

1st March 2018 pm English

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 March 2018

Preacher: Rev Roddy Morrison

[0 : 0 0] for the first time worshipping whether it's a congregation or the visiting then you're especially welcome. The services tomorrow will be at 12 noon in the hall next door and that will be a Catholic service and again will be here in the evening at 7 o'clock for an English service and the services tomorrow will be conducted by the Reverend Inesia McDonald assuming that he makes it here. Pray for his safe travel and his arrival here and I'm nervous about that at present.

Can I say also that the session opened this morning and if there are any who would want to come forward and profess their faith in Jesus for the first time this weekend and come to the Lord's table then please come and meet with the session we'd be delighted to meet with you we'll be in the hall just on my left and comes at the at the end of the service we'd be very encouraged to meet with with you.

I wanted to give a very warm welcome as well to the Reverend Donnie Morrison you've known for longer than you've known me and we've appreciated his ministry over many years and he's been through a lot with you as a congregation with us as a congregation and I'm delighted to be able to to welcome him and pray that God will speak through him over the course of this weekend just before I hand over to to Roddy I just want to share a verse and a half with you fear not this is not a sermon but we met some of us yesterday evening in the prayer meeting next door in the hall and we were in Psalm 52 it was the psalm that we were due to come to in our studies on Wednesday evening anyway and I want to just highlight a verse and a half of that psalm to use the wider combination as I did yesterday evening the psalmist as God inspires and says

I trust this is Psalm 52 in verse 8 and 9 I trust in God's unfailing love forever and ever I will praise you forever and ever for what you have done in your name I will hope for your name is good I will praise you in the presence of your saints and it just seems to be such an appropriate verse and a half for us to come to and to focus on as we come to this time as a congregation we look around and we've been mindful of all the activity that has gone on here in the past weeks we've been praying for three years and seeing God open doors sometimes very unexpectedly and there have been so many people who've been involved in praying and giving all their time and their talents and their money

I see so many who have grafted in so many ways and there's too many to thank and division but we know that the energy and the skills and the substance that we have every good and perfect gift comes from heaven and so we say with the psalmist I will praise you I will praise you forever for what you have done we want to see that as a combination we acknowledge that although there have been many people used and for all of these people we are so thankful we acknowledge that ultimately it is God who has done all of this God is the one who provides God is the one who gives and we praise him for what he has done to enable us to sit here tonight and as we look forward over the next couple of days we will be directed night on night to the cross of Christ the way that we are prepared to come to the Lord's table is to come to the cross and as we come to the cross what is it that we see we see what God has done for us in Christ and we say again with the psalmist although we see clearly what he wasn't able to see at this point we say

[5 : 04] I will praise you forever for what you have done Jesus it's finished he cried and our calling as we come to the Lord's table is to remember with thanks to the finished work of Christ as we sit at the table we say what the psalmist in your name in your name I will hope for your name is good not my name not any of our names we see as we come to the table that we are not good we need to see that or we can't come but we come saying God in your name I will hope for your name is good and so I will praise you in the presence of your saints let's pray heavenly father we do pray that as we now lift our eyes to the hills of the one who created all things as we fix our eyes upon

Jesus the author and perfecter the finisher of our faith we pray truly that we would be able to say with the psalmist I will praise you forever for what you have done help us Lord give us eyes to see all that has been done for us on the cross give us ears to hear our saviour as he cries out it is finished and Lord give us we pray the courage each one who is truly a believer give us the courage to say with the psalmist I will praise you in the presence of your saints hear us Lord help us and we pray all these things in Jesus name and for Jesus name I pray that

God he will know the Lord bless him through him as he preachers to us give us physical names above him as he will allow us that He of us issues for God let us begin our service by singing to God's praise in Psalm 84.

Psalm 84, and from verse 1, down to verse 6, six stanzas together. Psalm 84, how lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, the tabernacles of thy grace, how blessed Lord may be.

And down to verse 6, blessed is the man whose strength thou art, and in whose heart are they ways, who passing through be as we.

[8 : 47] Then in do, dig up wells, also the rain that falleth down the pools with water fills. These letters from verse 1 to verse 6, how lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me.

Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Almighty and eternal God, the creator of all things, visible and invisible, and the God who upholds everything, by the word of your power, we bow in your holy presence this evening as we gather together in this place, together in this place, where we never met before in worship like this.

we were looking forward to the time when we would. And at times, the evil one would try to discourage us and keep us back, and say to us, where is your God now when snags and difficulties would come up against us.

But we, O Lord, thank you for those who hung on to your promises, and who refused to give up, who refused to listen to the voice of the evil one.

The evil one always comes to steal and to kill and to destroy. But you have come that sinners like us would have a life and have it in all its abundance.

[10 : 50] And tonight, O God, we thank you that we are here in this beautiful building. And if man's hands can create things that are so beautiful as we see around us, how much more the creator God who is preparing a place of safety and blessedness for all who will die with their faith in Jesus Christ.

The psalmist was speaking about an earthly place of worship, your dwelling place, the place where God had promised to meet with his people and commune with them above the mercy seat.

Jesus' prayer, and from every country and from every language, gathering them home to be with yourself.

Jesus' prayer is being answered every day somewhere in the community or in the island or in the country or in the world when he said Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am that they may see my glory, the glory I had with you before the world was when you are taking them home and you are, Lord, welcoming them into your nearer presence.

We thank you that we are on that road together, fabulous together, children of the same family, blood bought, blood washed, mansent, healed, restored, forgiven, who like us, your praise should sing.

[13 : 10] We ask your blessing upon our time together tonight. Bless your word to us as we read it and as we meditate upon it.

Bless the singing of your praise as we join together gladly and joyfully in the singing of those hymns. Lord, may our hearts be glad within us and may we rejoice in your presence.

We thank you for the start of the communion season. It has come round once again with its many blessings and opportunities and we pray that those that will receive the blessings of God in these days will also realise that with the blessings come the responsibilities of being numbered openly among God's people and say I am not ashamed to own my Lord or to defend his cause.

Bless every heart and head bowed before you at this time. Bless the minister of the congregation. We thank you for him Lord and for his wife and family.

Bless the elders and deacons. Bless the members of this congregation and the adherents. And it said, wish that one by one the adherents would become members and that they would be with us on the way to heaven, rejoicing in the saviour who loved them and gave himself for them.

[15 : 08] So work through us and in us all here tonight and speak with the voice that wakes the dead and make the people hear.

Bless the whole community, bless the land and all who proclaim your word throughout their land. We long for the day when this land will again be a land of the book, a land famous for its godliness, sending out missionaries to other parts of the world with the glorious good news of the gospel.

Bless those who are in authority over us, the Queen and her royal household. Help those who have heavy burdens to bear, give them grace to do all things honestly and honourably to your glory and to your praise.

Hear us now as we sing again together to your praise for giving us our many sins and shortcomings and wanderings.

We ask all things in Jesus' name. Amen. sing again the words in hymn number 35.

[16 : 31] In the red hymn book, this hymn book here. 35, O worship the King, all-glorious above. O greatly sing his power and his love.

O shielded defender, the ancient of days, pavilion in splendor and shielded with praise. hymn 35, O worship the King, all-glorious above.

Let's now live the word of God together. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27, verse 57, like at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 27, Matthew's Gospel, verse 57. Now, when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.

This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.

[17 : 59] And laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn out of the rock. And he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and it parted.

And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary sitting opposite the tomb. On the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate.

saying, Sir, we remember while he was still alive, how that deceiver said, after three days I will rise.

Therefore command that the tomb may be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say to the people, he has risen from the dead, so the last deception will be worse than the first.

Pilate said to them, you have a guard, go your way, make it as secure as you know how. So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

[19 : 17] Amen and may God bless to us the redeemer of his holy and inspired word, which may be all the glory in place. It is again saying to God's praise in hymn 107, 107.

Spirit divine, attend our prayer, and make this house thy home, descend with all thy gracious power, O come, great spirit, come.

Hymn 107, O Spirit divine, attend our prayer. Seeking God's blessing upon us, let us turn to that passage that we read together.

Matthew's Gospel, chapter 27, and reading again at verse 57. chapter 27 of Matthew's Gospel.

There when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who himself also had become a disciple of Jesus.

[20 : 41] This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock.

And he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb and departed. Secret discipleship he wanted to tighten for tonight's ceremony.

Secret discipleship. Secret discipleship has been pleading the church of Jesus Christ through the years.

In John chapter 12 and verses 42 and 43 we read those words Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in him but because of the Pharisees they did not confess lest they should be put out of the synagogue for they learned the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Joseph of Ramathia was one of those people who were afraid to mourn of one in his growth in the spiritual life.

[22 : 33] And that's exactly how everyone who is a secret disciple will end up stunted in their growth in spiritual life.

Afraid to confess him as his saviour. The Gospel writers describe Joseph Thalamathia as a disciple, an honourable counsellor, one who waited for the kingdom of God, a good and righteous man.

And Luke, in chapter 23, verse 51, says that he had not consented to their decision and deed.

When they were discussing in the Jewish courts what to do with Jesus, the majority said that they would crucify him. But he did not vote in the Sanhedrin to crucify Jesus at all.

He did not consent. He absented himself. His protests were only silent ones.

[23 : 54] In other words, he did not vote with the rest of the people that were voting that day in the courts of the Jewish church. once he buries the body of Jesus in his own tomb, he is not mentioned anymore in the Bible.

And nothing will be known of him until we stand before God and the books will be opened and the seals shall be broken. and the life history of every one of us will be read out.

Then we will know more about this man. How many there are that are too cowardly to confess Jesus Christ until it is too late?

And so spend their best years, spend their talents, spend their gifts in silence and in uselessness in God's sense.

We're going to look at three things together this evening from these verses, verses 57 to 60. The reasons for secret discipleship, first of all.

[25 : 16] Then the results of secret discipleship. And then, finally, the remedy for secret discipleship. There is no doubt as to what made Joseph of Arimathea to be a secret disciple of Jesus Christ.

John 19, verse 38, says after this, Joseph of Arimathea being a disciple of Jesus but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

He was afraid of being ridiculed by the others in the Jewish court, the other Pharisees that were there. He was afraid they would laugh at him.

And so he kept quiet. Joseph was like a soul man in every age, wanting everyone to think well of them.

He wanted to keep well in. with the rest of his peers, the rest of the Pharisees. There are those here tonight, I'm sure, who would like to profess Christ as their saviour, but are afraid of what their friends will say when they meet them down the town or wherever they will meet them.

[26 : 47] What are they going to say to them? If their friends will say, I heard that you went forward at the communion there last week. What on earth possessed you?

Have you lost your mind? These are the things you would hear them say. And you can't face it. You can't stomach being ridiculed by your friends.

You know, one thing that the grace of God does when it comes into the heart of the sinner, it takes away the wishbone and replaces it with a backbone.

That's what you need, a backbone to stand up and be counted for Jesus Christ in this evil, rotten age in which we live. It takes a man to stand up.

I remember how hurt I was when I met one of my old friends after many years and he was speaking about various things and then I told him that I had become a Christian and he said, oh yes, I knew you when you were a man suggesting that I was not a man then because I had come to faith in class.

[28 : 23] I didn't reply to him. I still remember him when I pray for him if he is still alive that it was a hurtful thing to say to anybody.

That was when you were a man. As if being a Christian makes you less than a man it makes you more of a man than anything else.

Those who practice the vilest of lifestyles there are many of them in our day they are not ashamed to tell people of the kind of lives they are living.

They march with their banners through the towns and cities of the world. they are not ashamed of their lifestyle vile as it is.

Why should the Christian be ashamed that he is living a life of decency a life of faith a life of helping others in the world a life for Christ a life for God.

[29 : 35] you know as well as everything else it is dangerous and unnecessary to be ashamed of following Christ.

Do you know that? it is dangerous and it is unnecessary not to follow Christ.

It is unnecessary because being laughed at won't harm you. One week that nobody likes to be laughed at of course it hurts you but that is as far as it goes.

It is not nice but there is no danger of attack from it. The danger is not professing Christ as David.

Listen to Jesus in chapter 10 of this same gospel verse 32 to 33 There is for I there is for whoever confesses me before men him I will also confess before my father who is in heaven but whoever denies me before men him I also will deny before my father who is in heaven.

[31 : 02] You run the risk of ending up by being left out as far as God is concerned what does it mean to say that he will deny you when he will say I never knew you depart from me into everlasting earnings prepared for the devil and for his angels.

it was fear that kept Pilate from doing what he knew was right that day he respected Christ in his own way and his teachings as far as he knew that he could find no fault in Jesus he said that to his accuser but he was afraid what was he afraid of afraid of what the emperor Caesar would say about him if he heard that he had let Jesus of Nazareth go free and his fear triumphed in his heart over any noble desire or instinct that was there fear even trampled over the advice of his wife who had sent a letter to him that very morning saying have nothing to do with that just man

I suffered many things because of him this day fear triumphed in the heart of Joseph Aramathia and kept him silent when he should have spoken his fear triumphing over some heart here tonight keeping you silent and maybe you have been silent for years it's not getting any easier as the years go by reasons for secret discipleship and what about the results of secret discipleship the results of secret discipleship the passion who keeps his faith in Jesus Christ hidden and does not tell anyone about it loses out in so many ways if you keep hidden the faith you have in your heart for Jesus and the love you feel springing up there for Jesus then you are going to end up a loser that person suffered because he will miss out on the blessed fellowship that he could have enjoyed with the

Lord and he had made it tonight you were very close to the kingdom at one time you felt like giving your heart to Jesus years ago hesitated and it hasn't got any easier for you and you lost out on the fellowship you could have with the saviour all these years and what a wonderful blessing it is to have fellowship in your own heart between yourself and your God there is nothing as wonderful in the world as feeling the presence of Jesus with you as you kneel in prayer on your own and as you pour out your heart in prayer to God your heart kindles with love and with fire you see that with regard to Joseph and Arimathea we don't know when

Joseph first heard about Jesus and believed in him it was probably at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus some three years before he died Joseph could have got the benefit of these three years in the company of Jesus what wouldn't we give tonight for a year in the company of Jesus going in and out with him and listening to his teaching hearing him pray seeing his miracles Joseph could have got the benefit of these three years in the company of Jesus they had come out into the open at the very beginning oh the secret disciple cannot have sweet fellowship with his Lord while he is disobedient to God as long as you are disobedient to God you can't have sweet fellowship with your

[35 : 58] Lord Joseph could have got the benefit of these three years then but he lost out he lost out also on the example of Jesus and the teaching of Jesus with the result that he never heard the teachings that Christ was giving to his disciples and so his stunted growth was all he had at the end of the day in other words he was suffering from spiritual malnutrition you all know what it is like to be suffering from malnutrition you see some little children in other parts of the world that have nothing to eat from one end of the day to the other but the scraps that they can forage and the rubbish tips of the place where they live and their wee bodies are shrunk their stomachs are bloated there's hardly a scrap of meat on their bones spiritually speaking bloated and yet without a scrap of flesh on his bones spiritually speaking the bible is right where it says the fear of man bringeth a snare and so it does and Joseph was caught in that snare well and truly caught in that snare and held captive oh the number of blessings he deprived himself of as he went in and helped among the pharisees hiding his life from everybody pretending that he had no place in his heart for Jesus it's a person who stands self-opening for Jesus who will enjoy fellowship with him those of us who are Christians here tonight can never forget the night that we confessed to faith to somebody and told them that it was to follow

Jesus joy filled our hearts we could not have described it for me personally it was by writing a letter to my mother at home and it took hours before I got it on to the paper that I had become a Christian again once I got these words down in the paper the joy of God flooded my heart and flooded my soul and the person who stands self-opening for Jesus will enjoy fellowship with him when we neglect our duty a barrier is erected between ourselves and our God and the oftener we disobey the stronger that barrier becomes this is the first communion season of this new building wouldn't it be good if you just took this opportunity to stand out for the gospel and for

Jesus Christ in this congregation but the person who is a secret is out on the communion and fellowship he could have with his fellow believers in the world then other believers stand outside the camp bearing Israel approach but you can't have fellowship with them because you don't want to go outside the camp bearing the approach of Christ there's a joy in fellowship with other Christians people who remember when we started off down in Glasgow there was a crowd of us who came to faith about the same time your own minister was one of them Norman McKeever and the fellowship we used to have with our fellow Christians it's indescribable there there would be people there who were old age pensioners and we were as happy and as at home with them as if they were an old age group and the fellowship was wonderful we had a prayer meeting in one another's homes the elders of the congregation early

Friday half past seven that's it gathered at our house in Clyde Park next Friday we'd be out by ten o'clock and we would catch the bus at ten o'clock back home no long nights but decent hours and there was nothing in these prayer meetings but reading the Bible singing God's praises then there would be a small cup of tea and then there would be a time of Gaelic hymn singing and it was wonderful it was heaven on earth and I'm glad that I experienced all that because my soul was strengthened my heart was encouraged when the next Monday I would have to go back into the shipyards where there was nothing but curses and swears with every second word for no time for the prosperer for anything else and we thrived on these prayer meetings as well as the usual prayer meeting in the congregation that we wouldn't miss for anything and the

Sunday services of course the Christian needs to be daily in fellowship with his Lord and in daily fellowship if he can with his fellow Christians here on earth it's of great importance that we have fellowship one with another perhaps you're here tonight and you would love to be out and out for Jesus with the members of your own family perhaps and your close friends have no interest in the things of God and they are like a barrier to you and you're holding back because of them how can I go home how can I face my family who knows but if you did your duty your family would be affected and God would bless your family and he would see them converted like yourself it's often happened if God is waiting to bless your family and friends is he waiting and saying well as soon as he takes his stand or she takes her stand on my son's side then I will open the windows of heaven and I will pour out my spirit upon that family so that there be no room to contain it

[43 : 51] I've seen it happening again and again down through the years of my ministry by being a sacred disciple you're not doing much by way of encouraging your loved ones to follow Jesus I have been I have through families we had a young girl of 11 or 12 in Stornoway when I was there she started coming to the prayer with me and she started following Jesus and her father saw her with a Bible under her arm going out and he went as they say nuts who got wild and he said if I get a hold of that Bible I'm going to throw it in the fire but she persisted and dodged to and carried on with her witnessing for God it wasn't long after that that the father himself came out of the glue into the congregation once in the morn and he sat there fuming angry and he said to his wife going out of the church you've been talking to the minister about me and I'm going to the kind of life

I have been living as you see he was an alcoholic his wife said no I haven't said a thing he came out in the evening again and he was there in the festive after the evening service waiting like a small child wanting to know God wanting salvation for his soul and he was one of the brightest Christians that I had in my congregation he was a deacon and then one night he went to bed he never woke up the next morning he was dead beside his wife but he had made a witness of Christ then his wife came to know Christ as Saviour

Christ and the whole family of them came eventually to let three girls I remember ride and the three girls became Christians in a very short time a person here comes to saving faith in Christ and the first opportunity becomes a member of the church the other members of the family get to know about it and God draws them to himself too maybe an uncle then my in some way hears that his nephew has become a Christian and he starts coming to church himself and that's how it went and we saw hundreds converted during my 13 years in Stormy we started off with 160 members on the roll and we left

Stormy with 350 members on the roll and I can vouch for any one of them that they were soundly converted soundly saved and some of them went in for the ministry of the church and went off to mission stations abroad as missionaries perhaps you're here tonight and you'd love to be at an end for Christ but friends are stopping you what would they say about you well who knows but they would join with you if you took your stand is God waiting for you to take your stand for Jesus before he blesses your family and keeping back the blessing from your family by not following the Savior Lord will heart you come up is when we have heard of him and we know this is indeed

Christ the savior of the world. That's what happens when somebody is out and out for Christ. You have only one life to live. You haven't got long in this world, so make the most of it.

[49 : 03] The Results of Secret Discipleship. Well, the finer thing, the remedy for Secret Discipleship.

No amount of reasoning, no amount of arguing will constrain any person to stand up and be counted as one of the followers of Jesus Christ.

Until that person's heart is flooded with the love of God. When your heart is full of the love of God, then nothing will stand in your way. You'll face anybody and anything.

And you won't be afraid of your friends. You won't be afraid of your workmates because the love of God will be so full in your heart that you will face even a lion if it came up against you.

you will need to be seeing all these things happening more and more. When your heart is full of love for God and full of the grace of God, then you don't need to be invited twice to come forward to the session and come forward to sit at the Lord's table and profess Christ.

[50 : 21] I was converted on the 15th of August when the communion said the gardener said well until October. And I was anxious. What was I to do?

How would you go about becoming a member of the church? Not wanting to stay away but wanting to be there with God's people and why it hushes wouldn't keep me.

And I can't understand people who are afraid afraid of standing up for Jesus and to profess him. They couldn't keep me back.

Paul put it like this in his second letter to the Corinthians 5 and verse 14 For the love of Christ compels us because we judged us that if one died for all then all died.

And he died for all that those who live should live no longer for themselves but for him who died for them and rose again. We believe that as Jesus hung on that cross that Joseph of Arimathea was lurking around somewhere in the background among the crowd.

[51 : 45] He had seen the darkness that covered the earth for three hours. He had felt the earth shaking and he had seen the rocks splitting. And above all he had seen the wonderful love and patience of Jesus.

maybe he heard Jesus praying Father forgive them for they know not what they do. And the meaning of the cross began to dawn upon him in a new way and things slotted into place for him and he saw things that he had never seen before.

And as the Roman soldier plunged his spear into his the saviour's side and blood and water came out and Joseph of Arimathea would say I've had enough.

I've been a coward too long. I've moaned in the shadows long enough. Yes, too long. I must do something for him even if it would cost me my position in the Jewish church who cares.

Mark records that he came and taking courage these are Mark's words chapter 15 verse 43 and taking courage went into Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

[53 : 14] Matthew agrees with him and writes verse 58 this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. The authorised version I think says and begged begged the body of Jesus.

You see relations could claim the body of a victim by Roman law and they could take it away and bury it. But none of the relatives of Jesus were in a position to do that for they were from Galilee and had no tombs in Jerusalem so their hands were tied.

So it was good that Joseph stepped in and braved the hostility of Pilate and the resentment that was in his heart.

You see Pilate was in a foul mood that day. He was in a foul mood all that day and the bad mood was because the Jews had made him to do something that he didn't want to do.

They made him crucify Jesus and give him over to be crucified. He didn't want to do it. But he was pushed because they were saying if you are going to let this man go free you're not Caesar's friend.

[54 : 41] We'll tell Caesar what you did. And so they held a gun to his head. That angry sin in the way he backed.

What I have written I have written is it? He asked if he could change the superscription. He said no I will not. This one thing you're not going to make me do.

Done enough for you today. When the Jewish leaders asked him to change the superscription he was angry.

But Joseph's heart was different from what it was at the beginning because God had filled his heart with love. Perfect love casts out fear as John says in his first letter 4 and 18.

Joseph goes up to Pilate's palace and he knocks on the door. There is no earthly game for him going up and taking the body of Jesus.

[55 : 48] He would be mocked by other palaces and probably thrown out of the sanctuary. He would most certainly not be allowed to partake of the Passover feast. because he had touched a dead body.

Pilate could not understand why anyone would want the body of Jesus. But he did not see what was in Joseph's heart.

That's why he couldn't understand. hand. You see Jesus had become precious to Joseph of Arimathea just as Peter later wrote and said, therefore to you who believe he is precious.

And if you were there that day I'm sure you would also want to do something for Jesus. took the death of Jesus to melt down and mow the heart of Joseph.

And eternity alone will reveal the number of men and women and boys and girls who came to faith down the years as they thought about Jesus dying for them on the cross.

[57 : 03] How can you not love him? how can you not love him? For he has done so much for you. As Joseph takes the body of Jesus down from the cross, the women were gone.

They were glad that he had stepped in. But then they heard a scuffling and there was another person coming through the shadows to hurt Joseph.

Matthew doesn't say anything about him, but John does. Nicodemus says who first came to Jesus by night and he brings with him, says John 19, 39, a mixture of myrrh and annos, about a hundred pounds.

Oh, how lovingly they would take that body down from the cross, take out the name of Jesus, and lift him between them, and the tears should be in their eyes.

They knew it so well, you see. They had been in the same Jewish court of the church together, Nicodemus and Joseph.

[58 : 29] Nicodemus was a lecturer in the Jewish church, lecturer in theology. Joseph was one of the phallisies.

Picture the conversation if you can. Nicodemus, my friend, I'm so glad to see you. I have been such a coward all these years.

I should have stood up for him long ago, but I was too scared. Nicodemus would say, tell me about it, Joseph. I'm not any better than you are.

I should have stood up for him as well long ago. And you know this, Joseph, I went to see him a few years ago at night time.

I was afraid. I was afraid. People would see me. And I had a talk with him. And he told me something that shocked me and something that has been with me ever since.

[59 : 41] He said to me, Nicodemus, you must be born again. If you're not born again, Jesus said to me, you'll never get to the kingdom of heaven.

You'll never be in heaven. I too am ashamed that I didn't stand up for him more. And they took the blessed body and they put it in the tomb that Joseph had made for himself dug out of a rock face.

And as they looked at the nail prints and the spear wound and the scars the thorns had made of his brow, and as they looked at his face, black and blue with the punches and the slaps that they had given him the day before, God, they would say to one another, he did all that for us.

He did that because he loved us, he loved you, and he loved me. Where does this leave you to narrate?

God has spoken to you. He's not a minister, not a preacher, but God. And he's speaking to you in the depth of your heart at this very moment.

[61 : 10] And he's telling you the reasons for secret discipleship. He has been telling you the results of secret discipleship. And he's been telling you the remedy, the only remedy for secret discipleship.

I have done my bit as God's messenger lends over to you. and you will be accountable for this night.

When the books are opened, there will be a page there the night the first sermon was preached in the new building of the High of the North Harris Free Church.

And your name will be done as being in the sense. what else will be written against your name? That you went home because you were ashamed of Jesus, ashamed to own your Saviour book.

And will it be down in that book that evening you closed in the offer of salvation and that you took your stand for the first time on the side of Christ.

[62 : 37] May God bless you these few thoughts on this word. It's very great. Heavenly Father, we pray to Lamb, of all share, standing to trade opinions, wondering what to do, wondering if they will have the courage to stand up for Christ.

Or will they put it by another time. O Lord, we've no guarantee that we'll ever see another communion season.

Perhaps for some days this is the last one on earth. Hear us in our prayers and help anyone to make their calling and election short in this service tonight.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Continue closing to God's prayers in heaven number 481 481 Stand up, stand up for Jesus his soldiers at the cross.

Lift high his glory banner that must not suffer loss. From victory to victory his army he shall lead.

[63 : 58] Every foe is back. Christ is Lord and Jesus Christ the love of God and fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide upon you and upon all whom you love and upon all God's people here and everywhere both now and forever more Amen.

Amen.