

4.9.22 am

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Date: 04 September 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see all of you and good to see a number of visitors with us as well today.

You're very welcome. It's good to see especially a new family that have joined us today from Ukraine, the Dovhodkos. So I did try this morning to just do a little bit of Ukrainian. So, Dobruvu Ranko, Laskavo Prisomo. And I think that means good morning and welcome. So let's try and remember that. It's good to have you. It's good to have everyone today and a warm welcome.

There's tea and there's coffee after the service. If you're able to stay behind, please do so. It would be good to get the chance to meet together. Intimations have been going round before the service began. The evening service is at 6, which I'll take myself, God willing.

Ladies' Fellowship on Mondays, Little Fish's Enrode to Recovery on Tuesdays, as usual, and the prayer meeting on Wednesday, as usual, as well. Services next Sunday, 11 and 6, both will be taken by myself, God willing.

[1 : 09] And again, there's been an intimation there about the defibrillator. Now that the latest community defibrillator has been installed outside the church, we're seeking expressions of interest for volunteers to attend a training session sometime in the autumn on how to use the device and learn some basic life-saving skills.

There's a sign-up sheet at the door for volunteers. And once you've got an idea of numbers, we can organise a training evening as soon as possible. And I think Cammie's the main contact for that. I don't see him, but he's probably here somewhere. Blytheswood Shoebox Appeal. As we're starting to think about that, we heard about Blytheswood on Wednesday. Next week, we're collecting toiletries, toothpaste and toothbrushes.

And there's boxes in the foyer for collection. ETS Saturday courses resume on 17th of September. And there's attendance either online or in Stornway Free Church.

I know there's quite a few who've done it from the congregation here and have really enjoyed it and benefited from it. So if you'd like more information or to go to that, have a chat with Duncan.

[2 : 22] And the final thing is just to note that two weeks from today, God willing, we'll have a communion weekend. And for those who may be thinking about coming forward to the Lord's Table for the first time, please be encouraged to come forward and speak to me or to any of the elders just to have a discussion about that.

You don't need to, but I'm here. I'm very happy to meet with anyone in advance of that. So these, I think, are all the notices. And we'll begin now this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise from Psalm 100.

The words will be on the screen in just a minute. Psalm 100. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Serve with mirth as praise forth tell.

Come ye before him and rejoice. We'll stand to sing and we sing to God's praise. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him, sir, with mirth this praise forth tell. Come ye before him and rejoice.

[3 : 53] Know that the Lord is God indeed. Without our aid he did us make.

We are his work he done us free. And for his sheep he doth stay.

Oh, enter then his gates with grace.

Approach with joy his courts unto. Praise Lord and bless his name always.

For it is simply so to do. For why the Lord our God is good.

[5 : 16] His mercy is forever sure. His truth at all times pervist too.

And shall from age to age tend to. God's grace.

Amen. Amen. We are going to pray together. One of the things that is good to be able to do as we pray.

As we pray we come to God. We speak to God. We draw near to him. and also when we pray we can carry people who are perhaps not with us and some who are with us to God. Remember the picture that we have where friends of a man who was paralyzed, they carry their friend to Jesus, they let them down through the roof for they bring them to Jesus and we can do that in prayer, we can carry people to God in prayer and ask that he'll help them and a couple of people I want to highlight today just as we pray so we can be praying not just here but in our own quiet time. We've got little baby Nancy Kate with us and we've been praying for her, we're delighted to see her and welcome her into the congregation and she's struggling a wee bit with her health just now so Mackenzie and Ian have asked me to just make you aware of this so that you'll be praying. She's got a, you think they have a, you think that she has a rare kind of genetic condition that makes it difficult for her to process protein, is it?

Which means that there's a whole lot of complications up ahead if that isn't managed so it's not crystal clear yet they have a meeting tomorrow just to get some more clarity on it but they would appreciate our prayers so let's be praying for little Nancy Kate. And also Neil Cameron, back and forth to visit him, Neil's not been well for quite a while and he said that it's okay if I share with the congregation that they found a tumour in his kidney so he's waiting for tests and biopsies and these kind of things but again he said the more people who are praying about this the better. So I know some people can be very private about struggles, other people would like us to pray for them and with them which I think is a great thing to do. So let's not just now but continually be praying for those who are struggling so let's pray. Our Father we thank you for this day and we thank you for this gift that you've given to us of prayer. We thank you that we can raise our voices as we sing your praise. We thank you that we we sing your word and as we sing your word we are reminded of who you are. You are the God who has made us and you are the God who who calls us every one of us wherever we are from all people on earth that dwell. We are called to sing to the Lord with cheerful voice and we thank you that we have so many reasons to to lift our voices to you in praise. We thank you that you are the God who is good, the God who cares for us, who feeds us, who who who tends us like a good shepherd tends the flock and we thank you that we hear the voice of Jesus even in that psalm as we think about the the words he spoke in the New Testament saying I am the the good shepherd the one who lays down my life for the sheep and so we thank you for the the extent of your love for us Father that you would send your son Jesus into this world to live with us and to die for us so that we could have everlasting life if we believe in him.

[9 : 37] We thank you Lord that in prayer we can come to you and we can bring others to you whom we love and whom we care for and whom we are aware are struggling and so we do pray for little Nancy today. We ask Lord that you would be near to her we pray that your hands would be upon her we pray that you would be with Mackenzie and Ian as they meet with medical people tomorrow and ever over the next few days. We pray that there would be clarity over the struggles that she has and we ask Lord that if it's your will that you would lay your hands of healing upon her that she would grow up to be strong and healthy and to know you and to walk with you. We thank you for the children. We thank you Lord that as we prayed for them we see them coming into your house and we pray that they would grow up each of them to know you to know that they are loved by you and to know your blessing upon them. We pray for Neil Cameron also. We ask Lord that you would be close to him today. We thank you for him for the steadiness of his witness through the years for the encouragement that he has been to us so consistently over the years. We ask Lord that as he struggles with his health just now that you would minister to him and bless him and KTAC and we ask that as they prepare for scans and as they await clarity for the future and what requires to be done give them

Lord that sense of your peace. We know that sometimes as we wait there is such anxiety but we thank you that you are the God who calls us to cast all our anxiety upon you because you care for us. So be with those who struggle Lord we pray. We think of those who struggle with addictions and we bring them to you in prayer asking that you would break the chains that bind them and give to them that freedom. We pray for those who are grieving today. We think of the family and friends of Ethel McAnally and we ask Lord that you would comfort them as they grieve and we think also of the friends and family of Norma Miller. Lord that you would draw near to them also. That they would know your peace. That they would know the compassion of God as they are remembered by us and

as we seek to bring them to you in prayer. And we thank you Lord for all who are with us today. We thank you for each other. We thank you that as we come together to your house we are encouraged and we pray that you would bless each one of us. You know our needs. You know our situations. We pray for those visiting with us today. Those on holiday. Bless them Lord. We pray give them times of refreshment. And we thank you for those who have come with us for the first time today from Ukraine.

And we ask Lord that you would bless them as a family. And as they think of loved ones, friends and family back home. We pray that you would be near to them also. We pray for peace in that troubled land.

And we thank you Lord that we can come to you in prayer. The God who is sovereign over all things. So hear our prayers. Take away our sin. Lead us and guide us by your spirit. For we pray these things in Jesus name.

[13:04] And for Jesus sake. Amen. Boys and girls if you would like to come forward please. If you want to. It's good to hear little Effie.

She's found her voice. And that's a good thing. Thank you. How's everyone today? Good. Good. Good.

See when you're young. Am I young? No. I'm not. But see when you're young like you are. You hear lots of things.

Songs and stuff on TV. And you guys remember them. Much better than older people like me. And sometimes years and years down the line when you're older.

The things that you heard when you were little. They're still with you. So. I was reading through the Bible this week for the passage that we'll come to in a wee while.

[14:05] And there was an advert. I was reading about Peter. Do you know the story about Peter? The disciple. And Peter. He was a disciple of Jesus.

He did lots of good things. But he struggled. And he fell really badly. He let Jesus down very badly towards the end. But. Although he fell down a little.

Jesus didn't leave him down. Jesus made sure that he got back up. So. This song came into my mind. And an advert came into my mind. So I went and looked for it. And if the TV works.

We'll give it a try. So. This is what adverts looked like when I was a boy. Bye. There's a wonderful world of wobbly weevils.

Daddy and mom, your sis and brother too. Helping your kids learn about the world we live in. Doing things families do. Lovable weevils are wobbling round.

[15:04] Weevils wobble but they don't fall down. There's just nothing like them anywhere around. Weevils wobble but they don't fall down. Romper room makes weeble toys.

There you go. Just like the adverts today isn't it? Not really no. So you won't have. Do any of you have. Any of you ever had a weeble? No.

Well we look at some of the older people over here. Put your hands up if you ever had a weeble. Gordon. Gordon. This man over here. Marty. Who else had a weeble?

Ross. I bet he had a whole army of them. Taffy did you have your hand up? No. No. So tell me. You saw on the screen. Some of you had them in your house. What was the thing about weebles that made them weebles? Weevils wobble but they don't fall down. Weevils wobble but they don't fall down.

[16:02] So you could push them and they would go way down like that. But then they would pop back up. You know you get some toys. And I don't know what this is.

I find it in the creche. And it doesn't take much does it? Down it goes. But you get other toys. I find this one.

It's the closest I could get to a weeble today. You can push it. And it goes all the way over. But does it actually fall down?

It doesn't fall down does it? It just bounces back up. And the reason I'm telling you this is because. This is what's true about disciples of Jesus.

If we are truly disciples of Jesus. What's a disciple of Jesus? It's someone who trusts Jesus. And if we trust Jesus.

[17:02] Callum. You're hiding in behind that. If we trust Jesus. If we become Christians. Are we perfect? After that. No.

What do we struggle with? Pardon? What do we still struggle with? Father has got the answer there in the front row.

We struggle with sin. Sometimes it can be a bad temper. Sometimes it can be. We find it hard not to say words that we shouldn't. Sometimes we can be a bit lazy.

But we all struggle with sin. And. Yet when we're Christians. Although we struggle with sin. And although we're not perfect.

Although we wobble. Like this. Like the weeboats. We don't fall all the way down. Now why is that?

[18:03] How is it. That once you're a Christian. Although you wobble. And make a mess of things at times. You can't be lost. Is it because we are strong? So how is it?

Who's strong? God is strong. That's right. And Jesus has said to us. If we truly trust him. Although we won't be perfect.

Although we'll have lots of wobbles. Although sometimes we'll wander away from him. He said. No one will be lost. If they trust me. He keeps on picking us up.

When we wobble. He makes sure. That we are held up. And that's good news for us. If we're Christians. Because we know that we. We have all kinds of wobbles.

But we. We're thankful that. That Jesus holds us up. And for some people. Who might be thinking about. Becoming Christians. Or some people. Who might be thinking about. Going to the.

[18:59] The Lord's table. For the first time. And I'll turn and speak to everyone. For this. I often. Hear people. Who are thinking about. Going forward. To take communion. For the first time.

And they say. No no. I can't do it. I can't go forward. Because. Because what if I make a mess of things. And I'll say. You won't make a mess of things. Just like me. But when we.

Say sorry to Jesus. He forgives us. Of our mess. And there's other people. Who say. I can't go forward. Because. What if I stop. And what if I. What if I stop.

Being a Christian. But Jesus. Has said. That's impossible. If we belong to him. We'll always. Belong to him. So let's.

Be encouraged. By that. And let's pray. Lord. We thank you. That you love us. We thank you. That you care for us. We thank you. That you've promised.

[19:55] That when you take hold of us. You never let us go. And we know Lord. That we. Like Peter the disciple. Will. Sometimes. Have wobbles. Will sometimes.

Do the wrong thing. And say the wrong thing. Often. We'll. We'll still sin. We thank you. We thank you. That you've promised. That when we confess. Our sin. You'll forgive us.

And we thank you. That you've told us. You've promised Lord. That once you. Take hold of us. You'll never let us go. But you'll always. Hold us. Fast. So we thank you.

That if we're Christians. That's. Promises. That we can. Be thankful for. And if we're not Christians. We thank you. That we can. Be encouraged. To come to you. Knowing that. If we come to you.

You will never. Let us go. And you will never. Let us down. And we pray these things. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing now. A new hymn. And.

[20:50] I think most of us. Will have heard of it. I don't think we've sang it. Here. Before. So hang us all. Maybe play it through once. And then. We'll stand. And we'll sing. When I fear.

My faith will fail. Christ. Will hold me fast. And that's the. The thing that we want to. To remember. From the children's talk. Although. We wander. And wobble. Jesus holds us fast.

For our lives. Thank you. Thank you.

Come here. When I fear my faithful fail, Christ will hold me fast.

When the tempter would prevail, he will hold me fast. I could never keep my hope, through my sphere of power.

[22:35] For my life is often cold, he must hold me fast. He will hold me fast, he will hold me fast.

For my Savior loves me so, he will hold me fast. For my life is often cold, he must hold me fast.

Christ will hold me fast. Precious in his holy sight, he will hold me fast.

In what hath my soul be lost, his promises shall ask. But by him that starstruck cross, he will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so, he will hold me fast.

[23:59] For my life is often cold, he must hold me fast. Christ will hold me fast.

Justice has been satisfied, he will hold me fast. Praise with him to endless life.

He will hold me fast. Till our faith is turned to sight. When he comes to last.

He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so, he will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me fast.

[25 : 17] Okay, the boys and girls who want to go to Sunday school, can head through now. And we'll turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 22.

Luke chapter 22. Luke chapter 22. Luke chapter 22.

And we'll read from verse 24. Through to the end of verse 38. This is God's word. Also a dispute arose among them.

As to which of them was considered to be the greatest. Jesus said to them. The kings of the Gentiles lord over them. And those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest. And the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves?

[26 : 43] Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom.

Just as my father conferred one on me. So that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon.

Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon. That your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.

But he replied, Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you and to death. Jesus answered, I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.

Jesus asked them, when I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything? Nothing, they answered. He said to them, but now if you have a purse, take it.

[27 : 44] And also a bag. And if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written, and he was numbered with the transgressors. And I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me.

Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment. The disciples said, see, Lord, here are two swords. That is enough. He replied.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again now to God's praise the last two verses of Psalm 40.

Psalm 40 verses 16 and 17 in Gaelic. A reminder of our weakness and our need for the Lord's strength.

In thee let all be glad and joy, who seek in thee abide. Who thy salvation loves. Say still, the Lord be magnified. I am poor and needy. Yet the Lord of me a care doth take.

[28 : 43] Thou art my help and saviour, my God no tarring make. These two verses of Psalm 40. We remain seated to sing in Gaelic. In Gaelic. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 23] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

As we wait before you and ask that you would speak to us, we pray, Lord, for help that we may be enabled to listen, that our hearts would be softened and that we would be responsive to your word. We pray, Lord, just not for ourselves, but for the congregations around us, the different churches that meet.

[33 : 38] And watch at the Lord, we pray, and watch at the Lord, we pray, and watch at a distance.

But that you see.

What does it look like?

We think, and we think about a lawyer, and we think about a lawyer, we think about a lawyer, and we think about a lawyer, and we think about a lawyer.

And then there's the chef, you know, with the white apron, and the big white hat, and the big white tummy sometimes to match it. But the chef, and the chef, we're the ■ the last few weeks and gives us a real life picture and Jesus gives us a real life lesson on what his disciples should look like and yet also what his disciples often do look like and the should and the do often can be can be quite

different so four things today if I get through this in time the first thing that we'll see is disciples of Jesus are servants disciples are servants look at verse 24 I'll give you the four points actually just so you know where we're going in case we don't get there disciples are servants that's the first thing that we see the second thing that we see going from going into verse 28 is disciples have stickability we don't just fade away and give up at the first sign of trouble or difficulty the third thing is disciples strengthen each other that's our calling we strengthen each other particularly when we fall we're to get back up and strengthen each other and the final thing is disciples need scripture we need to be in the bible if we're going to survive and thrive and progress so first of all disciples are servants look at verse 24 it says there also a dispute arose among them that's the disciples as to which of them which disciple was considered to be greatest so that's what we see in this room they're squabbling the disciples with each other and we should just take a moment to remember the context in terms of where they were and what they were doing they're they're in this little upper room and they're with Jesus and they're at the Lord's table

[38 : 30] Jesus has just told them and Jesus has just shown them as he took the bread and the wine that he is about to suffer on the cross for their sake Jesus has said to them my body will be given for you my blood will be poured out for you to save you to save you from your sins so Jesus is beginning to feel the weight of the suffering of our sin upon his shoulder that he can begin to feel the reality of that suffering and he shared it with them that he's on the brink of this and not only that Jesus has just said to the group of disciples I'm going to suffer for you and yet one of you twelve is just about to betray me and so the disciples are in shock in this upper room and the first thing they say to Jesus is is it me Lord am I the one that's going to betray you they all look at themselves they examine themselves which which is the right thing to do but then it seems they go very quickly from examining self to examining each other they go from looking inside to that God that the Holy Spirit would search their hearts to see if betrayal was in their hearts but then they very quickly lift their eyes from self and they look at each other and they start to have this argument about who's the greatest which seems almost unbelievable that at this point in light of everything that Jesus has said to them and shared with them that they would behave in this way it seems almost unbelievable that in this their last quiet time with Jesus as a group of disciples they would have this dispute and yet Luke tells us this because it's true this is what happened makes the disciples look terrible but this is what happened and it stuns us on the one hand to see how crass they could be but then on the other hand as we step back from this for a moment we feel a little bit of relief because as we look at the disciples we see ourselves don't we because are we not quick to become proud are we not quick to let our egos rise back up are we not those who are quick to want to lift ourselves up and put other people down see although we don't like to admit this you know whether it's on a sports field or whether it's in a classroom or whether it's in the workplace or whether it's on social media we like to be the greatest we like to have the most likes and approvals we want people to look up to us we don't like it when people look down on us and when they do

look down on us there tends to be a squabble so that's what's happening in this room the disciples are bickering with each other about who's the greatest so how does Jesus respond look at verse 25 Jesus said to them the kings of the Gentiles lord over them and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors he's saying to the disciples those who are not Christians those who are who are who are not my disciples that's the way that they behave thinking about the Pharisees the religious leaders lording over everyone Jesus says that's the way they are you're not supposed to be that way you're not to be like that verse 26 instead the greatest among you should be like the youngest and in that culture the youngest were the ones who had no status no position no power and the one who rules says Jesus like the one who serves for who is greater the one who is at the table or the one who serves but is not is it not the one who is at the table but I am among you as one who serves so it's an awful conversation it's a terrible correction that Jesus has to give and yet it's not the first time that he's had to give it

I think about Mark 10 a little earlier James and John come quietly to Jesus and they say to Jesus can we have special seats in heaven can we have better seats than the rest of the disciples can we be can we be those who are slightly more elevated than the others and the rest of the disciples get to hear about what they've asked for and there's a spat there's a bad atmosphere and so Jesus has to sit them all down and he says to them in Mark 10 the son of man he's speaking about himself when he uses that term the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many and now Jesus here as he prepares to leave this upper room is preparing to give

his life as a ransom for many as the Lord's servant as the one Isaiah describes in Isaiah 53 in the surrounding chapters the Lord's servant he's about to be bruised for us he's about to be crushed for us he's about to suffer in our place as the Lord's servant and Jesus is aware of that as he comes to the cross and he says to the disciples you're not to seek to take the place of lordship over others you're to serve as I am serving and then he went to the cross to do what he said he would do and then after the cross Jesus continues to teach this truth to his disciples to the apostle Paul who looks back on the cross and says to us

Philippians 2 that says do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit rather in humility value others above yourselves not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interest of others in your relationships with each other have the same mindset as Christ Jesus who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage rather he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death even death on a cross disciples are to be servants we're not to be those type of people who are so entitled and think everyone should be serving us we're to be servants to become a disciple of Jesus we need to repent of pride we need to turn away from pride to become

[47 : 35] Christians we need to see that we are sinners we need to see that there's nothing in us to be proud of we need to come to the way that the hymn writer came when he wrote this line nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I claim that's that's the entry point of discipleship we can't carry pride in to a Christian walk we can't be saved and yet be proud and seek to assert ourselves over and above other people we've got to repent of that and then if we are to be useful and united disciples of Jesus we need day by day hour by hour to be repenting of pride and determining in God's strength to serve him and to serve the people he puts around us every day you know if we took this seriously all the disputes all the friction all the division all the tension that plagues the church would be gone if we listen to what Jesus said and determined in his strength not to think highly of ourselves but to think more highly about everyone around us not to seek to serve ourselves but to seek to serve the people around us disciples are servants second point disciples have stickability

Jesus says in verse 28 you are those he's speaking to his disciples here he says you are those who have stood by me in my trials now I think we should in the first instance just pause to let the grace and the kindness of Jesus register with us because think about the context that Jesus spoke that Jesus spoke that line into big dispute a room full of pride and friction and Jesus and the first thing he says to them is you are those who have stood by me in my trials such a gracious kind thing to say I mean very often when we've been disappointed or annoyed by someone as Jesus must have been we tend to react don't we when someone disappoints us when someone annoys us we may react with a bad tempered retort or a short answer or we may roll our eyes we may sigh we may give people the cold shoulder we may say

I'm done with them and just hold people at a distance because of one thing that they said or one thing that they did that tends to be our sinful response but there's not a trace of that from Jesus in spite of how disappointed he must have been with them in this moment in spite of the ugliness of the pride of the disciples in spite of their indifference to his impending sufferings that he's just shared with them in spite of their constant slowness to learn Jesus he doesn't scold them doesn't turn away from them he doesn't say I'm just done with you guys he says the kindest thing to them he says you are those who stood by me in my trials what did

Jesus mean well he meant simply I think that they were still with him there was many people who had at one time been following Jesus and they'd left him John 666 tells us that as the crowds go from big to small but the disciples were still with him and yes they had messed up many times and yes they would hardly be out the door of the upper room and they would mess up again they would scatter from Jesus and not stand with Jesus and Jesus knew everything that they would do he knew all the failures in the past in the present and in the future and yet he speaks this word of grace and reassurance to these imperfect disciples he says to them you have stickability he's commending them for that he says

I called you to be with me on day one and you're still with me and so you will be forever with me and he says to them in verse 29 and I confer on you a kingdom just as my father conferred one on me so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel now what is Jesus doing there as he speaks to them well he's giving them a window

into another world they're falling out because their eyes are on this world and Jesus in these moments it's like he opens a window into heaven and he says to them why are you fighting over all the stuff in this world when it all just fades away he's saying why are you fighting over position and power and status and who's going to have a throne in this world when I've told you already I'm preparing a place for you in a world that's to come that's beyond your wildest dreams why are you focused on things below when you need to lift your eyes to things above that was the lesson for them and that's the lesson for all of us you know if all we can see is this world our bank balance and our business account and our possessions and our cars and our houses and our education if all we can see is the stuff of this world we're going to squabble and fight and strain to get our pause on it but when we have a vision of heaven then we can be thankful for the things that God allows us to hold in this world but we won't hold it too tightly because we know we're not going to hold it for long and when we have a vision of heaven and the place that

[55 : 41] Jesus has prepared for those who trust him in heaven we're not going to care too much about our status and our position and what people think of us in this world because what will matter above everything else is what Jesus thinks of us and when our eyes are on Jesus and our home with him even when trials hit and when we really struggle and when we might be hated for being followers of Jesus we will have stickability because our eyes are not simply on the here and now but they're on the there and there which is much greater much better much longer I mean imagine putting all your investment into an activity that's going to last for five minutes and pouring all your savings and all your energy and all your time into something that's going to last for five minutes and neglecting something that's going to last for a thousand years and eternity is not a thousand years it's much longer than that and so Jesus says to the disciples you're fighting about all the stuff of this world eyes off this world eyes on me eyes on heaven and you will have stickability third point disciples of

Jesus strengthen each other I remember thinking back to nursery days I remember the first time in nursery when a bigger stronger boy pushed me remember when I was growing up there was giant haystacks and big daddy every Saturday morning on the television pushing each other and knocking chunks out of each other and there was rocky films and all that kind of things so you know as a wee boy you were growing up and you were playing football and you were wrestling and boxing and all that kind of stuff that's just the world we were in and when you're four years old you think you're the strongest man in the world you think no one can touch you but I remember going in from my little house where I had two sisters who were younger and weaker going into the boxing ring of nursery I remember the first day somebody pushed me and I thought oh didn't expect that as I went backwards

I realised in that moment he's stronger than me it was one of these moments of realisation that I wasn't as strong as I first thought and Peter the disciple spiritually speaking he hadn't had that moment of realisation yet Peter the disciple is a lovable character he is so full of good intentions he's so sincere but he's a sinner and he's weak he's full of bravado but he's weak and Jesus tries to tell him that he's not as strong as he thinks Jesus says to him in verse 31 Simon Simon that was his old name before he started following

Jesus Jesus gave him a new name Peter which meant rock and yet Jesus as he begins this conversation he's saying to Simon you're not as strong you're not as rock like as you think you are so he calls him twice by his old name then he says Satan has asked to sift you as wheat and then the text there although it's not clear in the English the you there is plural Jesus he speaks to Simon Peter but he says Satan has asked to sift all of you disciples as wheat the picture was when wheat would be put into this kind of sift type thing and it would be shaken furiously so he takes that picture and he says Satan has asked to sift you as wheat to shake you violently all of you but then Jesus in verse 32 says I have prayed for you Simon and the you there is singular Jesus says Satan has asked us to sift all of you as wheat but Simon as he makes eye contact with Simon I have prayed for you personally that you are singular Simon faith may not fail and when you singular Simon have turned back you Simon strengthen your brothers it's very personal and if I can just hit pause there for a moment being a Christian if you're here this morning you're wondering what actually is a

[61 : 37] Christian being a Christian is one who is in a personal relationship with Jesus that's what Christian is disciples of Jesus are those whom Jesus knows personally and walks with personally and prays for still personally by name that's what makes a disciple a disciple not having a

membership certificate or a stamp of your home church on it that doesn't make you a disciple not eating the bread and drinking the wine there's no magic in that Jesus did that and yet he wasn't a true disciple what makes a disciple a disciple is knowing and being known by

Jesus personally where we come to him personally and say I am a sinner will you please be my saviour will you come and live in my heart will you walk with me will you talk with me will you pray for me and that's what Simon had with Jesus that's what Peter had with Jesus he had this very personal relationship with him but Peter's problem was he didn't know how weak he was and how sinful he was so Peter replies in verse 33 Lord I am ready to go with you to prison and to death we can imagine him looking at all the other disciples saying

I don't know about these guys they're not up to much but I'll never let you down and Jesus answered verse 34 I tell you Peter before the rooster crows today you will deny three times that you know me and he did now rewind for a moment was Jesus prayer for Peter answered because remember he says Peter I've prayed for you was Jesus prayer for Peter answered well yes it was how do we know it was answered well because Peter kept on keeping on yes he denied Jesus he sinned publicly he sinned disgracefully but unlike Judas Peter repented he turned back to Jesus and he was forgiven and he did strengthen his brothers once he turned back and we could say that today still as God's word is open he's still strengthening his brothers and his sisters through the testimony of Peter I mean aren't you glad that these failures failures that are like like like like Peter are left in and not airbrushed out aren't you glad that these failures where Peter denies Jesus aren't you glad that they're left in and not edited out because if they were edited out what hope would we have because we know surely we are failures and as we look at them we see us because we fall we fail like Peter did but we have a saviour who's still praying for us and after we fall and after we fail after we sin as we repent as we come back still

Jesus calls us to strengthen each other we don't slag each other off when we fail we strengthen each other JC Ryon says have we ever fallen and by Christ's mercy been raised to newness of life then surely we are just the people who ought to deal gently with our brothers and sisters we should tell them from our own experience what an evil and bitter thing is sin we should caution them against trifling with temptation we should warn them against pride and presumption and neglect of prayer we should tell them of Christ's grace and compassion if they have ever fallen above all we should deal with them humbly and meekly remembering what we ourselves have gone through disciples support we strengthen each other to our calling and the final thing

[67 : 41] I'm out of time is disciples need scripture Jesus asked them verse 35 when I sent you without a purse bag or sandals did you lack anything nothing they said he said to them but now if you have a purse take it and also a bag and if you don't have a sword sell your cloak and buy one Jesus here is preparing for his disciples to leave him Jesus physically will not be with them anymore and he's preparing them for what's up ahead and in the days gone by in the past when the crowds were gathered around Jesus and when Jesus was popular people gave them what they needed they got supplied with things like a purse and a bag and a cloak it wasn't hard to get these things because people were generously given them but

Jesus is saying things are going to be different from here on now people are going to turn on me and because you're my disciples people are going to turn on you so he says to his disciples you're going into a battle so you will need the practical things you'll need to have them you'll need to get them and you're going to need a sword because you're going into a battle but Jesus isn't actually talking about a real iron sword he's talking about the Bible remember in Sunday school in the days when people actually used to bring Bibles and not apps you had things called sword drill the teacher would shout out Jeremiah 24 33 and everyone would get their

Bibles and turn up the text and once you had the text you read it out sword drill Bible is the sword and Jesus is saying to his disciples you're going to need to have a sword you're going to have to be in my word and he directs them then to the word he says quoting from Isaiah 53 it is written and he was numbered with the transgressors and I tell you this must be fulfilled in me yes what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment Jesus says all the sufferance Isaiah prophesied I'm about to that you're so familiar with is about to become real but the disciples just don't get it and they say to Jesus in verse 38 Lord look two swords and

Jesus says that's enough enough of that kind of talk disciples need scripture not swords and that was true back then and that's true today if you and I if we are disciples of Jesus are going to carry on keep on keeping on walking with Jesus in the battle we must be in the Bible we need to have a

sword let's pray Lord we thank you for your word and we recognize that your word is like a mirror and we look into it and we see we see much of our own reflection in it as we see the disciples and as we see the failures we see so many of the things that plague us in our lives but we pray that as we as we process these verses that we would have clarity on whether or not we are actually disciples help us to to know for sure that we are following you and if there is anyone here who is not yet following

Jesus we thank you that through even this passage the call continues to go out follow me come to me says Jesus confess your sin admit your weakness and come to me we thank you that Jesus came for sinners that he came to save us and we thank you that the call is a call to walk with you Lord Jesus through this world and we're promised that if we do that when we come to the end of this world we are carried through death into a world where there is no pain and no suffering and no division and no sin and no attacks but perfect peace so help us we pray to have our eyes upon heaven to fix our eyes upon

[73 : 21] Jesus and to follow him and we pray this in Jesus name amen we'll sing to conclude the hymn here is love vast as the ocean loving kindness as the flood when the prince of life are ransomed shed for us his precious blood who his love will not remember who can cease to sing his praise he can never be forgotten to attend see tarot days on the land of crucifixion curtains open deep and wide to the flood gates of God's mercy flowed a vast and gracious time grace on the like mighty rivers for incessant from above untapped peace and perfect justice is the guilty word in blood of the

Lord of the love of the love of the ever of my is let me seek thy kingdom only and my life be to thy praise thou alone shall be my glory nothing in this world I see thou hast quen and sanctify me but thyself has set me free in thy truth thou dost direct me by thy spirit through thy word and thy grace my need is meeting as I trust in thee my Lord of thy fullness love and pouring thy great love and power on me without measure full and boundless drawing out my heart to thee and now may the grace of our

Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more amen