

FAQ

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Preacher: Reverend Neil Lachie Macdonald

[0:00] Good evening everyone. A warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to see people not just from our own congregation but from other congregations and you're especially welcome.

! If you're able to stay behind after the service this evening please do so there's tea and there's a time of fellowship and Neil Lachey will share something with his testimony over the fellowship time as well.

So be encouraged to stay if you're able to do so. Two more things. One is to say that the tithing collection tonight, the collection this evening will go to the Free Church Youth Camps and the last thing to say is that the session will close this evening with the benediction.

The last last thing to say is just thank you to Neil Lachey on your behalf. It's been a blessing to have you in the congregation over the weekend and we have enjoyed, if that's the right word, we have benefited I'm sure from being under the ministry of the word and again we pray that you'll know God's help as you open his word this evening. So thank you.

I'll hand over to you now please. Thank you David and good evening again. Nice to see you all and some other faces that I haven't seen yet so I look forward to meeting you afterwards.

[1:26] It has been a pleasure to be with you and I do bring the greetings of the folk in Lachbrum and Coyach as well. We're going to begin our worship this evening singing to God's praise from the Scottish Psalter on Psalm 40, the familiar words of Psalm 40.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. If you're able please stand and let's sing to God's praise. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. If you're able to be seated in kind. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. If you're able to be seated in kind. He took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty grave. And on a road he set my feet.

Establishing my way In good and youth song in my mouth Our God to magnify Many shall see it and shall fear And on the Lord rely O blessed is the man Whose trust upon the Lord relies

Respecting not the proud Or such as turn aside tonight O Lord my God For many of the wonders Thou hast done Thy gracious thoughts To us were far above All thoughts are gone And on the Lord None can reckon

[4:55] Then to thee If they'll declare And speak of them I would They more And can be numbered Well folks shall we unite our hearts together again As we come before the throne of grace With confidence Not because of who we are But because of whose name we come in In the name of Jesus Let's pray And so Lord as we draw to the conclusion of another communion weekend We give thanks for all that we have been reminded of Through your words And by the word of Christ Jesus himself

Lord we thank you for scripture We thank you for its truth And we pray that by it You would continue to illuminate our hearts and our minds That we would come to know you more deeply That we would have a more comprehensive understanding Of who you are As we turn to your word living and active Lord we give thanks this evening That you are the maker The creator And the sustainer of all that we know That you are the God of the cosmos You are the one whose name is holy The one who is high and lifted up The one who inhabits time, space and indeed eternity You are the one who is sovereign over all That you are not bound by the confines of our human limitations But that you are the one who is able to do all things And all things well

That in you and through you All things are possible And so Father God we pray that you would help us To come before you expectantly We pray that you would enable within us A spirit of expectation

That we might pray big prayers Not because we are big people Not because we have the means within ourselves But because we utterly, completely and totally depend upon you Lord God we give thanks for the sufficiency of your grace for us That as we depend upon you You promised to give us everything that we need for holy living And so Lord we pray that we would be holy as you are holy That we would pursue the things of heaven Rather than being distracted by the things of this world Lord that we would see the beauty of Christ

The one who is altogether lovely The one who is worthy of our praise And worthy of our adoration Worthy of our exaltation The God who has come to us in the flesh The one who has emptied himself In order that we may be filled In order that we might be redeemed In order that we might be saved In order that we might be given a hope And a future We thank you for the wonder of the gospel In all of its beauty And in all of its meaning And we pray that you would enthuse us Through the indwelling of your spirit By the equipping of your word To go And to fulfill the great commission That you have left with us To make disciples To point others to Jesus To baptize in the name of the Father And of the Son And of the Holy Spirit With the great promise

That you are with us To the very end of the age Lord we know that we are saved by grace Through faith in Christ alone It is nothing of ourselves But all of him But we know that we are saved To more than just salvation But we are saved into your service And so we pray that you would enable us And continue to empower us Through your word and by your spirit To fulfill the works that you have prepared In advance for us to do Recognizing that we are the body of Christ That the building that we meet in Is not the church It is the meeting place for the church The church is your people We are your church Many people One body Many different parts Many different talents Many different functions But one in Christ Jesus And so Lord we pray that you would help us

[10:04] To discern what part we might be And what role we might fulfill In the harmony and the synergy Of working together All one in Christ Jesus Protecting the bonds of peace That have been given to us In Christ and through his gospel That we might fulfill the works That you have prepared for us to do And that by doing so Many would come to know you as Lord and as God Father we pray for the multitudes In these islands and in our nation Who are without God And without hope in the world We pray that you would unite us in love That we would have that new perspective That we considered this morning A perspective that goes beyond the mere temporal And fixes on what is yet to come That we would develop that new relationship That we have with Christ himself Living The one who is seated at the right hand of God

The one who ever lives To intercede for us Our advocate in the throne room of heaven And that we would fulfill his commandment To love one another For love covers a multitude of sins Lord we pray that we would put on The new wardrobe that you have given to us Putting off the old self With all of its sin stained rottenness And that we would put on Hearts of compassion Kindness Humility Gentleness Meekness Patience And that we would bind it all together With love Lord as we love one another May we exhibit the love of Christ Into a world Which needs it so desperately We pray for those who are lost Those who seek meaning in the vacuous And trivial things of this world May they recognize the brevity of life

That our life is a vapor that appears for a moment And then it is gone But you, O Lord, are eternal And the things of God of infinite worth And so help us to fix our eyes on these things We look around the world And there is so much to trouble us So much to distress us And as we look around, Lord, we pray that we would look up To recognize that you are the sovereign God of all In all, through all That there is nothing that is a surprise to you That you are the Alpha and the Omega The beginning and the end And you have promised that one day You will make all things new Lord, we long for that day Where there will be no more sadness There will be no more sickness There will be no more tears There will be no more death No more separation

Lord, we long for that day But in the meantime We pray that you would enable us to live in a way That is honoring to you And is helpful to those around about us And so bless us and bless your word To us afresh this evening We ask in Jesus' name Amen Folks, we are again going to sing This time from the Gaelic rendering of Psalm 61 Verses 1 to 3 together We will sing these two stanzas And we will remain seated for this Let us sing these two times Let us sing these two times

times Let us sing these two times Thank you.

Thank you.

[15:05] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. that Jesus speaks about, glory, looking past, looking beyond the immediate and the hardships that were to follow, talking about that new relationship that he offers to us, a relationship of faith, that we walk by faith, not by sight, and that refresh, that new commandment to love one another, that we might be characterized by love, that we may demonstrate the love of Jesus through the way in which we love one another and interact with one another. What a challenge that is to us. We're going to read this evening from verse 18 of the chapter together, and this is Jesus speaking to the disciples, where he says, I am not speaking of all of you. I know whom I have chosen, but the scripture will be fulfilled, he who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me, referring to David and Psalm 41. I am telling you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am he. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me. After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side.

[19:22] So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, it is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then, after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, what you are going to do, do quickly. Now, no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that because Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, buy what we need for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out, and it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so I also say to you, where I am going, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered him, where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterwards. Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. Jesus answered, will you lay down your life for me?

Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, the cock will not crow till you have denied me three times. Amen.

[21:36] The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord remains forever, and for that we give thanks. May he add his own blessing to that word. We're now going to sing from the hymn, Blessed Assurance.

Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine. Adam's going to play, and we'll just sing together. So let's stand, if we're able, and sing.

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine.

Lord, Lord, for all of His Spirit washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight. Visions of rapture burst of my sight.

[23:14] Angels descending, ring from above. Visions of rapture burst of my sight.

Written, recorded by a number of different authors across a vast array of time and experiences brought together in what we now know as the Bible and containing so many answers to all of the big questions that we have in life.

Well, as we return this evening back to John chapter 13 and the upper room discourse at the end of the Last Supper between Jesus and His disciples, we come across a conversation that happens between Peter and Jesus.

Well, really, it's an interruption by Peter that turns into a conversation. And what Peter does is he asks a couple of questions, frequently asked questions, actually.

And Jesus gives a couple of answers and then He gives us three principles that we're going to look at this evening. So we get two questions, two answers, and three principles that we can extrapolate from that.

[30:54] One thing that you know about reading through the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is that Peter is often prominent. Peter is the one who speaks more than any of the other apostles.

Peter is addressed directly more often than any of the other disciples by Jesus Himself. Peter is rebuked by Jesus more than any of the other disciples.

And whenever there's a list, whenever there's a list, and there are four in the New Testament, whenever there's a list of the twelve apostles, Peter is always number one on that list and Judas is always last.

Make of that what you will. So Jesus has been teaching, He's leading His disciples, He's talking about that new perspective, and that new relationship, and that new or refreshed commandment to love one another.

And then Peter interjects. Peter interrupts, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered him, where I'm going, you can't follow me now, but you will follow me afterwards.

[32:06] And Peter said to him, Lord, why? Why can't I follow you now? I'll lay down my life for you. Jesus says, will you?

I tell you the truth. Before the rooster crows, you shall disown me three times. So we've got two questions, two answers, and three principles to look at briefly this evening as we conclude.

Often, in our own experience, we with Peter say, Lord, where? Lord, where are you? Lord, where are you when I need you?

Where are you when the bottom has fallen out and when things are going awry? Where are you, O Lord? And the other question that we ask so often is, why?

Why, Lord? Why me? Why is this happening to me? Why is this happening to them? It's the question that haunts us, I suppose, throughout our lives.

[33:06] Why? The question of why. And sometimes we struggle to answer that. But let's have a go this evening at these two questions. Firstly, Lord, where? Lord, where are you going?

Now, whenever anybody asks a question, it actually reveals something about the person asking the question. And the question here by Peter reveals something about Peter.

What's this question? Lord, where are you going? Lord, where are you going? This question actually exposes Peter's self-obsession.

Peter's self-centeredness. And you think, how on earth do you get that from him asking this question? Well, bear with me. Follow me on this. What's Jesus been teaching on?

He's been teaching about the future glory and glorifying God. He's been talking about loving him and being in relationship with him. He's been talking about loving one another and about serving one another.

[34:15] Sharing the good news. Demonstrating the manifest change in our hearts through an encounter with Christ. And of all of the things that Jesus has spoken about, it's interesting that Peter asks a question about none of these things.

None of them. He doesn't ask him about, well, glorifying God or honoring God or serving. He doesn't say, well, Jesus, can I just stop you there for a moment? Could you expand on what you mean about this future glory?

I'd love to know more about that. No, he doesn't say that. He doesn't say, Lord, you've just said that we're to love one another. Well, loving people is actually something I find difficult. Could you speak

a wee bit more about that?

Could you show us how we might love one another more effectively? No, he doesn't say that. He says, Lord, where are you going? Now, why does he do that?

Because he's thinking about himself. He's not thinking about others. He's not even thinking about what Jesus has just been teaching. He's just thinking about himself.

[35:26] If you've got children, think of it this way. You say to your child, I'm going away. I've got to go away for a few days with work. And the child goes, why?

How long for? Where are you going? And then it's, well, what am I supposed to do? And who's going to look after me? And who's going to make me supper?

And what if I miss you? And I don't want you to go away. See, the child asks many of these questions, not because they're interested in where we're going, but they're concerned about themselves.

And who's going to look after them and provide for them and care for them and keep them safe in your absence? And it's the same here for Peter. Lord, where are you going?

You can't leave. What about us? What about me? What about my needs? How often we are like Peter.

[36:26] Here is the Lord. Here is Jesus seeking to reveal profound truth, life-changing teaching.

But so often we don't hear those things because we're focusing on our own immediate needs. Our heads are down rather than heavenward.

We're fixated on ourselves rather than on Jesus. I heard about a man who went on a diet and he was really committed to this diet.

Every day when he went to work, he used to drive past a bakery and he would stop at the bakery and he would get himself a nice big dream ring or something like that. And he would take it to work and he thought, right, I've got to stop this.

I'm serious about this diet. So I'm going to change the direction that I go to work so I'm not passing the bakery. And he was getting on OK. And then one day he came in carrying this huge cake and his colleague said, I thought you were on a diet.

[37:31] I thought you were going to stop with the cakes. He said, well, this is a special cake, actually. It's a very special cake, this one. Because today when I drove to work, I forgot about the new route and I ended up going past the bakery and I saw this cake in the window.

And so I prayed and I said, Lord, if it's your will that I have that cake, then just provide me with a parking space outside the bakery. And well, eighth time round the block, a space became available. And here I am with the cake. Was he being genuine in his prayer? No, he wasn't. He was thinking about himself, longing for that cake and making sure that ultimately he got it.

Peter here is zeroing in on the absent cake in his life. Lord, where are you going? It actually reveals something about him.

He's more concerned about himself rather than Jesus. Second question, Lord, why? Lord, why can I not follow you now?

[38:38] And it's followed up with a statement, isn't it? I will lay down my life for your sake. Now, remember, earlier in the meal, the disciples had been arguing amongst one another about who was going to be the greatest.

Bickering back and forth about, no, I'm going to be the greatest. No, I'm going to be greater. No, you misunderstand. I'm going to be the greatest. They'd been arguing about that. And could it be that Peter here is seeking to view that as a test and determined to come out on top?

Jesus has already predicted to these guys in that upper room that one of the disciples was going to betray him, Judas.

They didn't know who it was at that point. And so perhaps Peter is thinking to himself, maybe this is a test like at Caesarea Philippi, when Jesus asked, who do you say that I am?

I got that right. Because I said, you're the Christ of God. And he said, yes, Peter, you are correct. Maybe if I get this test right, then I will receive further adulation from Jesus.

[39:50] So, Lord, why can't I follow you? Why can't I come with you? I'll lay down my life for you. And he's thinking that Jesus will say, congratulations, Peter.

You are the greatest. You are an amazing fellow. But that's not what Peter heard, was it? What's the response that Peter got? Well, it's a prediction from Jesus that Peter will deny him three times. It's always good when there's a further eyewitness account to pull on. In Mark's Gospel, chapter 14, verse 27, you will all fall away, Jesus told them.

For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. But after I have arisen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee. Peter declared, even if all fall away, I will not.

Truly, I tell you, Jesus answered, today, yes, tonight, before the rooster crows twice, you yourself will disown me three times. But Peter insisted, even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.

[41:04] And all the others said the same. Lord, you don't really know me, I'm sure Peter is thinking. I would never, I would never do that. I would die for you.

It's interesting that he says that, isn't it? He's in the presence. He says, even if all these guys, even if all these other guys fall away, not me. No, no, not me.

I love you too much for that. But Jesus knew Peter. It will never happen to me, says Peter. Well, we all know that pride comes before a fall.

Next time we think that it will never happen to us, we should take heed lest we fall. As Paul reminds us, or as the mother whale said to the baby whale, careful, once you get to the top and start to blow bubbles, that's when you get harpooned.

Peter's gotten to the top, as it were. He's become prominent. His voice is heard often, and he's confident.

[42:13] The problem is he's overconfident, and he's overconfident in himself. He doesn't see the mistake. He doesn't foresee the denial, the multiple denials that he is about to make.

Lord, where? Lord, why? Now, Jesus gives answers, and he gives answers, and he gives principles as he does so.

The first of them is that our faithfulness is expected. Our faithfulness is expected. Look at what Jesus says.

Peter asks the first question. He says, Lord, where are you going? Jesus says, where I am going, you cannot follow me now. Where is Jesus going?

Jesus is going home. After he dies on the cross, after he is risen, where is he going? He's going back to heaven. He's going back to his father's house.

[43:16] And Peter, you cannot come with me now. Now, Jesus answers Peter a little cryptically. He doesn't answer him completely or, indeed, directly.

He doesn't say, now, Peter, well, I'm going to the paradise of my father's house. In fact, tomorrow I'm going to be crucified. And three days later, I'm going to be resurrected. And I'll be around for about 40 days after that.

And then I'm going to ascend. I'm going to be taken up into heaven to the right hand of God the Father. And you, well, you, Peter, in around about AD 67, you'll die just outside Rome.

And at that moment, you'll then come with me to join me at my father's house. But not right now. So, he doesn't give him all of that information. We know now, looking back, that that's indeed what happened.

He just says to Peter, where I am going, you cannot follow me now. Why didn't he offer him a more full description? Why did Jesus answer him cryptically?

[44:20] Well, we could give you a couple of reasons for that. Number one, what good would it do anyway? Evidently, Peter's not really listening to anything that Jesus is saying.

Either that or much of what Jesus is saying is going right over Peter's head. And he's not grasping much of what Jesus is saying. Jesus has already said to them, I'm going to Jerusalem.

They're going to kill me. And in three days, I'm going to rise. And what did Peter say? Matthew chapter 16. No, Lord, not so. Never. I will never let that happen to you. We're never going to let that happen to you.

So, Peter wasn't really in a place where he was grasping what Jesus is saying. But reason number two, above and beyond that, is this answer reveals that an expectation that Jesus has for Peter. You can't follow me now. Peter, you can't follow me now. It's not that you can never follow me. It's not that you'll never follow me. But it's that you can't follow me now.

[45:28] Now, as parents, we can relate to that. I'm sure as a child, perhaps, you can relate to it as well. You say, Mum, can I go to the shop? Not just now. That doesn't mean you'll never go to the shop.

Dad, can we get a dog? Not just now. Maybe someday. One day. Maybe never. Can I drive? No, not just now. We'd be in jail if you did.

When can I get a boyfriend? Never. Not just now. We put things off. It's not never, but it's not just now. Peter, you're a disciple.

Peter, you're a follower. But you cannot come with me now, but you'll come with me sometime. Just not right now. Jesus has to fulfill the work of God the Father.

He has to do what he has been called to do. And only then and after then, after that point, will they be called. Because notice that it says, where I am going, you cannot come.

[46:32] Lord, where are you going? Where am I going? You cannot follow me now, but you will follow me later. You will follow me afterwards.

It's not going to happen right now, Peter, but it will happen in time to come. What is he talking about there?

Well, he's saying, look, there is work for you to do. There are tasks for you to fulfill. Yet here, that's why you cannot come yet.

One day you'll go. One day you will come. But you can't go yet because I have work for you to do. One day all of us will be called.

One day all of us will be called from time to eternity. Will we be called into the presence of the Lord or will we be cast from his presence?

[47:38] You have to answer that question for yourself. But we can't go until the Lord has finished with us and we have finished what he has set apart for us to do here on earth.

And that's a fundamental point, isn't it, about the Christian life. If God's purpose was simply to save us, then immediately at the point of profession, we would be taken up to be with him.

Immediately at the point of coming to faith, we'd go. Gone. We'd be with him. But that doesn't happen, does it? And it doesn't happen.

Why? Because the Lord has a heart of compassion for his people and his desire is that none would perish. And how can he ensure that people hear the good news and know the gospel and become aware of their need?

Well, one is through the Holy Spirit and two is through his people, by his church, you and I, that we go and share, that we witness, that we testify, that we proclaim, that we tell people about Jesus.

[48:52] That's what Peter will do. That's what Jesus is calling him and his disciples to do. That's indeed what Jesus calls each and every one of us to do. From the moment we believe until the moment we are called home, our role is to tell others about Jesus.

Anybody that is content to go to heaven alone does not understand the gospel. We cannot be content to go by ourselves.

But we must tell people. We might not go now. Peter was not going to go now, but you will come eventually. Until then, there is much work for you to do and your faithfulness is expected.

Secondly, we know that our future is assured. I've already alluded to this, but Jesus says, where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.

According to church tradition, it was AD 67 when Peter died at Rome. They were going to crucify him, as the Romans chose. Their preferred method of execution was crucifixion.

[50:06] But Peter said, I'm not worthy to be crucified in the same way as my Lord. And according to history, he was crucified upside down, which was even worse.

Peter was restored by Jesus. We know that, even after his denial. And Peter followed Jesus throughout his life. And Peter served Jesus throughout his life. Peter followed Jesus in his death.

And he followed him into glory. You will follow me afterwards. He doesn't say, oh, Peter, not another stupid question.

Why can't you just listen to what I'm saying? No, he doesn't say that. He says, listen, you can't come now, but you will follow me later. And the point is, for anybody who follows Jesus, who surrenders to Jesus, who gives their life to Jesus, we will go to be with him.

We will. There's no ambiguity. There's not hope so. There's not maybe. There's not if I try hard enough. There's none of that.

[51:14] You will go to be with him. We've said already this weekend, if you believe in your heart and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved.

And if you are saved, you will go to be with him where he is. And if we are in him, he will never leave us nor forsake us. Our future is absolutely assured.

Absolutely assured. Blessed assurance. Blessed assurance. Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine.

John writes his gospel so that we might know. I write these things. Jesus did many other miracles that are not recorded in his book, but these are written.

It's recorded that you may believe and that by believing you may have life in his name. If you go to 1 John, his letter, go to 1 John chapter 5, you read these words.

[52:21] I'm writing these things to you so that you may know, that you might be assured, that you may be certain that you have eternal life.

That in Christ you are absolutely secure, assuredly secure. Today you will be with me in paradise, Jesus says to the thief on the cross.

Have you ever traveled on the ferry on standby? Yeah, some people are nodding. It's not a nice place to be, is it? You race to the ferry. You want to be there as early as you possibly can to give yourself the best possible chance of getting on to the ferry, but you don't know.

Don't know if you'll get on. Remember sitting at Leverbara when we were living in U.S., not booked. Busy ferry, summertime. This isn't looking good. I was unsettled, uneasy, ill at ease.

And looking across at these people who are almost like waving their tickets at me. Ha ha, we're booked on. Yes, look at us lying here, just relaxing, reclining, not a worry in the world.

[53:28] Watching the boat come across the sound, waiting to roll on, knowing that we're going to get to our destination tonight. Perhaps reading a book or eating a morsel from the Bothy Bus or whatever it's called.

Not so with us as standby. We're kind of hovering and waiting and can't sit and can't stand and don't know if we're going to get on. I'm not sure if we're going to get home that night.

What's the difference between the two passengers? One knows that they're going. The other is unsure. If we are in Christ Jesus, we know.

We are assured. We are certain that we will go with Him to be where He is.

That when we are called from time to eternity, we will hear those words, Well done, good and faithful servant. Come in and enter the joy of the Lord.

[54:32] A rich and abundant welcome will wait for us. The alternative is to be on standby, to be uncertain, to be unsure, and to possibly hear the words, Depart from me for I never knew you.

There is no need for you to be on standby when it comes to heaven. But it requires that you do something now. Will you book your place?

Will you find an absolutely certain future? Will you be assured for your future? Jesus says, I have made the way possible.

All you have to do is come and get your ticket. You don't have to pay for it, but you just have to come and get one. Have you ever been to a free event?

A free event doesn't cost you anything. You're welcome to come, but there's limited space and therefore you require a ticket. You don't have to pay for the ticket. You just have to come and get it.

[55:37] So it is with the Lord. He says, come and get your ticket. Come and secure your place. Come and take what we are offering to you by invitation and no absolute assurance as a result of that.

If we trust in Jesus, if your faith is in Christ, regardless of how imperfect you are and we're coming to that, your future is absolutely assured.

Our faithfulness is expected. Our future is assured. Thirdly and finally, as we conclude, our failure is anticipated. Our failure is anticipated.

Our imperfection in following Jesus is anticipated. Will you really lay down your life for me?

Says Jesus. Jesus knows the answer to that question. But the question is still put to Peter as a challenge. Will you really lay down your life?

[56:43] Because actually, before the rooster crows, you're going to disown me three times. Was Jesus right in his prediction? Absolutely, he was right in his prediction.

Did Peter falter? Yes. Within a few hours of this, was Peter denying that he even knew Jesus? Yes. Peter sat down with him. Luke 22, 55.

A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, this man was with him. But Peter denied it. Woman, I don't know him, he said.

A little later, someone else saw him and said, you're also one of them. Man, I'm not, Peter replied.

About an hour later, another asserted, certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.

Peter replied, man, I don't know what you're talking about. Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.

[57:46] Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him. Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times. And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Jesus knows our imperfections. Jesus predicts our failures. He knows all about our foibles and our weaknesses.

They do not surprise him. He knew the worst from the first. And still he was willing to die for you and for me. That is the wonder of the gospel, isn't it?

He understands how weak we are. Psalm 103, he understands how weak we are. He knows that we are only dust. God knows how weak and how prone we are to failure.

God knows our frame. He remembers it well. And Jesus here anticipates the failure of one of his chosen disciples.

[58:52] But we give thanks that that's not the end of the story, is it? Simon, Simon, Satan has asked for you that he might sift you like wheat.

But Peter, I pray for you, says Jesus. But Peter, I pray for you. And when you have returned to me, strengthen your brothers.

Peter, I know you're going to fail. Peter, I know you're bluffing. You're blessed. Jesus anticipated that Peter would return. Jesus anticipated that Peter would return. And that failure would be used to build him up and to prepare him for his ministry in the years ahead.

And when you are returned to me, strengthen your brothers. Peter, I know you're going to fail.

Peter, I know you're bluffing, you're bluster.

I know you're impetuous and you're reckless. I know all of these weaknesses that you hold. But I love you and I pray for you. The great promise that we have this evening is that we have a Savior who prays for us.

[60:07] A Savior who knows our weaknesses and who anticipates our failures. Who doesn't point at us, shake his head and laugh. But the one who prays for us and who restores us and who employs us in his service.

Jesus knew that Peter would have deep and dark failure within his life. And yet he still chose to pray for him and restore him and employ him in his service.

And yet, he says, failure needn't be the end of the story. We can all be restored and renewed through the power of Christ. He expects that whilst we live, though we cannot go with him immediately, one day if we are in him, we will go to be with him.

But meantime, he wants us to exercise our faithfulness in serving him, in fulfilling the work that he has set apart for us to do. Because our future is secure, assured.

We know whose we are and to whom we will go when life is done. And therefore, it transforms how we live, even when we fail. And we will, and we'll falter.

[61:35] But his grace is sufficient for us. Let's pray. God, our Father, we thank you for your word and for its encouragement to us as people who

so often are like Peter.

So often we talk a good game, and yet we fail to deliver. So often we stumble and falter. So often we deny, sometimes even just by our silence.

But Lord, we thank you that you choose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. We give thanks that you are a God who calls not the qualified, but who qualifies the called.

That you use ignoble vessels for noble purposes. That you come and you work in our hearts and our lives, fully aware of our weakness and our propensity toward waywardness.

And yet you are a God who is faithful evermore. And so, Lord, we pray that we would exhibit faithfulness as we love one another.

[62:39] That having the perspective which goes beyond the here and now would transform the way in which we live. As we love one another, that it would be evident to those around about us.

That we would learn to take our eyes from ourselves and our self-seeking nature. And that we would lift them to fix them on Jesus. To discern the work that you have set apart for us to do.

To discharge the duties that you give us willingly and joyfully. In order that your name might be lifted high. We know that our future is assured. That our failure is anticipated.

That you are a God of grace. A God of goodness. The one whose grace is sufficient for us. Bless us and keep us. Go before us, we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Of course, we conclude by singing from the hymn. His mercy is more. Our failure may be great, but his mercy is more. What love could remember no wrongs we have done.

[63:42] Omniscient, all-knowing, he counts not their sin. His mercy is more. We'll stand and sing together. What love could remember no wrongs we have done.

Omniscient, all-knowing, he counts not their sin. Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore.

Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

Stronger than darkness, new every morn. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

The patience would wake us, we constantly roam. What father so tender is calling us home.

[65:02] He welcomes the weakest, the weakest, the weakest, the good. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. Stronger than darkness, new every morn.

Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

What riches of kindness he lavished on us. His blood was a payment, his life was the cost. We still need a debt we could never afford.

Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

[66:10] His mercy is more. Stronger than darkness, new every morn. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

His mercy is more. His mercy is more. His mercy is more. His mercy is more.

Stronger than darkness, new every morn. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

And now may the grace and the mercy and the peace of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and remain with us all now and evermore and all God's people say, Amen.