray for wisdom for ourselves. As we pray. That you would give wisdom to those. Who are in these positions of power.

They may not acknowledge you. They may not seek wisdom Lord. But we like Daniel of old. We pray that you would have mercy on us as a nation. And that you would come near to those.

That you are allowed to be in these positions of authority. And we thank you Lord that you are our battle shield as well. You are the one who protects us. You are the one who is able to clothe us with the armor of God.

And in a world where we are so conscious of conflict. And when we see the reality of conflict around us. And within us.

[12 : 40] And when we are conscious also of the spiritual reality. Of the attacks of the enemy. We thank you that you are our battle shield. That you are our sword for the fight.

And we ask that you would equip us Lord. And help us in the reality of the difficulties. And the struggles of this life. May we know your protection.

And your hand upon us for good. And we thank you that you are our hope. We sing so often in Christ alone. My hope is found.

And so we thank you Lord. That you are our hope for each day. And that you are our hope for eternity. We thank you that every child of God. Every believer.

And no matter what we go through. In terms of the circumstances of our lives. We thank you that none of us. Wake up on any day. Hopeless. Because our hope.

[13 : 38] Is not found in our circumstances. Or our moods. Our hope. Is grounded in Christ alone. In his life. Live righteously. Sinlessly.

For us. In his death. Where he went to the cross. To pay the price. For our sin. And in his resurrection. Through which he promises.

That we will share in. When we are trusting in Jesus. So we thank you Lord. That you are our hope. And we worship you. For who you are. And all that you have done for us.

In Jesus. Amen. To bring us. May our eyes be. For us. May our eyes be. On Christ. Through this hour. And through our lives. May he. Be our vision. And may we fix our eyes upon him.

Hear our prayers. Cleanse us from our sin. Empty us of all. That would. Fixate on ourselves. Fill us with the Holy Spirit. We pray. that we may on the Lord's day be in the spirit and be able to worship you in truth.

[14 : 37] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come out, please? Boys and girls, would you like to come out, please?

I'm going to show you this. Can anyone tell me, what's this? Let me see some hands.

Katie. It's a jacket, yeah, but what kind of a jacket is it, do you think? Because, you know, how stylish do you think this is?

Is it very stylish? When you look around at some of the stylish jackets in the room here this morning, that nice peach jacket over there, a good quality thing, and there's these puffer jackets, high quality.

You know, and then you look at this one. How stylish is this jacket on a one to ten? Nothing.

Nothing really, no. Yeah, thanks for that. So it's not stylish, is it?

[16 : 04] It's not a jacket that you'd wear for fashion, is it? Now, is it warm? Well, I'll come to that in a second, Michael. But is this a warm jacket, do you think?

No. Why do you think it's not warm? It's waterproof. It's got no fur inside it, does it? Yeah, but it's waterproof. So it's not warm very, it just kind of keeps the wind out, but it doesn't really keep you very warm.

Is it waterproof? Yes. No, it's not. Most jackets that are waterproof have fur. Most jackets that have waterproof have fur.

No, that are waterproof don't have fur. Yeah, yeah, that's true. Katie? It's not water resistant either, no? Jono? Jono and Jon Rory.

I don't know what questions you're answering, but let's hear them anyway. It's not a running jacket. It's not a running jacket. Does I see you running a jacket? No. What are you going to say, Jono? It's a hoodie. It's not a hoodie, no?

[17:08] Because it's got no hood. So, it's not stylish, it's not warm, it's not waterproof. No, that's the worst jacket ever.

So what's the worst jacket ever, you say? It's not a gore text. It's got nothing much going for it, does it? If you ever made them go, I would get them out in the warehouse.

So, now then, this jacket, it doesn't do any of these things, but it does have a purpose. So, if you look to the screen, you will see where this jacket is useful.

It's not a glow-in-the-dark jacket. It's not a glow-in-the-dark jacket. Have you seen it?

So, cars can see you. That's right. Yes, it's a glow-in-the-dark jacket. That's right, Fraser. It's a glow-in-the-dark jacket. But there's a dark one, there's nothing there. It's a beauty of dark.

[18:09] So, a dark tree, when it gets its light on, it will replace your jacket, but it might not be able to break. That's right. Well, let's not go there.

But, this is a jacket. It's quite bright during the day, so you could wear it when you're walking on the road and cars would see you. But at night time, Anna was walking along the road there and it was pitch black and you could see nothing.

And then, Maddie came along with the car and she put the lights on the jacket and it's like a glow-in-the-dark. You just see. It's almost scary because you just see this kind of thing, this jacket that's walking.

You can't see anything else. But this glow-in-the-dark jacket that's just walking. So, that's what the jacket is useful for. Now, here's the next question. How does it work to reflect jacket?

Light. It needs lights. It needs lights, Lois. When the lights shine against it, Katie. When the lights shine against it, Katie. It reflects the light.

[19:09] It reflects the light back. I'm not talking about it. So, don't steal my sermon yet, Michael. Katrina. It's a reflective jacket. It's a reflective jacket. There's lots of little glass beads on it, apparently.

So, when you're driving along, the lights hit the glass beads. They reflect all the light that comes from the car. And they shine it back out so that the jacket just shines and the person can be seen. And that reminds me of something that Jesus said. What verse do you think I'm going to go for? Fraser? Jesus is the light of the world.

That's one of the verses that was in my mind. Jesus said, I'm the light of the world. But what else did he say, Shawnee? Jesus is our lighthouse.

Jesus is our lighthouse. That's a song, yeah? And it's like the light of the world. Yeah, that's what Jesus said, Katie. He said, we have to reflect.

[20:13] He said, I'm the light of the world. But then he said to his disciples, you are the light of the world. Oh, give me the verse. Matthew chapter 5, verse 16. Jesus said to his disciples, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Now, what do you think it means to let your light shine? Do you think Jesus was talking about buying one of the dark jackets? No.

So what does it mean to let your light shine? Do you think? What do you think, John? Show people what God is like.

That's right. So how might your light shine in school? For being good. For being good, yeah.

Fraser? From the sun.

Well, from the sun, yeah. Telling other people about God. Telling other people about God, yeah.

Katie? Show other people. Showing people God's kindness, yeah.

[21:26] All these things are ways that we can let our light shine. And when people see our lives shine, what do you think that should make them do?

Do you think that should make them say, you know, that person there is so shiny bright. His life is such a shining bright. He's a great guy. No. That girl is such a shining light of a girl.

No. No. What do you think, why does Jesus want our light to shine? That it makes it so that it convinces other people. So that other people will be convinced about what?

It will reflect on men and others and others and others and others. So who should people see through our shiny lives?

And send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water. And cool my tongue. Because I am in agony in this fire. But Abraham replied. Son remember that in your lifetime you received your good things. While Lazarus received bad things. But now he is comforted here. And you are in agony. And besides all this. Between us and you. A great chasm has been fixed. So that you.

So that those who want to go from here to you cannot. Nor can anyone cross over from there to us. He answered. Then I beg you father. Let's send Lazarus to my father's house.

[30 : 05] For I have five brothers. Let him warn them. So that they will not also come to this place of torment. Abraham replied. They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.

No father Abraham. He said. But if someone goes from the dead. To them. They will repent. He said to him. If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets. They will not be convinced.

Even if someone rises from the dead. Jesus said to his disciples. Things that cause people to sin are bound to come. But woe to that person through whom they come.

It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea. With a millstone tied around his neck. Than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves. If your brother sins.

Rebuke him. And if he repents. Forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day. And seven times comes back to you. And says I repent. Forgive him. The apostle said to the Lord.

[31 : 09] Increase our faith. He replied. If you have faith as small as a mustard seed. You can say to this mulberry tree. Be uprooted and planted in the sea. And it will obey you. Suppose one of you had a servant.

Plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant. When he comes in from the field. Come along now. And sit down and eat. Would he not rather say. Prepare my supper. Get yourself ready.

And wait on me. While I eat and drink. After that you may. Eat and drink. Would he thank the servant. Because he did what he was told to do. So you also. When you have done everything. You were told to do.

Should say. We are unworthy servants. We have only done our duty. Amen. And may God bless that reading. Of his word to us. We're going to sing again now.

To God's praise. The first two stanzas. Of Psalm 121. Verses 1 to 4. As they're marked in English. I to the hills.

[32 : 04] Will lift mine eyes. From whence. Will come my need. My safety cometh. From the Lord. Who heaven and earth hath made. Thy foot. He'll not let slide. Nor will he slumber. That he keeps.

Behold. He that keeps Israel. He slumbers not. Nor sleeps. These two verses. The verses of Psalm 121. In Gala. And we'll remain seated to sing.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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[34 : 47] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS PHONE CHINESE CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and we pray that you would be our help now as we seek to understand and as we seek to respond in faith to all that you speak to us through that word.

And we cannot see, we cannot hear, we cannot respond without your help. So we look to you and we ask, Lord, for that help now. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. You've all heard the phrase, hindsight would be a wonderful thing or hindsight is a wonderful thing.

[37 : 00] And we recognize that if we knew ahead of time what was going to happen in our lives, we would often do things differently. And if we'd known five years ago what the last couple of years, the last couple of COVID years would have looked like, we'd have lived differently five years ago.

We might have started a business in the manufacture of face masks and hand sanitizer. Or we might have bought some shares in Zoom, something we'd never heard of going back five years.

Or we might have taken a trip out to Wuhan, China to warn them about food hygiene in their markets. But you understand the point.

If we knew ahead of time what was going to happen in our lives, we'd live differently. And in the parable that we looked at last week and we're just finishing off this week, we see in Luke 16 a rich man.

And we're given an insight into his life. He lived like a king. He accumulated masses of this world's treasure.

[38 : 15] But his life was short, as all our lives are. And when he died, he perished. He went to hell. And from hell, he looks back at his life.

And with hindsight, we can see that he wishes he had lived differently. So I want to look at two points, taking us from chapter 16 into chapter 17.

Maybe I'll ask Kathy Ray just to close the door, please. There's a disco going on next door, I think. So with Luke chapter 16 open in this parable of the rich man and Lazarus, I want to look first of all from the perspective of the rich man.

And he's looking back from eternity, from hell. He's looking from eternity back into time. So that's the first point, looking back from eternity into time.

And we know that this parable, it's a story. It's a story that Jesus made up to make a point, to make an illustration. But the rich man in this parable, although he's a parabolic figure, he's representative of many millions of real people who have gone from time into a lost eternity.

[39 : 39] And in a sense, from that lost eternity, they send us a message through this parable so that we'll learn from their mistakes.

And there's two words that I want to underline that are in the text under this first point. The first word is remember. The second word is repent. repent.

Lazarus, when he is in hell, he is told by Abraham to remember his life. And then as he thinks about this, and as he thinks about those he's left behind, the message he wants to send to them is repent. So first of all, remember. And if you look at verse 25, you see that this is what Abraham says to the rich man.

He calls the rich man to look back on his life and to remember. In verse 25, he says, he says there, son, remember that in your lifetime, you received good things, whilst Lazarus suffered.

[40 : 55] And the rich man, he's able to look back and remember. And I think that's a point that we can take as instructive in terms of, you know, what the experience of hell is.

If you read up on hell, there's lots of different opinions on what hell is. And some people would seek to argue that there is no such place as hell.

It's just a state of mind. It's not a real place. But Jesus teaches repeatedly and very clearly, even in this passage, hell is a real place. And some people would maybe accept that hell is a real place, but they would say, well, it's a place where you don't feel anything, you don't know anything, you kind of go into a state of eternal unconsciousness.

The term they use is annihilation. So some people would say hell is a place where people are annihilated. They know nothing. They just cease to exist.

They cease to feel. They cease to know anything. But Jesus teaches something quite different to that as well. Because we see that in hell, this rich man, he's in that real place, and he's very conscious.

[42 : 19] He's able to remember things from hell. The first thing is he can remember his life. And we pick up the conversation at verse 25.

I don't want to go back over where we were last week, but the rich man in hell, he is suffering. He's feeling the pain of the flames.

And he wants some relief. And so he sends, well, he asks Abraham to send Lazarus so that Lazarus will get some water and just bring him some relief from the fires of hell.

And Abraham replied, son, remember that in your lifetime, you received the good things, while Lazarus received bad things. Now he's comforted here, and you're in agony.

And the rich man, in response to what Abraham says, he's able to remember. He remembers Lazarus. He even recognizes Lazarus.

[43 : 27] He remembers all the bad things that Lazarus did have to suffer. And he remembers that whilst Lazarus suffered, he overindulged in every excess.

He remembers that Lazarus, in spite of his material poverty, was one who had called out to the Lord for help in his lifetime. And he was saved. He had faith. And he can remember that he, whilst he was living up in time, had no interest in God.

No interest in anything but his own cash and his own luxuries. And now he's lost. He remembers. The rich man in hell, he's suffering, and he remembers why he's suffering. He's able to see that he is paying eternally for the sins that he committed in his lifetime.

He's able to see that he's facing God's justice. And you know, hell is a place of justice. It's a place where the sin that we have committed in this world, it's paid for.

[44 : 49] You know, if we are going to be people who determine that we will not trust Christ, if you're sitting here this morning or you're listening this morning at somewhere else, and you're determined in your own heart that you will sit in your chair and you will carry on life your way, you're not trusting Christ and you're not going to trust Christ.

If you're determining that you will not ask for forgiveness of your sins, but you will hold on to these sins, then these sins have to be paid for.

That's justice. And if Jesus does not pay the price for our sin on the cross, then we have to pay for the price of that sin.

And so the cross is an ugly place for us to look. We see Christ suffer. And hell is an ugly place for us to look here because we see this man suffer.

But he is facing justice, isn't he? I mean, think about his life. The rich man with all his resources, he could have brought the suffering that Lazarus was enduring to stop in a second.

[46 : 20] It was just a little bit of his fortune. But he chose not to. And now the rich man who knew nothing of suffering in this world knows what it feels like to suffer.

There's been a reversal. And the rich man, think about it, who saw Lazarus every day locked outside of his gate for the first time he now experiences the reality of what it feels like to be locked outside of heaven's gate.

And it's justice. And it's this rich man who deprived Lazarus of so many good things that he could have so freely given.

He now knows what it feels like to be deprived of good things. So Abraham says to the rich man, remember, you chose this.

Remember, you chose this by the way that you decided you were going to live your life. And the rich man, he can remember his life. He sees the logic of all.

[47 : 32] He can remember. And not only can he remember his life, but he can remember his brothers.

Because we're told in verse 27 that the rich man had five brothers. And we don't really know very much about these five brothers. All we know is that the rich man believed that his five brothers were following him down the road to hell.

I mean, maybe the five brothers were similarly rich and lived a similar kind of lifestyle. Or maybe they were slightly less rich than this rich man was and they had aspirations to be like their brother. And from hell, the rich man, he can remember his brothers and it disturbs him to know that his brothers are heading down the same track that he was on.

It seems that part of the torment of hell for the rich man was the thought that his brothers were following his lead.

[48 : 47] And so he wants to send them a message. So what message was it? Well, that takes us to the second word. The first word is remember. The second word is repent.

And that's the message this rich man wants Lazarus to deliver to his brothers and we read that in verse 27. He wants them, verse 28, to be warned about this awful place, hell, that they had no thought of in time.

And he wants his brothers, whilst there's still time, to repent, to change their lives, to change direction, to turn in faith to the God who could save them.

He wants this message delivered. Repent, brothers. See, the rich man now knows the truth.

He went through his life either denying the truth or giving no thought to the truth. But now he knows the truth. He knows the truth about God.

[49 : 55] He knows the truth about heaven. He knows the truth about hell. The rich man now believes that it was too late to be saved.

And so he wants this message supernaturally delivered by the resurrected Lazarus to his five brothers. And he wants Lazarus to say to them, repent, change direction, believe, and be saved. But the tragedy is that this message would not be delivered by Lazarus to the five brothers. And Jesus makes clear even if it was, they wouldn't believe.

And we can think about another man in John chapter 11, a real man, Lazarus was his name. And he died and Jesus raised him from the dead.

And he was a living witness of the fact that Jesus could bring people back from the dead. Now did the crowds believe in Jesus because of the testimony of Lazarus, the real Lazarus in John 11?

[51 : 14] No, they didn't. In fact, they were so determined to not believe that they decided after they saw Lazarus come back from the dead that they would kill Jesus.

So this message would not be delivered to the brothers. But in a sense it's delivered to us today, not by Lazarus, but by Jesus, by God the Son, who died and who rose from the dead and he calls us to repent and to believe and to receive eternal life.

So let me ask all of us, have we done that yet? Are we going to be looking back like the rich man from a lost eternity on a life where we had so many opportunities to believe and we passed them by?

It's an awful thought but it needn't be that way because one prayer sitting in our chairs just now will change everything.

We come before the Lord in the quietness of our own hearts and confess the fact that we are sinners that we so much live for ourselves as the rich man did. We're seeking forgiveness.

[52 : 48] We want to turn from that life and we want to follow Christ. If we pray that in our hearts in this instant, eternity changes for us.

we're taken away from hell. Our sins are taken to the cross of Christ. They're paid for.

Heaven's gates are opened. Eternal security is secured. So have you prayed that prayer yet?

The prayer that the rich man wouldn't pray. The prayer that the poor man did pray, Lord, help me. If not, why would you leave another minute?

Because we don't know we have another minute. So we see a rich man and he's looking back from eternity into time and he wants this message to be delivered.

[53 : 56] Repent. And then we come to the second point and I'll be brief and moving through this. And we see Jesus. And Jesus is speaking to his disciples and he encourages his disciples to look forward from time into eternity.

Not to fixate in this world, but yes to live in this world, but to have an eye on eternity. It's kind of like Jesus says, well, you've seen that.

You've seen how it could be. Now, don't live that way. You know sometimes how you can have a dream? It's night time and you have a dream and the dream is alarming and you wake up in the morning and you just heave a sigh of relief.

I've had a recurring dream and it's ten past eleven on a Sunday morning and I can't seem to be able to get out of the house. And I'm conscious you're all sitting here waiting for me and I can't get to the house and I haven't finished the sermon and I don't know what to say and stress levels are rising and I wake up in a cold sweat and I go, thank goodness for that, it's only Thursday.

There's still time to prepare. And there's something of that going on here. Jesus has just taken them into this very vivid picture of a man who wasted his life, a man whose life led to eternal loss.

[55 : 24] And had the effect of leading his brothers to the same, the same eternal destiny. And Jesus says, you know, we've had the story of the man who was out of time. And he was lost.

And now he says to his disciples, you know, you, you are in time. So be careful how you live. Don't waste your life like the rich man.

Be careful how you live. Don't just live for today, but live looking forward today, from time into eternity. And there's four things that Jesus gives, and I'll just give you the headings, really.

The first thing he says to his disciples, if they're to live this way, is be watchful. Jesus said to his disciples, verse 1, things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come.

It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves. Underline that.

[56 : 34] Watch yourselves, says Jesus. You know, we're very good at watching everyone else. We're very good at spotting where everybody else is going wrong, and the disciples were probably expert at seeing where the Pharisees were going wrong, because Jesus was always picking them up, or where they were going off course.

But Jesus says to his disciples, now, yes, we see the Pharisees, and we see where they're off track, but you watch yourselves. Watch that you don't drift off course, disciples.

Because when you drift off course, you also will cause others to drift off course. And Jesus mentions in verse 2, they're little ones.

And we can ask the question, well, who are the little ones that he's talking about? And the answer to that is, I think Jesus is talking about children. He's a particular love and care for children. But it's more than children. I think Jesus also is speaking about young believers. Those who were young in the faith.

[57 : 45] I mean, remember Jesus, he attracted all kinds of shady characters. They were tax collectors. They were all kinds of dodgy characters who Jesus would eat with and preach to.

And who were coming to faith. faith. But they weren't mature in faith. They could very easily fall back into sin. And so Jesus says to his disciples, back then and still to us today, watch yourselves. Think about how your life and your witness will affect the people who are around you. If we are to live wisely, we must be watchful.

Not just ourselves, but think about how our lives affect the lives that are around us. Gordon quite often uses this quote that he was given in police training when they were going through their police training.

He talks about this guy who said, every contact leaves a trace. If you're on a case and you're trying to crack it, remember every contact, whether it's a computer contact or a fingerprint or a conversation or whatever, every contact leaves a trace.

[58 : 57] And I wonder what kind of trace are you and I leaving as we live our lives here? And if our contacts, if our children, if our family, if our friends were to be asked about the effect our lives were having, what kind of what kind of lead are we given?

What trace are we leaving? Are we leading people to Jesus? Are we leading people closer to Jesus? Or are we driving people away from Jesus because they don't like what they see in our lives?

And they assume that to be what Jesus is like. Be watchful, says Jesus.

And secondly, he says, be forgiven. Verse 3, if your brother sins, rebuke him. Notice that, rebuke him.

Don't go and talk about him. Don't go and phone six people and say, did you hear what you did? Don't go immediately to ask for a session meeting to discuss the offense that this has caused you.

[60 : 21] Rebuke him, go straight to him. Have the courage to have the conversation. And if he repents, forgive him, verse 3, if he sins against you seven times in a day and seven times comes back to you and says, I repent, forgive him.

That doesn't mean you keep one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, a log of how many times people offend you. It just means you keep on doing it. You keep on forgiving. And I think Jesus here is applying the lesson of a previous parable.

Remember in Luke 15, Jesus, he tells the story of the two brothers. And the younger one goes off and wastes the family inheritance and then he realizes what a fool he's been.

He comes under conviction of sin. He returns to his father. he repents and his father forgives him. Even though he's burned all the cash, even though he's shredded the family name, he forgives him. But his older brother neither rebukes him when he returns nor forgives him. But he sulks outside of the buyer, talking behind the back of the brother to the father and refusing to forgive.

[61 : 41] refusing to come in. And perhaps with that parable in mind, Jesus says to his disciples, don't be like the bitter, sulking, angry older brother.

Be like the father. Be forgiving. And we struggle with this.

we struggle to forgive each other. This is a problem in marriages. This is a problem in family life.

This is a problem amongst friends. It's a problem in every church you go to. And Jesus knows that. And yet he still insists on it.

one of the commentators, Dale Ralph Davis, says our problem with Jesus, our problem with Jesus, our problem with Jesus, I can't read my own writing, sorry, our problem with Jesus' own word here is that we are often too spineless to rebuke and too resentful to forgive.

[62 : 54] Jesus requires of us the courage to rebuke and the compassion to forgive. Christian life demands both guts and goodness. A forgiving person is a Christ-like person.

A forgiving person is able to lead other people to Jesus, but an unforgiving person not only harbors sin in their own hearts, but will very often lead others into sin because of the bitter critical spirit that poisons the innards.

So we're told be watchful, be forgiving, as Jesus is towards you. And if we hit pause here, already this is overwhelming because we know we can't do this.

We need help to do this. And so the disciples, realizing that this is just too heavy a burden for them to bear, they simply say to Jesus, help.

increase our faith. They recognize they can't do it.

[64 : 15] They recognize they don't have it in them. So they say, please help increase my faith so I can start to try and do some of this stuff. They recognize that they need to be trusting in God.

And that's the third thing. Jesus says, he teaches them to be trusting in God. Jesus replied, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, be uprooted and planted in the sea and it will obey you.

And the mulberry tree was known because it had massive, strong, deep, extensive roots. They went down deep. They reckoned the roots of a mulberry tree would stay in the ground for 600 years.

roots. They were impossible to dredge up. And that's maybe a good illustration of the sin in our lives, the struggle that we have to forgive, the bad habits that we don't seem able to break.

The roots of our sin go down deep. And we're not strong enough to pull them up ourselves. We need Jesus. I remember trying to dig some of the roots of the trees in the man's garden.

[65 : 33] I remember spending one Saturday and I thought, I'll go out with a shovel and I'll dig out all these roots. And after about three hours of torturous labour, I realised I couldn't dig up one root.

It just wasn't strong enough. And they were just spread all over the area. And so I gave up. But then a year or two later when Kenny Carrier was at the man's with the digger, I watched him with the big machine pulling the roots out of the ground like pieces of thread out of a sewing box.

Because the machine had power. And the disciples are recognising here they don't have enough power. They can't live the way Jesus is describing.

And so they say we need more faith Jesus. And Jesus in response says well it's not the largeness of your faith that's important. It's the object of your faith that's important. You need to trust me.

You can have mustard seed tiny faith but as long as it's in me it works. I've said it before you know you can you can have masses of faith in thin ice.

[66 : 55] But if you step out on the loch you're going down. You can have minuscule faith in thick ice and you can nervously stand out on the loch and you'll be held firm.

It's not the measure of our faith it's the object of our faith. And what we are called to do day by day is look to Jesus. Trust in Jesus. Sometimes we'll struggle.

Sometimes our faith will be minute. But look to Christ. Stay close to Jesus. He will day by day give us what we need to live the lives that he calls us to live.

And the final thing Jesus says and I'll just give you the heading is be humble. And you can see that in verses 7 down to verse 10.

He gives the story there of the servant. And Jesus is surrounded by now by Pharisees who are puffed up with pride.

[68 : 03] And Jesus says to his disciples don't be like that. When you're serving me be humble. the best exposition of that section maybe is the verse that we sang.

Riches I heed not or man's empty praise thou mine inheritance now and always. Jesus says when you're serving me don't go looking for a round of applause.

Now don't go looking to get your name in all the bulletins of the church networks. Don't look for personal recognition. Be humble. Be like John the Baptist.

I must decrease. Christ must increase. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father we thank you for your word and we thank you for the stark contrast that we see between these two chapters.

[69 : 15] We pray that you would help us to learn the lessons that we're taught. We pray that none of us would be like the rich man looking back from a lost eternity remembering a life and so many opportunities that were wasted.

Alarmed by the fact that others are following us down the same track. enable us we pray to be trusting in Jesus and to be living in time.

But with that awareness constantly that we are headed for eternity. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude Mission Praise 760.

Mission Praise 760. When we walk with the Lord and the light of his word what a glory he sheds in our way while we do his good will he abides with us still with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey. There's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey. when we walk with the Lord in the light of his word what a glory he sheds on our way while we do his good will he abides with us still and with all who will trust and obey.

[70 : 53] Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise not a cloud in the skies but a smile quickly drives it away.

Not a doubt nor a fear not a sigh nor a tear can abide while we trust and obey.

Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

Not a burden we bear not a sorrow we share but our toy he doth richly repay.

[72 : 00] Not a grief nor a loss not a plan nor a cross but is blessed if we trust and obey.

Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

But we never can prove the delights of his love until all on the altar we lay.

for the favour he shows and the joy he bestows and for them who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

[73 : 05] Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at his feet or we'll walk by his side in the way.

What he says we will do when he sends we will go never fear only trust and obey.

Trust and obey for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

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 evermore. Amen.