

27.2.22 am

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Date: 27 February 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning and a warm welcome to church this morning. There's a few visiting with us this morning and you're especially welcome. It's good to see you. If you're able to stay behind and have tea and coffee, that will be served just to my left at the end of the service. So it would be good to get a chance to meet you. The intimations have been on the screen just before the service began and I'll just take a second to go through these. The evening service tonight is a gala service, the monthly gala service and that will be taken by Dan Marig. In the course of the week, a few things to note. Deacons Court tomorrow night at half past six, Ladies Fellowship, Little Fishers, Road to Recovery, all at the usual times and there's details of these there on the screen.

The prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven here in the church and still on Zoom. If the weather's reasonable, that wasn't the last couple of weeks, but if the weather's reasonable then please make an effort to come out on Wednesday evening. It's great to have the encouragement of real people as we pray together. The kids clubs on Friday, let's continue to come to these young ones and pray for these, those who are a bit older. The services next Sunday will be taken, God willing, by myself and we hope to have the YF from Stornoway with us. We'll have a few extra faces there. There's lunch for them after the service. So if you're able to help with that, there's a sheet at the front door, please indicate what you can do to help. Two more things. One's not on the notice sheet I've got here. It might have been on the screen. I didn't see it, but there's a Slavic Gospel Association who we've had in the past. They are hosting a prayer meeting on Zoom tomorrow night, praying specifically for Ukraine. They obviously have an in-depth knowledge of what's happening there at this time. So there's an open invitation to join together on Zoom for that prayer meeting. I'm sorry it's not on the screen or on intimations, but I'll ask ENA to put it on the Facebook page. So if you check the Facebook page, there'll be details on there for those who want to join to pray into that awful situation that we see there at this time. Final thing is to note that the communion services will be the 11th to the 13th of March, and you have details there. Thomas Davis will preach in Gaelic, and the Reverend John Lachey will take the English services over the course of the weekend. And for those perhaps who've come to faith, who believe in Jesus, but have never yet professed faith in Jesus, can I just encourage you to come and speak to myself or any of the elders, or just to come forward in the course of that weekend. We are encouraged, we are commanded by Jesus, if we are trusting him, to take the bread, to take the wine, to remember his death, to remember all that he's done for us, to make it possible for us to be saved. So these, I think, are all the intimations, and we'll now begin this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise, the words on the screen.

It's a slight variation on the old hymn, Amazing Grace. Mission Praise 1151. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see. And that refrain, my chains are gone, I've been set free, my God, my Saviour has ransomed me. And like a flood, his mercy reigns, unending love. Amazing grace.

It's one that we sang, or we sang in our own homes during lockdown quite often. And we don't often sing it here, but Jane and Anna are going to lead us as we sing this hymn. So let's stand to sing to God's praise.

[4 : 3 0] My praise, how precious God, there, thanks to God for being sang for yourzuge to know-laughing. It's my life when I Southampton and erupted. And in itself it is thou art, as the sorts of science that caught my heart before me. And yet we came to our core, and remember to be detector, I was the nearer, to be in the immediate direction of shining ahead. And we dans Thanos on oll, How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.

My chains are gone, I've been set free, my God, my Savior, has ransomed me.
Unlike a flood, His mercy rains, unending love, amazing grace.

The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be, as long as life ventures.

[6 : 19] My chains are gone, I've been set free, my God, my Savior, has ransomed me.

Unlike a flood, His mercy rains, unending love, amazing grace.
My chains are gone, I've been set free, my God, my Savior, has ransomed me.
And like a flood, His mercy rains, unending love, amazing grace.
The end shall soon dissolve like snow, that sun forbear to shine.

[7 : 44] But God's who called me here below will be forever mine.

Will be forever mine. You are forever mine.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day and we thank you for the encouragement of remembering as we sing that you are the eternal God. You're the God who has no beginning and has no end. You always have been. There is never a time when you will not be reigning overall.

We thank you that you are the sovereign God. We thank you that you are the God who is in control. You're the God that we are able to trust.

[9 : 19] And even when the earth will dissolve as one day, you have said, Lord, that it will. The heavens and the earth as we know them will pass away.

Everything will be made new. We thank you that when we see that happening in a way we see that happening before our eyes even now.

We see the decay in the world around us. We see decay even in our own bodies as the years pass on. But we thank you that you are the God who never changes.

And we thank you that when we are trusting in you, when we are your children, we have the promise that we too will be ransomed, we will be redeemed.

We will be made new. We will be made like Christ. When we pass from this world. Into eternity. And we rejoice in the fact that all this has been made possible because of your amazing grace.

[10 : 33] If our salvation and if all the newness of life that we crave for was dependent on us and our lives.

And our good behavior. We know, Lord, that we would be lost. Because we are sinners. And even the standards that we set for ourselves, we fail to meet them day after day.

And we know, Lord, that your standard is perfection. And every moment we fail to meet that. But we thank you, Lord, that you have made it possible for sinners like us to be saved through the grace of Jesus.

We thank you, Father, that you sent your Son into this world. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you came willingly into this world. On that rescue mission.

On that mission to ransom us, to redeem us. And we thank you, Lord, that you came willingly into this world. And we thank you, Lord, that you came willingly into this world. And we thank you that that mission was completed. As, Lord Jesus, you died on the cross and rose from the dead.

[11 : 51] We thank you that as we look at the life of Jesus, we see that sinless, perfect life that we could not live, but that he lived for us. We thank you that as we look at the cross of Jesus, as we were reminded last weekend, we see not only Christ, but we see our sin nailed to that cross if we are trusting in Jesus.

We thank you that as we thank you that as we are trusting in Jesus. We thank you that as Jesus died, that cry, it is finished, was a cry that spoke of the completion of all that was necessary to save us.

And we thank you that as we thank you that as we are trusting in Jesus. And we thank you that as Jesus rose from the dead, we see that resurrection life that is offered to all of us when we believe.

So we pray that all of us would be trusting in Christ today. We pray that all of us would be able to say that the Lord Jesus is ours, you are forever mine.

We pray that we would hear the words of our Father saying, you are forever mine. We ask, Lord, that you would save us as we cry out to you for mercy, confessing our sin and seeking that amazing grace.

[13 : 22] And we cry out, Lord, for help. We know that day by day we are in need of help. We are in need of eternal help. We are in need of the help that saves us.

And we seek that. But we thank you that as our Father, we are able to cry out to you day by day, seeking help for ourselves and for others. We pray for those who are struggling at this time.

Those that we are burdened for, we pray on for those who are grieving. And we ask that you would comfort them. And many of our own congregation here who have lost loved ones in the past weeks and months and years as well.

We feel the pain of that. And we pray for your comfort. We pray on, Lord, for the family of little Amy. For Susan and for John and for Kayla.

And we ask, Lord, that they too would know your comfort. Lord, we pray on for the family and the community in Bull Glass with the very sudden passing of Angus.

[14:29] Lord, we pray for your comfort and for your strength for all those who grieve. We pray for your help over these coming days. We bring to you those who are sick.

We ask, Lord, that they would know your hand of healing upon them. Those who are in hospital. Lord, that you would draw near to them. Those who are in their homes, who are struggling with pain.

Who are receiving treatment. We bring them to you, Lord. And we give you thanks for answered prayer. We thank you for Hannah. Back home now. And we ask, Lord, that you would keep her steady.

And that she would know increased strength over these days. And we thank you, Lord, for her continued faith in you. And, Lord, we pray for those not only who are close to us in this community. But we pray for those who are far from us. We see the state of the world at this time. We see the situation in Ukraine.

[15:37] As war begins to really bite. We see civilian casualties. We see the evidence of one man's pride and greed.

And the bloodshed that brings. And, Lord, we pray for that country. We pray that you would bring peace where there is designs for war.

We pray, Lord, that your people would know refuge and strength in you. We pray that you would push back the evil that would seek to bring such destruction.

And we pray especially, Lord, for those who are your people. Many who are determining to stay in Ukraine. And seek to speak the gospel into a place where there is such darkness at this time.

And we ask, Lord, that you would give them courage. That you would protect them. And that in this time of distress, they would know God with them. And that many would turn in faith to Jesus.

[16:51] So, Lord, hear our prayers. Take away our sin. And lead us and guide us as we seek to worship you. May we be in the spirit on this, your day.

And we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? Amen. Now then.

How are you all today? Good. All good. All good. Tell me some of your favourite foods. Pizza. Pizza. Cheese. Cheese, yeah. I have one, but I have one.

Okay, that's two from you, Michael. Shawnee? Pickles. Pickles? Pickles. Pickles. Yeah. Okay. Right. Angus Alec will look very troubled by that one.

Yeah. What other foods do you like? Chocolate. Chocolate. That's that. Fraser? Donuts. Donuts, yes.

[18:00] Donuts. Anything else? Cake. Cake. Emily, yes. Chocolate. Broccoli. Brussels sprouts. No.

No. No. No. What about raspberries? Oh, no. Not sure about that. Well, let's just... Grapes. Grapes. Grapes. Shh, shh, shh. Let's watch a little video. Because today, I'm going to show you a video.

And the star of this video is one of our own congregation.

He's getting a round of applause already, Joseph John. He's not just drinking milk now. He's starting to widen his diet. And I guess he's had some porridge, has he?

And he's probably having some of these baby jars. And I don't know if he's had ice cream or if he's had any of the wares of Brownie Shop yet. But on this particular day, he's trying a raspberry for the first time.

[19:02] Is he watching? He's watching. He's watching.

Get rid of that. Get it off there. I think if it's possible, we can watch that one more time.

Is it possible? You ready? So here he goes. Come here. Come here.

Come here. Come here. so there he is do you think he's going to be asking for any more raspberries no no see the thing about the raspberry is it looked delicious it looked delicious didn't it and he took hold of it and he put it in his mouth but when he tasted it super sour and so you see him

at the end and he's trying to push it off his chair as fast as he can get rid of that don't want any more of that raspberry stuff and what do you think that's like Michael always likes to work at my show what do you think that's like you know there's some things and they look amazing they look delicious but they're actually very sour they're not very good for us what's that like the devil is saying to do something you think it's going to be good but it's not the devil comes to us and he has things for us that he wants us to taste what's it called sin and when the devil tempts us he always makes these sinful things look so delicious and so attractive and we almost hear him in our ears say go on try it it'll be great it'll be amazing and when we give in to temptation you know it might taste good for a minute but then afterwards

Fraser you're right after that Fraser he went like that it's like this I had macros then it doesn't it was good at the start but then did you say macro Michael yeah macro Michael had macro it was good at the start but then that's why I wasn't in school yesterday that's why that's why he wasn't in school I grew up on the end of the morning okay Fraser what were you going to say there it's because first it tastes nice but then it it it it it it it it it makes you makes you sick and that's what sin is like yeah the devil says to us try it right from the very beginning even in the garden he said to Eve go on try it it's going to be delicious but the second we we sin and we do it a lot I know we know almost immediately shouldn't have done that it's a bad taste it's bad for us in our hearts and we and we know that but tell me this boys and girls what is good if sin is bad what is good do you want to know [23 : 11] God is good and God's word the bible is good it's not it's not sour and bitter like raspberries it's sweet like honey that's what it says in a psalm that we're going to sing in a few minutes time listen to this I'll change the word just a little bit but this is psalm 119 are you listening listening and David the psalmist and he knew what it was like to sin and have that horrible taste in his mouth afterwards he knew what it was like to make big mistakes and David the psalmist he says how sweet to my taste oh lord are all your words of truth yes I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth so David the psalmist he's saying God's word it's like it's like honey to my mouth there's no bitter aftertaste there's nothing bad about it it's good and the reason that God's word is so good is because

God is good and as we open the bible we meet with him and he speaks to us and he shows himself to us in his word and he is kind and he's loving and he's patient with us and he's gracious to us and he's good he's loving how do we know that God is so loving what do we what do we look to to remember that God is loving Katrina the bible yeah and what do we see in the bible that we always talk about every week John you had your hand up and John Rory John Rory you try the cross you know that's where we see how much God loved us he went to the cross to save us so boys and girls this week when when the devil tempts us with something that looks sweet but we know it's going to be nasty remember Joseph John get that picture back in your mind remember what he was doing at the end he had a taste of raspberry he went and then what did he do with it remember the hand pushes it off the chair so when the devil comes let's remember to push sin away and to taste and see as it says in the psalm that God is good so let's pray let's close our eyes and let's speak to God let's pray

Lord God we thank you that you love us and we thank you that you are the God who is good we thank you that you are good in every way and we thank you that as we open your word we see how good you are to us and how good you are in your character and we thank you that when we fill our minds and our hearts with the Bible there's no bitter aftertaste there's nothing that makes us sick but we thank you that your word makes us whole it makes us well it makes us strong makes us steady so help us we pray when we're tempted by the devil to push away all that he wants us to taste and instead help us to turn to your word and to open it and to taste and see that you are good we pray all this in Jesus name Amen we're going to sing now and we're going to sing sing psalms verse sing psalms number 34 psalm 34 but it's a slightly easier version for us to understand for children and we'll sing verses 10 to 14 of psalm 34 and I'll just read these verses young lions may grow weak and faint and hunger for their food but those who wait upon the Lord will not lack any good come hear my children gather around and listen to my word and I will help you understand how you may fear that means not to be scared of it means to to respect and to love God to love the Lord does anyone delight in life and long to see good days and keep your tongue from evil speech your lip from lying ways depart from depart and turn from evil paths and practice what is right desire to know the way of peace pursue it with your might so we'll sing did I say verse 10 to 14

I meant to say verse 8 to 14 but it's probably not on the screen I'm on is it so Farrakhan are you singing you can sing a solo verses 8 and 9 and then we'll all join you for verses 10 to 14 so let's stand to sing to God's praise come to stand and see the Lord is good who trust in him is blessed oh fear the Lord you sins with need you will not be oppressed young lions may grow weak and failed and hunger for their food but those who wait upon the Lord shall not lack any good come hear my children gather round and listen and listen to my word and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord does anyone delight in life and long to see good days and keep your tongues from evil speech your lips from lying ways depart and turn from evil past and practice what is right decide to know the way of peace pursue it with your mind okay boys and girls have you had this on your school now please and if we can turn in our

Bibles to Luke chapter 18 please and the words also will be on the screen Luke chapter 18 and I'll read in from verse 34 verses 31 verse 33 Jesus he for the third time speaks to his disciples about his death so actually it's on the screen I'll read from verse 31 Jesus Jesus Jesus took the twelve aside and told them we are going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written by the prophets about the son of man will be fulfilled he will be turned over to the

[32 : 18] Gentiles they will mock him insult him spit on him flog him and kill him on the third day he will rise again the disciples did not understand any of this its meaning was hidden from them and they did not know what he was talking about so we see the blindness of the disciples there the ones who should have known and been able to see can't see and then we move into this next section and we meet a blind man who can see as Jesus approached Jericho a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging when he heard the crowd going by he asked what was happening they told him Jesus of Nazareth is passing by he called out Jesus son of David have mercy on me those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet but he shouted all the more son of David have mercy on me Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him when he came near

Jesus asked him what do you want me to do for you Lord I want to see he replied Jesus said to him receive your sight your faith has healed you immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus praising God when all the people saw it they also praised God Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again now to God's praise and we sing from Psalm 119 verses 103 and 104 the verses we referred to just a moment ago how sweet and to my taste O Lord are all thy words of truth yea I do find them sweeter far than honey to my mouth I through thy precepts that are pure do understand and get I therefore every way that's false with all my heart do hate we sing these two verses in Gaelic and go remain seated to sing in Gaelic

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 25] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[39 : 25] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[41 : 49] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. question of the blind man this morning.

Tell us please, what do we need to do? How can we become followers of Jesus? And there's four points, if I get through it in the time, there's four points that I want to highlight in this man's testimony. The first thing he says to us is that we have to be in the place where we can expect to meet with Jesus. To become a Christian, we have to meet with Jesus. So we have to be in the place where we can expect to meet with Jesus.

And the second thing he teaches us is we're to call out to Jesus. There's no sense in being close to Jesus, being close to salvation, but never actually asking for it. We can sit in these chairs every week and hear about how it's possible to be saved and have our sins forgiven. But if we never ask God to do it, how tragic, how much more guilty actually we are than anyone else if we know of

salvation but never ask for it. So the blind man, he teaches us to call out to Jesus. And the third thing he teaches us is we're to receive the grace of Jesus. We don't buy this. We don't earn this. We receive salvation. And the final thing this man teaches us, if we are those who come to faith, we must profess faith in Jesus. We must tell people as this man did. So first of all, we see that this man, he's in the place where he's able to meet with Jesus. And we're encouraged this morning to be in the place where we can expect to meet with Jesus. It's the first point. That's where we start. So look at verse 35 to verse 37. And we read there, as Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And when he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. And they told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. So the first thing we see about this man is that he's in just the right place at just the right time to be able to meet with Jesus. And if we were to rewind back through Luke's gospel, we would rewind all the way back to Luke chapter nine and verse 51. And we see at that point, Jesus starts a journey. He's heading for Jerusalem.

He's heading for the cross. And he has this steadfast resolve that he is going there to save us. And on this particular day, we see that Jesus was approaching Jericho. He's not far from Jerusalem now. And the blind man, verse 35, was sitting by the roadside and he was begging. And that was his life.

[45 : 12] That's how he lived. That's how he existed. In these days, there was no disability allowance. There was no social services. There were no jobs reserved for those who struggled with their eyesight. If you wanted to eat, you had to beg. And so that's what this man was doing on this day. It was a day like many other days. Except on this day, there's a bit of buzz around the crowd. There's a bit of activity. There's a higher volume of noise. There seems to be some excitement as the crowds moved along the roadside.

So the blind man asks the question in verse 36, what's happening? Tell me what's going on today. And the crowds answered him in verse 37 by saying, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And the big question that was on the lips of those in the crowds was, who is this Jesus? That's the question that everyone was talking about. Who is this Jesus? Some were saying he was a good teacher. You saw that in the rich young ruler. That's how he addresses Jesus. Good teacher.

Some were saying he was more than that. They were saying he was a prophet. Someone who was sent by God. The religious leaders, as they saw Jesus and as they wrestled with Jesus, they were saying, he is a big problem. He is a damaging factor to us in our religion. They were plotting as to how they could kill him, how they could get rid of him. And the disciples were trying to kind of figure it all out. They're following Jesus. They have some kind of sight of who Jesus is, but they weren't seeing things very clearly. We learn that from verse 34. But the irony is that this blind man, he seems to be able to see Jesus more clearly than anyone, even though his eyes are closed.

[47 : 30] And those in that day, in that place, they grew up knowing the Bible. And many of you, the older ones especially, you know the catechisms. I was sitting in with somebody on Friday, whose mind and memory is going. But when we started talking about the catechism, things that were learned in the primary school class were recalled with absolute clarity. And for many of you, you know huge sections of the scriptures. You know so many Psalms. And that's the way it was in that culture.

They knew their Bibles. They heard the prophecies. And so this blind man perhaps was recalling what was said in Isaiah. In Isaiah, there was a prophecy about the coming Messiah. There was a word that was given so that the people could recognize the Savior when he came. And it says in Isaiah 35 and verses 3 to 6, be strong, do not fear, your God will come. He will come with vengeance, with divine retribution.

He will come to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy. So that was the prophecy.

The people knew the prophecy. They had it in their minds. Now as Jesus traveled to Jerusalem, if we track steps back through that journey, what was he doing? He was speaking of salvation. He was healing the lame. He was unstopping the ears of those who were deaf. He was opening the eyes of the blind. And as the blind man obviously heard about these things, he put the pieces together in his mind. And he could see in his mind's eye that God had come. He could see that Jesus was the Messiah, that he was the son of David, that he was the one who could open his eyes

and heal his heart.

[49 : 47] And so on this day, this blind man suddenly realized, as he sat at the side of this road, that he was in the place where he could meet with Jesus.

How can we become Christians? Well firstly, we have to meet with Jesus.

Because he's the only one who can save us. To be saved, we don't have to go and climb a mountain somewhere in Asia. We don't have to do a PhD in world religions.

We don't have to do all kinds of mystical, spiritual meditation exercises. To be saved, there's only one person that we have to meet, and it's Jesus.

There's salvation in no other name. He is the way. He is the truth. He is the life. No one gets to the Father except through him. No one gets saved except through him.

[51 : 03] So if we are to be saved, if we are to become Christians, we must meet with Jesus. And where can we expect to meet with Jesus?

Well, we can expect to meet with Jesus here. Today. Jesus promised in Matthew chapter 18 and verse 20, where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

So even if it was only two or three of us today in this congregation, Jesus has promised that he would be here. That's what makes this hour special.

Jesus is here. By his spirit. He is here. He's passing by. And like the blind man, we have the opportunity in this hour to meet him.

I mean, you can plan your dinner if you want. You can figure out your week if you want. You can let your mind wander off to the Champions League or whatever. Miss the opportunity.

[52 : 31] But you and I have the opportunity in these moments to meet with Jesus. My guess is the blind man probably didn't expect that morning to meet with Jesus.

It's just another day. So it's just part of his routine. And maybe this morning as we headed out to church, we didn't really expect to meet with Jesus.

We just came to sit in these seats. Have a coffee and a cake at the end. But the truth is, he is here. So what will we do about that?

Well, what does the blind man teach us to do? That's the second point. The blind man teaches us to call out to Jesus. Verse 38.

He called out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Jesus is close to him. He recognizes that.

[53 : 45] And so he calls out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And then it says in verse 39, something which is sad.

Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet. And that's something that we have to note here, especially if we are Christians.

Those who led the way, presumably the followers of Jesus, when this man called out to Jesus, they said to him, be quiet.

He doesn't want to see you. You're just a blind man. You're just on the low end of the social scale. Jesus hasn't got time for the likes of you. He's got important people to speak to.

He has VIPs to consider. You just get back down there. Be quiet. Stop causing a disturbance. They told the man to be quiet.

[54 : 55] They gave the man the impression that Jesus wasn't interested in him. That Jesus had no time for him. And this isn't the first time this has happened.

Because if you rewind just a few verses to verse 15, we see people bringing little children to Jesus and the disciples, when they see the children we brought to Jesus, they say, take the children away.

He hasn't got time for children. He's a busy man. He tried to keep them away from Jesus.

Just like those who led the way tried to keep this man away from Jesus. And I want to ask the question of all who are Christians, myself first, if we are followers of Jesus, if we are leading the way, if we are those who are known to be disciples of Jesus, are we encouraging people to come to Jesus or are we pushing people away from Jesus?

As people look at our lives and as they listen to the things that we say, are they encouraged to come to Jesus or are they actually being pushed back?

[56 : 16] My guess is that there are some people who are sitting here this morning and there will be some people watching this at home who will not even get into the building here. because in the past, some so-called follower of Jesus has disappointed them or hurt them.

And the response is to say, well, if that's Jesus, if that's his people, I'm done with this. I'm not coming to Jesus. I'm not going to any church.

You'll never get me to any communion season. If that's what Christians are like, if that's what Christ ones are like, I'm finished with it all. And I want to say, if that's you today, if that attitude is in the hearts of anyone today, can I encourage us to look and learn from the blind man?

He had every reason to say, oh, forget it. I don't want to be part of that crowd anyway.

Look at them. If that's what followers of Jesus are like, I don't need that. But look at this blind man.

[57 : 42] He's not looking at them. He's looking at Jesus. And he would not be put off by either sinful disciples or pseudo-disciples.

He wouldn't be put off by Christians who were struggling and making a mess of it. And he wouldn't be put off by those who pretended they were Christians even though they weren't. No one and nothing was going to stop him from meeting with Jesus.

And so in verse 39, after he's told to be quiet, he shouted all the more, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And the word used there for shouted means that he roared.

It was an animal cry. In spite of the obstacles that this man faced because of his disability, in spite of the discouragements that he encountered from the crowd, he calls out to Jesus.

And it says in Romans chapter 10 and verse 13 that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

[58 : 50] And that's what this man did. He called upon the name of the Lord. Do you notice how he addresses Jesus? When he asks the crowd what's going on, the crowd say, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.

But he doesn't call out Jesus of Nazareth. What he says is Jesus, son of David, which is the title that was used for the Messiah, for the Lord.

And he doesn't say to Jesus what he said to everybody else. He didn't say, please give me some money. He says to Jesus, have mercy on me. Which means he's confessing a sin.

So we see a blind man here and he knows his own need. He knows that he needs to be saved, not just physically from the blindness that he was struggling with, but he understands in his heart he's a sinner who needs to be saved.

And that's why he cries out, have mercy on me. But not only does this man know his own need, he knows that Jesus can meet his need.

[60 : 07] Not only does this man realize that he needs to be saved, he recognizes that Jesus is the Savior. He's the son of David.

And so he calls out with everything that he's got, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

And so this blind man as his testimony here is shared, he teaches us that if we want to be Christians, if we want to be saved, we need to call out to Jesus.

And we need to call out to Jesus knowing what this blind man knew. We need to know that we are great sinners and that Christ is the great Savior.

John Newton, who wrote the original version of Amazing Grace, the hymn, towards the end of his life, his memory was going.

[61 : 22] And he was struggling in his mind. But he said this shortly before he died. He said, although my memory is fading, I remember two things very clearly.

One, I am a great sinner. And two, Christ is a great Savior. And that's all you and I need to know if we are wanting to become Christians.

You don't have to have a degree in theology. you don't have to have five years of church experience. You don't have to be able to quote huge sections of the Bible.

You don't need to be able to recite the shorter catechism. All these things are of benefit but they're not necessary. Today, if you've just walked in this door and know very little but you understand now that you're a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior, then if you call out to Him you'll be saved right this instant.

And equally, if you don't, you won't. You can get as close as this blind man and sit there and say nothing.

[62 : 56] Not pray. Let your mind go somewhere else. you can be that close to being saved. Week after week after week and never be saved because you never cried out.

This blind man, he teaches us to be in a place where we can meet with Jesus. He teaches us to call out to Jesus. The third thing is he teaches us to receive the grace of Jesus. And if we ask the

question of this blind man, tell me, what did you do to get your sight?

You know, what did you do to get saved? What did you do to receive the mercy of God that you were asking for?

The answer is he did nothing. Nothing. You know, it's not about what this man could do for Jesus. It's all about what Jesus would do for the man.

Look at verse 40 to verse 42. It says there, Jesus stopped. And he always does when you pray.

[64 : 16] Lots of people, we try to get them to stop and speak this for a minute and they're so busy and they've got such a congested schedule that they've never got five minutes to stop. Jesus stops and he orders the man to be brought to him.

Which I imagine caused the blushes of the so-called followers of Jesus who are telling him to be quiet. And all of a sudden Jesus says, no, no, you be quiet. Bring the man here.

And when he came near, Jesus asked him, what do you want me to do for you? Lord, I want to see, he replied.

And Jesus said to him, receive your sight, your faith has healed you. The word healed there literally is your faith has saved you. And all this is free.

He doesn't have to get his wallet out. He doesn't have to sign a contract to do all these things. This is free. It's instantaneous.

[65 : 29] He's saved. And we're sceptical of this because we're so used to having to pay for everything. You know, you go to Stormway to buy a paper, you've got to pay to put your car on a bit of tarmac for ten minutes.

Nothing's free. But this blind man, he receives his sight freely. No medical bills to pay. It's free.

And not only are his eyes opened, his physical eyes, but the eyes of his heart are opened. He's given spiritual sight. He's given salvation.

He's given forgiveness of sin. This man is given eternal life. And it cost him nothing. And we ask the question, how is that possible?

How is it possible for him? How is it possible for you and I to get salvation for nothing? How can it cost nothing? And the reality is our salvation, the forgiveness of sin, it costs a lot.

[66 : 45] It didn't cost nothing. It cost far more than we could ever estimate. But Jesus paid it all.

And the price tag for your salvation and for my salvation is given to us in verses 31 to verse 33. We read there that Jesus, as he heads for Jerusalem, he knows he's going to be mocked, he's going to be insulted, he's going to be spat on, he's going to be flogged, and he's going to be killed.

Jesus is going to lay down his life. Jesus is going to give up everything to pay the price of our salvation, and he did it.

But he offers it now to us freely. Price is paid, the work is done. And this is offered graciously, freely, to those who believe.

So just as Jesus on that day said to the blind man, what do you want me to do for you? He says to us today, what do you want me to do for you?

[68 : 27] And if we say to him, Lord, I want to see, I want to be saved, I want to receive mercy, and if we mean that, his promise is that he will give us that grace, that saving grace, which we receive by faith.

This blind man teaches us to receive with empty hands the grace of Jesus. He teaches us to call out to Jesus.

He teaches us to be in a place where we can meet with Jesus. And the final thing, just as we finish, is he teaches us to profess our faith in Jesus. Verse 43, immediately he received the sight and followed Jesus, praising God, when all the people saw it, they also praised God.

This blind man, you know, he's just been given the greatest gift that anyone could ever give him.

And he doesn't just say, thank you very much, I'm off to live my life, I'm off to do all the things that I never got a chance to do before, I'm off to spend time with this one and that one, I'm going to go and see the things I've never seen, I'm going to get a job, I'm going to make some money, I've got all these plans, thank you Jesus for the gift, see you later.

It's not what he did. He receives his sight and he fixes his eyes on Jesus and he follows Jesus and he praises God.

[70 : 12] God. So this blind man, his profession of faith, it could be both heard and seen. We hear that he believes as he shouts out Jesus, son of David, nobody else was saying that.

He's making a profession of faith there that he believes that Jesus is the saviour. He makes another profession of faith in verse 41 when he addresses Jesus as Lord, he says, Lord, I want to see. We could hear this profession of faith and then we could see this profession of faith as he followed Jesus along the way. And you know, if faith is real, it can't be suppressed.

It must be professed. if you believe in Jesus, if he saved you, he's given you eternal life, he's given you this amazing grace, then the evidence of that is that you have to speak about it. you have to follow him. And not only is that evidence, it's something that's required from us.

[71 : 50] Jesus says to us, we've benefited from his death. if we have been forgiven because of what he has done for us on the cross, he says, he says, in terms of a profession of faith, as we think about communion even, he says, take the bread, take the wine, do this to remember me.

Let people see you doing this. Take your place at my table. Show yourself to be one of my people. And this blind man, he's not ashamed to say that Jesus is his Lord.

He's not ashamed to follow him. And as this blind man professes his faith in Jesus, other people join him in praising God.

And so the application is not hard to figure. If we have met with Jesus, if we have called out to Jesus for salvation, if we have received the grace of Jesus, then we are to follow the lead of this blind man and profess our faith in Jesus.

Today and every day. Or to use the words of the hymn that we'll now sing, we are to give our lives and we are to give it all to love and to follow him.

[73 : 28] So let's sing the words of this final hymn. My heart is filled with thankfulness to him who bore my pain, who plumbed the depths of my disgrace and gave me life again, who crushed my curse of sinfulness and clothed me with his light, who wrote his law of righteousness with power upon my heart.

My heart is filled with thankfulness to him who walks beside, who floods my weaknesses with strength and causes fears to fly, whose every promise is enough for every step I take, sustaining me with arms of love and crowning me with grace.

And listen to the final words. my heart is filled with thankfulness to him who reigns above, whose wisdom is my perfect peace, whose every thought is love. For every day, for every day, I have on earth is given by the king.

So I will give my life, my all, not my half, not my dregs, not my leftovers, but my all to love. and to follow him. So let's stand and sing to God's praise. Amen. God's praise.

[75 : 10] Who calmed the depths of my disgrace and gave me life again. Who cursed my curse, our sinful best, and clothed me with his light, and clothed his law of righteousness with power upon my heart.

heart. My heart is filled with love for rest, to him who wants beside. Who floods my weaknesses with strength, and causes fears to fight.

Whose heavenly promises they know, for every step I take. love for love for rest, and love for rest, and love for rest, and crowning me with grace.

my heart is filled with love for rest, to him who raves above. Whose grace on is my perfect peace, whose every thought is found.

love for love for every day I have on earth is given by the king, so I will give my life my own to love and for him.

[76 : 53] love for me. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship, the comfort of God the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forevermore.

Amen.