

10.7.21 am: Amazing Love

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Date: 10 July 2022

Preacher: Roddy Mackenzie

[0 : 00] Good morning everybody and welcome to our morning service and a special welcome to visitors. A good welcome too to the late arrivals, do come in.

So we're pleased today to have Roddy McKenzie leading the service this morning in the absence of our ministers on holiday. Tea and coffee are served at the end of the service and a warm welcome is extended to all to attend that.

And the service at 6pm will be conducted by Scott McLeod who is due shortly to enter Edinburgh Theological Seminary to train for the ministry. Little Fishers, Parent and Toddler group meets on Tuesday from 10 to 12 and Road to Recovery meets on Tuesday night at 7pm here in the church. So anyone struggling with any addiction is very welcome to attend. The prayer meeting on Thursday will be led by George Barney and that will be in person and via Zoom as is our current practice.

George will be here for a couple of weeks so he'll be taking the services next Sunday as well. And he'll also be out and about visiting people as he did last year.

[1 : 20] And with the minister being on holiday until the 1st of August, pastoral support is being provided by Reverend Ian McGritchie. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, thanks very much indeed, Duncan, for your kind words. So welcome. Can I say what a privilege and a pleasure it is to be back in the North Harris Congregation once more.

And as we worship God together today, our prayer is that we would hear God's voice, that we would seek God's face, and that above all, we would know God's presence and God's blessing in our midst.

And we're going to begin our service today by singing to God's praise in Metrical Psalm number 107. Metrical Psalm number 107. From the beginning of that psalm.

Praise God, for he is good for still, his mercy's lasting be. Let God's redeemed say so whom he, from the enemies handed free. And gather them out of the lands from north, south, east, and west.

[2 : 48] They strayed in deserts pathless way, no city found to rest. For thirst and hunger in them faints, their soul when straits them press. They cry unto the Lord, and he them frees from their distress.

Them also in a way to walk, that right is he did guide, that they might to a city go, wherein they might abide. O that men to the Lord would give, praise for his goodness then, and for his works of wonder done unto the sons of men.

These five verses to God's praise from Psalm 117 from the beginning. Praise God, for he is good for still. Praise God, for he is good for still.

His mercy's lasting be. Let God's redeem, save so whom he, from the enemies handed free.

And gather them birds of the lands from north, south, east, and west.

[4 : 15] His scathing deserts pathless way, no city found to rest.

For thirst and hunger in them faints, their soul when straits them press.

They cry unto the Lord, and he left free from their distress.

Their soul when straits them press. Their soul when a way to walk, that right is he did guide, that they might to a city go, wherein they might.

Their soul when they might abide. Their soul when they might abide. Their soul when they might abide. O God, when to the Lord would give, praise for his goodness then, and for his works of wonder done.

[5 : 57] And to the sons of men. Amen.

Let's engage in prayer. Let us pray. Oh, Lord our God, as we bow in thy presence at this morning hour, we thank thee that we can echo the words of the psalmist when he said, for he is good for still, his mercies lasting be.

We thank thee for all thy mercies to us, thy mercies to us in providence, in that we have plenty of food, ample clothing, and many good friends. But we thank thee above all for thy goodness to us in grace.

And as we bow in thy presence on this Lord's Day morning, when we think on the first day of the week, when the women went to the sepulcher, they were given that glorious news, he is not here, he is risen.

We thank thee that we worship a risen living God, one who is on the right hand of the Father on high, and one who makes intercession for his people. And we thank thee for the desire, which thou hast awakened in each and every one of us, to gather in thy house here today.

[7 : 08] And our prayer is that we would say, it was good for us to have met here, as we come here on each successive Sabbath, and as we are conscious of how quickly, the months and the years of our lives go by.

We thank thee that thou art the God, who art the same yesterday, today, and forever. We see changes round us and even in us, but we thank thee that thou art the God, who never changes. And we thank thee not only for the unchangeableness of thy being, but we thank thee for the unchangeableness of the gospel message, that thou art saying today, to men and to women, to boys and to girls, come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. We pray, O Lord, that indeed we would know, that rest which only thou can give, and which none can take away. And as we gather here, Lord, we thank thee, for the way in which thou hast led us hitherto, for all thy people can stand here today, and say, as another said, hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

We thank thee not only for past blessings, but also for future promises, that thou hast promised all who put their trust in thee, that thou wilt never leave them nor forsake them.

[8 : 23] For family friends may leave us, but thou wilt never leave us. If our hope is fixed on the God, who holds all our tomorrows, we will be saved for time and for eternity.

We pray, Lord, for the preaching of the word today. We remember the preaching of it throughout the world. And we remember that there are many preaching thy word in difficult circumstances, preaching thy word in other lands and in other cultures, sometimes feeling very alone.

But we thank thee that if thou wert with them, they are never alone. And our prayer is, O Lord, that thou wouldst bless thy word as it spreads throughout the world. We thank thee for those we read of and we learn of, who are engaged in work and thy service.

And we thank thee that in other lands, there are great movements of people to thee. We pray that thou wouldst be with our own land here. We confess, O Lord, we have gone far from thee.

But we pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst turn to us, that we would experience days of mighty reviving power. Many people coming to thy house, no need to say, Know the Lord, for they will know him from the least and even unto the greatest.

[9 : 35] We pray that thou wouldst be with this congregation here. We thank thee for the strong witness it has in this community. We remember all engaged in thy work.

We remember thy servant especially. And as he away at this time, and as he has in these days, a sad bereavement, we pray that thou wouldst uphold David and the wife and the family.

We thank thee, O Lord, that he does not mourn as those without hope. For the one he has lost has gone into thine own eternal service. And we pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst uphold not only them of man's family, but all in our midst to mourn.

For thou were speaking to us so often in the uncertainty of providence and the coldness of death, reminding us all that our days are like the days on the calendar, some long like summer, but some short as in the bleak midwinter.

We do not know, certainly, what a day nor an hour may bring forth. We pray for any of our number who are laid aside through sickness, thinking of us as we gather here.

[10 : 41] We pray that thou wouldst be with them in their own situation. We remember the office bearers in this congregation, the many extra duties that evolve upon them, and pray that thou wouldst strengthen them, and keep them, and hold them, and keep them equal to the task.

We remember our neighbouring congregations of this time, and we remember especially Stuart as he preaches the word in South Harris today, and Farah Harris he goes to preach the word tonight. Be with them, we pray thee, and bless them wherever thou in thy providence will cast their lot.

Remember thy servant, who will come in coming days to this congregation.

Be with him too, we pray thee, and we remember Scott as he preaches the word tonight, that indeed thou wouldst be with him, and prepare him for the work which lies ahead of him, as he seeks to engage in full-time work in thy service.

We pray, Lord, that thou wouldst be with us, as we turn to thy word and seek to meditate on it, that thou wouldst bless each and every one of us here, as thou knowest our differing needs, for there are some of us who have needs we cannot tell any, but we thank thee that thou art the God, who knows all things, the God who can meet us at the deepest point of our needs.

[11 : 53] Be with us and keep us looking unto thee. Go before us throughout the remainder of this service. Lead us and guide us. Remember those who lead the praise, and as our praise ascends to thee, may thy blessings descend to us.

We thank thee for the consciousness we have of God's people supporting us here, at the throne of grace. And our prayer is, that thou wouldst continue to bless and own thy witness, in this community.

Be with us, we pray thee, and pardon our sins, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now, do the wee ones gather round, or are they quite happy sitting where they are? Ach, well, they're quite happy.

Do you want to come here? Do you want to come round to them? I'm not so far away, and I'm not so big. See? Are you going to tell them?

Excuse me. Excuse me. To try and use it to escape something. That's right. Very good indeed.

Excellent. We're trying to use it to try and escape something.

[12 : 55] An excuse is a reason for something. You do what you shouldn't have done. And you and yourself, quite often you'll use excuses when it comes to school back. It's for school sometimes.

You've forgotten to do what you're supposed to do at home, and we might say, well, I left my daughter on the right top of the house.

Which is correct, but it's an excuse. And sometimes, we all use different excuses. Now, if you look at me closely, you'll see that I've got a bump in my head.

Right? Now, if I was a date with a minister, I would be able to do something with my hair and cover the bumps, perhaps, perhaps, and it wouldn't be quite obvious. But I can't tell you, I've got a bump.

And people ask me, how did you get a bump? And I always say, well, I did get a bump by jumping up far too quickly in John's van, Brown's family. And, bam, I hit the top.

But, I don't want to say that because it makes me seem very, very silly because I've done hundreds of times and they catch my head on the top of the lap. Well, that's a silly thing. So, instead, I use the excuse and I say, it's a van.

[13 : 59] The roof was too low and I jumped out and the van is just simply an excuse. And I'm telling an excuse. I know a lot of people telling excuses.

And I couldn't read the Bible. I would read the way, the way at the very beginning in the Bible and people make excuses. I didn't believe when we can't believe. And, a snake came along and came to leave and he'd remember ate of the fruit and then Adam ate the fruit.

And then the Lord came along and he asked him, did you eat the fruit? And Adam said, Eve told me to. And Eve said, the serpent told me to.

And you're just making excuses. Now, in the Bible, very often people make excuses. People who were met with Jesus and Jesus told them to follow him.

But they didn't. They made excuses. They were too young. They were too busy. There were various excuses they gave when they wouldn't follow reasons why they wouldn't follow Jesus.

[15 : 10] They even told the New Testament about Paul talking to a man called Felix about Jesus and my own and Felix said, will you go? I'll speak to you later. And he never told the serpent to the devil.

And for those we should make an excuse. When they were young, Jesus did the special promise.

Remember Jesus when he was going around and after she was quite close to his disciples because the disciples said, don't bother with their little children.

And Jesus said, no, leave the children because they're the future kingdom of heaven. If you follow me, Aaron, you will find you. He gives a special promise to children, to young people.

He wants young people to follow you. He wants young people to follow you. And when you go to Sunday school, go in and be fired, and when you hear about the Lord Jesus, don't be young to see. Don't be young to see. Don't say, I need a kid. Don't say, ah, forget about Jesus. No, Jesus says to you, follow them. And when Jesus says, follow them, that's what you do.

[16:15] Because you know, for you, and for all the adults who are accomplished here, no matter how many times you hear about the Lord Jesus, one time you hear it for the last time.

And if we are the Lord Jesus, I will go. The Lord will never leave. You are friends, you have 50 promises, you are never going to part up, you are friends, you will be friends forever, and then suddenly you follow it, and that's it.

You know, you follow the Lord Jesus. He's a friend that you never leave. And he will be with the Lord Jesus. And I pray as always, that go to something soon, that go to the various clubs, and I will pass into the Lord for these clubs and to the people of Israel, that you will indeed come to me with the Lord Jesus.

And I say, I'm in touch, I'm sorry. And I say, we were the people of the same. Lord, we pray, I'm in strength, all the young people who are gathered here, and remember the Sabbath scriptures. And some people will look in our own life, and will remember those who taught us the Sabbath scriptures, who have now gone to him. But we thank thee for this teaching, and we will be congregated for all that he spoke to us of.

[17:23] We pray, Lord, that that was blessed, all the young people gathered here, that they would come to know him as their own personal say, and as teachers gave us so in the sea, bless the secret of the church.

We pray, that it will result that many young people coming to know the Lord Jesus. And with us, keep us looking into the people, part of the world and part of the sins for Jesus' sake.

Amen. And thanks very much and deeply for this. It's a good listening. It was very, absolutely fantastic. Now, we're going to carry on, and this time we're going to sing in hymn number 759.

Hymn number 759. When we do this hymn, it takes me back to when I was a wee boy, a few ages, some of you here, going to a little gospel hall in Greenup with an old lady called Katie Cameron who was a family friend, and this was one of the hymns which were sung there, and I think that's the first time the Lord made any impression on my life.

Hymn number 759. When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, and the morning breaks eternal bright and fair, when the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, and the role is called up yonder, I'll be there.

[18:37] We'll sing the whole of hymn number 759. When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more. When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more, and the morning breaks eternal bright and fair, when the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore, and the role is going yonder, I'll be there.

When the role is going yonder, when the role is going yonder, when the road is going yonder, when the road is going yonder, I'll be there.

On the bright and proud this morning when the dead in Christ shall rise And the glory of his resurrection share When his chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the sky And the role is called a wonder out in the air When the role is called a wonder When the role is called a wonder When the role is called a wonder When the role is called a wonder I'll be there Let us labor for the master from the dawn's old setting sun Let us talk of all his wondrous love and care Then when all of life is over and the work on earth is done And the role is called a wonder I'll be there When the role is called a wonder

When the role is called a wonder When the role is called a wonder When the role is called a wonder I'll be there Amen.

Luke chapter 15, reading from the beginning. Luke chapter 15, reading from the beginning.

[22:25] Luke chapter 15, reading from the beginning.

And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them this living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in the land, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger.

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

[23 : 57] Make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best gold, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.

For this my son was dead and is alive again. He was lost in his family, and they began to be merry. Now the elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing.

And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and entreated. And he answered and said to his father, Lord, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time my commandments.

[25 : 16] And yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harleys, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad. For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found.

Amen. May God bless that reading from his own holy and inerrant word, and to his name, be all the praise and the glory. We'll continue singing. This time we're singing in hymn number 31.

Hymn number 31. The hymn which says, Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found.

Was blind, but now I see. And we'll sing the whole of that hymn to God's praise. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound. Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, the sin of wretch like me.

[26 : 47] I once was lost, but now I'm found. Was blind, but now I see.

Was grace adorned my heart to hear, and grace my fears with thee.

How precious did that grace appear, the year I first believed.

Through many dangers, droils and scares, my love already come.

Tis grace, how Lord, he saved us all. The grace will lead me home.

[28 : 02] When we've been there ten thousand years, by shining up the sun, we've known as days to sing those praise, than when we first begun.

I want us to look together this morning, in Luke chapter 15, the chapter we were reading, and I want us to look at the last of these parables, the very well-known parable of the prodigal son, or the forlorn son.

And we can call it amazing love. And there's always a danger when you go over a parable time and time and time again. You might think, well, I've heard it so often, and I'm not going to get anything new from it, and I'm not going to hear anything new.

But when we go, and when we seek to say a word for the Lord, we say it, praying that he would bless. For we don't know what he will bless, whether this or that.

And it is looking at this parable today, and praying that God would bless. For without his blessing, we concede our efforts are indeed in vain. But we are thankful that if he will bless, there is no human agency on earth who can hinder.

[29 : 35] Now the Lord himself made his public ministry, a means of getting into close contact with sinful and erring men and women of every shade and opinion and social and ecclesiastical ostracism.

Now what I mean by that, very simple, is that the people the Lord came in contact with and the people the Lord spoke to the most were those who were outcasts from church and society. Now the sympathy our Lord showed towards those who were socially degraded and morally outcasted was bitterly resented by the Pharisees.

We see that in their continual criticism of our Lord. And obviously they looked on people Jesus befriended with supreme contempt.

And it wasn't just the Pharisees. Remember when Jesus was speaking to the woman at the well and when along came the disciples and were told they marvelled that he talked with the woman.

[30 : 40] They looked at this woman. Their eyes were able to tell what they thought of it. For those of us, and there will be a lot here, where in emergency service you'll be conscious of the fact that sometimes when called out to difficult situations you don't need to say anything.

Your eyes just simply tell their own story. And here we see the disciples when they saw Jesus talking with the woman. Now we're told at the beginning, drew near to Jesus all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

Now publicans and sinners to the Pharisees who were around were failures and unclean people. They weren't even thought of as objects for never mind for human compassion.

Never mind as objects for the redeeming love of God. And it's the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees that we see supplied in the three parables we have here.

There's the lost coin, there's the lost sheep, and there's the lost son. Now the three parables are done very simply to enforce one doctrine, which is simply the love of Christ to sinners.

[31 : 59] and how important it is to have one sinner saved. The importance of one sinner being saved. In 1965, the Milford Haven thrall of the Boston Heron went aground in Stillam and off Scalpey.

And a certain number of the crew were lost and some were saved. And various people went out to effect a rescue. The original Scalpey Isle was one of the boats which went out.

And several of their crewmen received awards afterwards. And afterwards, when the media circus gathered round, one of the questions that was asked is, what put people out in a hurricane southerly gale to effect a rescue?

And one of our own senior men said, if you knew the importance of a human soul, you would never ask such a question. And how true that is. One soul.

It says in the Bible, there's rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repented. And here in this chapter, Jesus brings out the importance of one soul.

[33 : 06] And this was a note which was so absent from the teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees in the synagogue. They wouldn't talk this way. The Pharisees, quite simply, if you kept the law, therefore, you were all right.

If you were a certain social class, you were all right. But it's interesting to note in the passing here that the Lord Jesus continued to go to the synagogue. He didn't say he wasn't going because of the Pharisees.

He continued to go. He continued to worship there. So here we see the common people, how they went to Jesus. They gathered in their thousands to hear him because they knew the Lord was one of infinite compassion.

They knew the Lord's mission was simply to seek and to save that which was lost. And if we look here, the third and best known of the parables are the one I want to focus on.

The one of the lost son. The one of the forlorn son. Now the Lord Jesus himself was a master teacher. Especially in the parables which he told.

[34 : 21] These wonderful accounts we hear centuries later they still have the same impact on us. They teach the meaning.

We talk very often that they're earthly stories with heavenly meanings. But they're more than that. When we look at these parables they reveal to us something of what God has done and is doing and will do in the present world through his kingdom by the person and work of his son and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this parable starts with the very simple words that a certain man had two sons. It's very important this because if we go back to verse 1 and 2 we're told about the Pharisees publicans and the sinners and the Pharisees and the scribes.

Now the first of this parable and the main point of this parable is simply the receiving again of the prodigal son as one alive from the dead and the condemnation of the older self-righteous brother. It says here a certain man but it becomes clear as we go through this as we go through this parable that the certain man is Jesus himself God himself.

[35 : 39] And we see this account of this young man being brought up and this young man's spiritual pilgrimage. We see here his sin we see here his repentance we see here his turning to God.

At the very start he's weary of his father's restrictions and he asks for the portion of his goods. He says give me the portion of goods in verse 12 that falls to me.

Now we would get these goods when the father died in him but he wants them just this bit earlier and then he says he wants to go to the far country and saying this when the Lord said this it would be so relevant to those hearing this parable because the far country to Jews meant going to Antioch or Rome it was the seat of learning it was the place where wealthy Jews wished to go to that's where they went much like sometimes with ourselves we may think if we go away to the cities life will be totally different and this young man wants to go into the far country he wants to go there and we're told he went and he wastes his money and the Bible here and this parable paints a very vivid picture of the fact that he's wasted his money he's spending his money with riotous living it's a very vivid picture of the havoc brought by sin in the lives of men and women and this young man's money it brought him friends it brought him forgetfulness of home and it doesn't say in this translation of the Bible but in other translations some of you that will have other translations it says in verse 14 but when he had spent all and it's a very very important word that but there's a but when he had spent all there arose a mighty famine in the land he began to be in want there's an awareness here of something lacking it's his first step in his pilgrimage to go back home he ends up feeding pigs he's got so little money he's so destitute he's got nothing and he ends up feeding pigs now to the Jew this was a horrific picture because to the Jew the most unclean animal was the pig and to think of anyone feeding pigs was the lowest of the very low he's feeding pigs and it says also that he's so hungry he's got absolutely nothing he's so hungry he would have eaten the husks which the pigs were eating he would have eaten the food which they were having he had no way of doing anything about it he was here his money was gone his friends were gone we can say his innocence was gone his home was gone everything he had is gone here and even human sympathy for him is gone this young man has wasted everything and he's got nothing but then in his desperate condition he saw one possible way of escape and that issued from the home he had so despised and the ones he had so rudely scorned it says there he came to himself how many higher servants of my father's have bread enough and a spade and I perish with hunger now a higher servant to make you understand was someone who was much lower than a servant a higher servant was somebody a richer farmer or a richer landowner would take on just at harvest time and they would work for a short time and then they would be paid off they were virtually like slaves they were the lowest of the low to the Jew and to this man the lowest of the low that his father had the higher servants were better off than he was because they had

bread enough and to spare he decides to go to his father he decides to tell him what a waste he has had of his life and you know when we look at this parable spiritually we look at the prodigal and we see the father it's the story of a man realising he's gone far from the father from God and turning and coming back and coming back to him in genuine repentance and when we see in the story here the father we're told there his father saw him a great way off the son is trudging off for home without feeling worthless just wondering what reception he'll get but we're told the father saw him a great way off and in those lands because of the flatness of the terrain you could see a great distance away and the father the impression we are given in this parable is that the father is waiting and watching day by day vainly seeking the horizon to see if anyone is coming home and then suddenly he sees this young man on his way back home he sees him here coming home he's got his speech ready he's going to speak and to say he sinned but you know before he can say anything his father ran and fell on his neck and kissed him and that's a very very very big picture of how the lord is to any who turn to him because this young man would be coming home he's been feeding pigs he's been living in horrendous conditions he would be smelling he would be dirty he would be filthy but it makes no difference to the father he comes to him away right away and we're told there he fell on his neck and kissed him the young man is going to say he sinned and he was going to say make him one of his higher servants but before he can say anything the father said put the robe on him

kill the fatted calf bring him in and we'll have a feast and here we see the love of the lord towards lost sinners there's no word of reproach here he just falls on his neck and kisses him and this symbolizes christ's love for us we see and he had compassion how different that is to the scribes and the pharises his condition is so awful it's so miserable but it's no hindrance to the love of the father and if we are outside of christ and if we call on jesus no matter what state we are in it's no hindrance to the love of christ and here we see he's coming to the father and he's coming back home and the focus here is on the young man being so sorry for all he's done you know there's a school of thought nowadays which tells us that there's lots and lots of different ways to heaven remember last year children went to Edinburgh and I went down with a minibus to collect them and even with a sat-nav

I still got lost in the city but I found the airport eventually and people think you go into some of our major cities and there's lots of ways in but you'll get in eventually to the centre and people think well it's the same way with heaven we'll get there eventually with lots and lots and lots of different ways but jesus here emphasizes the fact there's only one way to heaven and that one way is simple that it's the way of the cross we have to come in genuine repentance we have to say how sorry we are for our sins and then the lord jesus will take us in and the last part of this parable shows the great joy over the sin of repentance there was a great preacher in the north of england called samuel wellingford and he used to say if one saved soul from unworth that's the place he ministered in meet me at god's right hand my heaven will be to heaven in emmanuel's land he's showing the importance of a human soul importance of how the soul being saved brought such great rejoicing we see this young man restored to to sonship we see here the older brother and he comes here into the story and he's so annoyed at the father for the way he has treated this son and you know this is the lord jesus pointing out to the pharisees the way of salvation can only come by believing in the lord jesus it's said twice we should make merry and be glad for your son was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found what has happened to this young son is quite the opposite of what he deserves he didn't deserve any sympathy he took the father's money he went away he wasted it all but yet he's receiving this grace now he's getting it not because he deserves it but it is as a free gift and the contrast in the end of this parable is between the son who had willfully turned away and has now come home he's abandoned his father and the other son is the one who has remained obedient there's a contrast between the penitent prodigal who understood the need for the father's grace and the older brother who saw him said there's no such need and I remember as a youngster often reading this and thinking how unfair it was on the older brother but I had missed the whole point of the account the older brother here sees no need of anything whereas the younger brother has come in genuine repentance and you know for ourselves as we stand here today we must ask ourselves what is the basis of our hope is it that we do the best we can is it that we come to church and all these things don't get me wrong are very very good but the bible very simply tells us and this parable is emphasizing to us we must be born again we must be born again you know the older brother can say he never did anything and he could be his father but both were sinners both needed repentance and it's important for us because sin isn't an act but a condition you know at the end of the day when we stand before the Lord we're not asked what we've done we're not asked where we went we're asked very simply do we know the Lord Jesus

[47 : 44] as our own personal saviour do we know him as our own personal saviour and this parable here this very very vivid parable it's often been called amazing love or amazing grace because it shows the great love of Jesus towards sinners now the great question we have is do we know this love for ourselves there's no one I said who is beyond the reach in this life of saving grace we see in scripture we're told in the old testament about a man called Manasseh and this man did awful things and yet he turned to Jesus we're told in the new testament about a thief on a cross his life was ebbing away and he called Jesus and he said to Jesus just simply remember me don't put me into any special place just remember me when you get to heaven and Jesus said those wonderful words today you'll be with me in paradise that thief never sat at a communion table he never stood before a session but he is tonight today in glory because he heard the Lord Jesus and he trusted the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jesus saved him as the hymn says the dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day and there will I though vile as he wash all my sins away the Lord promises if we are as yet strangers to grace and to God and we all know how we stand before God today at the end of the day we know how we stand before God and we know where we are in the light of God's we've all been taught from an early age are we like the brother in this parable here thinking we're doing alright thinking it'll be alright in the end or are we like the prodigal son going to

call on Jesus saying as another said

Lord I believe help thou my man believe you know if we follow and trust in Jesus it doesn't mean we'll not have any troubles it doesn't mean that things won't go wrong for us we'll have troubles but the difference is we'll have the Lord with us and all God's people in this church today will give their amen to that they will say surely goodness and mercy has followed us all the days of our lives you know on a bad night in the north mansion I'm sure you've all had it there is nothing better than seeing the lights of storm because you're coming into calmer seas and you know for us all although in our lives we may have many things going wrong in our lives we may have many difficulties in our lives we may look at many things and feel that things have gone wrong but we have if we have the Lord we have everything he'll never leave us nor forsake us he shows here this great love towards this lost sin emphasizing here the love the Lord has to lost sinners if we follow him he promises he will be with us and he will never leave us nor forsake us and we must this may have been beyond the scope of the audience

Jesus was speaking to Jesus was talking to here to this huge audience some very willing to listen some walking away and looking and sounding askance at what the Lord said but you know the Lord is saying this love is here none of us have promised and that's self-evident all around us and in our news and it's self-evident even in our communities that none of us are promised tomorrow none of us are promised once ahead but one thing we are promised that is if today we call him the Lord Jesus he will save us he will the mother in what state we are call us and take us to be with himself and if we are with himself he will be with us and bear us up in the storms of life he will take us one day to heaven heaven we might look at ourselves and say we are not good enough the Lord Jesus did not come to save good people he came to save sinners and he gives that great promise come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest and then we can say Lord I believe help thou my non-belief in this account we are given here each one emphasises the importance of souls each one emphasises the rejoicing in heaven over sinners repenting and may they be rejoicing in heaven today over sinners repenting in this congregation and up and down our land and throughout the world for we rejoice when we hear and we read of people turning to Jesus and our prayer is for us all that we would all know him as our own saviour we come and we meet in church like this we go away and one day we will part for the last time but my prayer and my hope for every one of us is that we will all meet in that place where God will wipe away all tears from our eyes that we will meet in that place where we will worship God throughout an endless eternity where God will be our

God where God will be the one who will be with us and may that be the portion for each and every one of us today as we reflect on his solemn words I will say a word of prayer O Lord our God as we think in the parable of the prodigal son we think O Lord of the great love of the father and may we know that love in all our lives may we all know thee as our own personal saviour and friend not the saviour of relatives not the saviour of those around us not the saviour of others bearers in our church but our own personal saviour may we take thee as our personal saviour in life we pray Lord that thou wouldst be with us now go out with us in the evening strengthen and uphold thy servant who will preach to us we thank thee for it and we pray that thou wouldst bless it whatever thou in thy providence has cast this world and as we go forward into the week ahead a week we do not know what it holds but we thank thee that thou wouldst be with us the God who holds all our tomoves we will be saved for time and for eternity may we know thee as our God and our saviour lead us and guide us and go before us pardon our sins for Jesus' sake

[55 : 00] Amen I will conclude our service today by singing to God's praise in Psalm number 103 Psalm 103 and we'll sing from verse 13 in that psalm such pity as a father hath unto his children dear like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear for he remembers we are dust and he are flame well knows for he o man his days are like the grass as flowering field he grows for over it the wind hath passed and it away is gone and of the place where once it was it shall no more be known but unto them that do in fear God's mercy never ends and to their children children still his righteousness extends these four verses in Psalm 103 from verse 13 such pity as our father hath such pity as our father hath such pity as our father hath number of 13 of Israel who crochets his children in fear like pity he chose like pity less aware of what is

The tempers we are dust, and he of faith well knows.

The man his days are like the grass, a strong in field he grows.

For over it the wind hath passed, and it away is gone.

And of the place where once it was, it shall no more be known.

[57 : 38] But unto them, not to them fear, God's mercy never ends.

And to the children, children still, his righteousness extends.

Amen. Lord our God, may we know the love of which we are singing of here. The love which spreads from generation to generation.

May we know that love of God who never leaves us nor forsakes us. And now unto him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the Master's face with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, with power and might, dominion and strength, both now and forever and more.

Amen. Amen. Again. Amen. Amen.

[58 : 54] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.