

25.9.22 am

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Date: 25 September 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. And those who are visiting with us, I see a few visitors. It's very good to see you and to have you worshipping with us this morning.

There's tea and there's coffee at the end of the service. If you're able to stay behind, please do so. And it'd be good to get the chance to meet you and to catch up with you. The intimations are on the screen. They have been on the screen before the service began. I'll just quickly run through it. The Gaelic service tonight at 6 o'clock.

And that will be led by Hamish Taylor from over in Leverborough. And the service will be here.

English fellowship at half past 7. Our monthly fellowship, half past 7 tonight.

Cammy's organising this one. And I know that he's asked Ali McLeod or Ali Graver, as he's known, to share testimony. So he'll be coming over from Graver. So let's make an effort to come out and to have some time together in fellowship.

Ladies fellowship, I'm invited to meet at the church tomorrow at half past 7 to wrap Licewood boxes. Please, please bring sellotape and scissors. Little fishes as usual on Tuesday, as is Road to Recovery on Tuesday evening.

[1 : 15] On Wednesday, we have a prayer meeting, but we'll also have the annual congregational meeting. It says there that it will be on Zoom, but I think the session has decided the congregational meeting is better just to have in person.

So the congregational meeting, it will be within the context of prayer and worship, and we'll have the business aspect towards the end. But that won't be a Zoom meeting. That, I think, is much more suited to an in-person meeting.

Mother and Toddish Gallic Group in the church again on Thursday, 29th September. Details there.

And Connect for P4 to P7 this Friday at quarter to four to half past five.

Blythwood Shoebox Appeal. Yesterday was a great day, and the children served us very well.

They were very active and cheerful as they served us in the church yesterday morning. So just a word of thank you to those who organized it, who wish not to be named, and to the children who helped and who served.

[2 : 25] And to those who came along, there was quite a lot of money raised. I don't have the total figure just now. Does anybody have the figure for me? It's about 1,200, which is an incredible amount for a morning.

There is more that's gone into the basket this morning marked for Blythwood. So I guess it's up from there. And if you weren't able to come yesterday but want to make a donation, there's still opportunity to do so.

So please do that. The Christian Institute will hold a meeting on fighting for the family at the Caber Faye Hotel. That's the 4th of October. A wee bit away.

From half past seven till nine on Tuesday, 4th of October. And the service is next Sunday. The morning service will be a baptismal service.

For a long time, we had no baptisms here. We had very few over the course of time. I can glance around and see a few who are growing up who were baptized.

[3 : 26] And it's encouraging to see that. And next Sunday, God willing, we'll have the baptism service of Anna Caitlin King, who we prayed for for a long time before she came.

And as she came into the world, the first wee while was a little bit difficult for her. And we continue to pray and we continue to pray for her.

So Stuart and Joyce will be taking their vows next Sunday morning. And we look forward to that and there'll be tea and I think a cake after the service.

So be encouraged to come. 6pm evening service. It's just me doing the usual. But we open God's word and that's the focus.

I think that's all the intimations. So let's now begin this time of worship. Let's worship God and we'll sing to God's praise. The first of our praises. What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer?

[4 : 24] There is no more for heaven not to give.

He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom. My selfless love, my deep and boundless peace.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus. For my life is only back to His.

Oh, how strange and divine I can say. All is mine, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

It's dark, but I am not forsaken.

[5 : 38] For by my side the Savior He will stay. I labor on in weakness and rejoicing.

For in my need His power is dismayed. To this I hold, my shepherd will defend me.

Through the deep this valley will lead. Oh, the night has been won, and I shall overcome.

Yet not I, but through Christ in me. The faith I dread, I know I am forgiven.

The future sure, the crisis has been great. For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon.

[6 : 43] And He was raised to overthrow the grave. To this I hold, my sin has been defeated.

Jesus now, on heaven is my plea. All the chains are released, I am sin. I am free, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

With every breath I long to follow Jesus.

For He has said that He will bring me home. And day by day, I know He will renew me.

And still I stand with joy before the throne. To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus.

[7 : 48] All the glory evermore to Him. When the grace is complete, till my lips shall repeat.

Yet not I, but through Christ in me. All the grace shall repeat.

Yet not I, but through Christ in me. Yet not I, but through Christ in me. Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this year day. And we thank you for this hour of worship. And the call, the invitation that we are given to come into your presence in the name of Jesus.

[9 : 07] And because we come in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Saviour. We thank you that we are received. We thank you that as we seek to draw near to you, we have the promise that you are the God who will draw near to us.

We thank you that we have the promise that as we seek to come to Jesus, we will never be cast away. We will never be pushed back. But we will be drawn close. But we will be drawn close.

And we pray that in this hour, especially as we come together in worship, we pray that we would know the nearness of your presence.

We pray that we would know that you are God and that you are with us. Lord, that you are moving amongst us, that you are moving within us. And Lord, that you are speaking to us in our hearts.

We thank you that you know us. We'll sing in just a moment from the psalm, which reminds us that you search us and you know us. And we recognize, even with the limited vision that we have, that as we look inside ourselves, we are sinners.

[10 : 13] We fall and we fail. The good that we want to do, we so often leave undone. And the evil we want to turn away from, we so often find ourselves back in.

And so we say with the Apostle Paul, who will save me from this body of death. And we thank you that we have the answer in Jesus. And we thank you that he is our Savior, as we have sang.

We thank you that he is our Redeemer, that he is the rock of our salvation. He is the one who holds on to us when sometimes we lose our grip on you.

He is the one who promises that he will never leave us nor forsake us. He is the one who loved us so much that he came such great distance from heaven to earth to live and to die and to rise.

So that all who believe in him have the promise that we can be reconciled to God. And help us to take that in, in some measure.

[11 : 19] That we, who are finite, can know personally and intimately the God who is infinite. Help us to dwell upon the fact that everything that we see in the wonder of creation, it speaks to us of your majesty and your glory.

The vastness of the stars in the sky as we look up on a clear night. We cannot grasp such vast power.

And yet we thank you, Lord God, that you are the one who condescends to us and calls us to come to you and to find rest for our souls.

So we come this morning and we come confessing our sin and asking that you would cleanse us once more in the blood of Jesus. We have been brought, even in the first hymn there, back to the cross where Jesus died.

And we thank you that because of the fountain that was filled with blood at Calvary, all our guilty stains can be washed away. So cleanse us, we pray, as we confess our sin, as we see our sin flash before our eyes.

[12 : 34] We name it in our hearts and ask that you would cleanse us. And empty us of self because we confess that we are people who are so prone to fixate on ourself.

But we know, Lord, that we are not called to lift up self. We are not called to let self rule and reign. But we are to put the old man, the selfish self, to death so that Christ can live within us.

And we pray that that would be a reality in our lives if we are your children. And for anyone here today who is not yet a child of God, not yet one who is saved by Jesus, we pray that even in these moments, even today, Lord, that you would show them their sin and show them the loving Saviour that we see in Jesus and enable them to come and to find forgiveness of sin and rest for their souls. So be near to us, Lord, we pray, in this hour and help us. We pray for the things that we've mentioned, even in our notices, we thank you for yesterday and for the work of Blysewood.

We pray, Lord, for these shoeboxes that will go out from here and from many other places to areas in the world where there's great need. And we ask, Lord, that they would go forth with your blessing and that as food and as gifts are received for body, we pray that the message of Jesus would be heard and received and felt and known that there would be those who are in distant places that we will never meet but that you will take hold of by your grace.

[14 : 24] We pray, Lord, for the work of Blysewood and we ask that you would be with them, Lord, and that you would help all those who seek to serve you in that place. And we think of Adam as well who was here on Thursday night and the ministry you've called him to as he crosses borders, as he goes into places of danger for the sake of Jesus.

And we ask that you would continue to protect him and his wife and his family and continue to use him for your glory. Thank you for the inspiration, the challenge that he is as we listen to these testimonies that he shares.

So be with Blysewood, be with Adam, be with all those who seek to bring the gospel to far-off places and help us, we pray, in this place, in our conversations through our lives to seek to point people to Jesus.

We pray for those who are struggling today. We think of those who are sick, those who are infirm, those who would want to be here with us and who are not able to be here.

We ask that you would meet them at the point of their need. We pray for Kathy Campbell in hospital. We ask that you would be near to her and strengthen her. We pray for Marlene Mitchell and Neil Cameron and others who are at home and who are struggling with their health at this time.

[15 : 45] We ask that they would know the touch of Jesus as we pray for them, Lord. We pray that you would draw near to them and that you would help them. We thank you that Jesus is the great physician.

And for those who are grieving, those who are battling with addictions, those who feel cast down in their minds, who are low on hope, we bring them to you, Lord, and ask that you would minister to each one and help them, Lord, we pray, and help us as we bow in your presence.

Lead us by the power of your spirit and help us to do all things in accordance with your will. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come out, please?

How's everyone today?

All good, yeah? Still all got tummies full of pancakes and waffles and bacon and eggs and all the blightsewish brunch stuff. No. No, no.

[17 : 01] Back down to needing more. Now, you guys are all young, but you're all very good with these things, aren't you?

Do you think you're better than your parents? Yes. Yeah. Do you think you can work a computer and an iPad and a phone better than your mums and dads and grannies can? Yes. Yeah, yeah.

I think you're right too. See, the older that we get, the harder it seems to be for us to figure out how these things work. And the less we know about the things that are cool and the things that are uncool.

So, there's a thing that I've been hearing about the last wee while. I'm not on it. But I kept hearing people talking about it. And so, I wondered if you knew about it.

It's called Be Real. Yes. Natalie does it all the time. Okay. So, tell us, Michael, what is Be Real?

[18:04] You take a picture from the corner and make it look like your old FaceTime. Take a picture of the corner and then you take a picture from another thing. So, you take a picture of one thing and then you take a picture of another thing.

I know. Don't stress, Natalie. We're not getting you out here. John Roddy? Once a day at a random time a bit of note of a patient and then you take a video of a patient and then you click on it.

Then you take a photo and then it's like meant to be what's in front of you and then just what you're doing basically. Then you post it and then you can see once you've posted it you can see what other people have posted.

Okay. Are you on it? You're on it, yeah. He knows all about it. So, sorry? Callum? You're on it as well.

So, so once a day for those who didn't hear that once a day your phone goes ping and you get a notification and you have two minutes and in that two minutes that doesn't give you enough time to go and put your makeup on in that two minutes you have to take a picture of what's right in front of you even if it's E&A; and at the same time you have to take a picture of yourself so it's like click Farrakhar and then click what Farrakhar's seeing and so I suppose it's supposed to be why do you think it's called Be A Real?

[19:37] John Roddy? You're the expert. You're supposed to be a real. Because you're supposed to be a real aren't you? So I think we actually have a couple of Be A Real pictures for the screen.

I'm not on it but I think we have a couple of pictures for the screen of some of the well that was that was not me that was Anna.

So I was just putting the expression there on that the youth put on when they're getting photographs taken. And there's Ruthie and Anna and Grace there. There's Gordon.

Is that a knife? Looking terrifying and Ruthie there. And there's Gordon with I don't know what that is. Tuck in. Tuck in.

A big massive bag of sweets is it? I think. And there's Grace and who is that? Bethany.

[20:36] being irresponsible on the road. And there's Lois being dangerous with a big there's a I recognise that.

That is a bowl that's a tub of millionaire shortbread bites that at that time was probably quite full and now is far from full.

And Anna. So there you go. There's just a few pictures just to give you a sense of it. And it's about Be Real. Because all these other things that people have been using on phones for a while there's things like Facebook the old people I look at Facebook from time to time old people go on Facebook like me.

No one uses Facebook that's what you're saying right there. No one uses Facebook apart from the old guys like you. And then there's Instagram I'm not on that but a lot of people who are not just young but older ones too are on Instagram.

But see the thing is if you look on Facebook I'm looking around here I can see some of you people are on Facebook and Instagram and if you look on these things you'll see pictures of the post things like here's us and our family and they're all smiling and they've been in a makeup parlor for 15 minutes I think before the photograph was taken.

[21:56] There's been 57 attempts before they got one where everybody's smiling and only the perfect picture goes on. Or you'll get a picture of someone just enjoy my morning coffee.

So they're sitting there looking very calm and serene. Bible's open on the table in front of them. You know the house is immaculate but the thing is I've been in some of your houses and they're not always immaculate.

Yours is Michael but not all the houses are always immaculate. So the thing about Facebook and Instagram is it's not real. People just put on their best stuff and then other people look and think oh how come my house is a mess and their house is always beautiful or how come my hair is all sticking up and they look so immaculate.

It's because it's not real. But be real Michael is supposed to be real isn't it? But it's like be real is like it's like you're not having to dress up people are seeing you just because you've only got two minutes people are seeing you in the way that you normally are.

Now here's the question here's the big question right what do you think God wants us to be like with him?

[23 : 22] Henry be real be real God wants us to be real doesn't he? And so when we come to pray we've got to when we speak to him we want to we want to speak to him and remember that he is God so we don't speak to him in a way when we're not thinking we don't speak in a way that recognizes that almost like takes God down we remember when we pray that God is the almighty God he's powerful he's holy and so we must speak to him very carefully but at the same time he wants us to speak to him in a way that's real and he loves us and God knows Michael and Callum and Jono and Lois and Miriam and Finlay and everybody he knows us far better than we even know ourselves even me and do you think God can see the sin that's in my heart so is there any point in me pretending that it's not there no so when

I see my sin what do I do pray to God pray to God and what do we say please please forgive me see the psalm that we're going to sing in a second it says that God he searches us and he knows us but he loves us and he wants us to be real with him and to tell him about our sin so he can take it away tell him about our struggles does anybody here ever get scared yeah so when we're scared sometimes when we're with our friends and we're feeling a bit scared then we don't want to see I was speaking to Stevie Price yesterday and we were talking about how sometimes you know when maybe your daughter's up singing a song in the modern you start feeling tears coming on your eyes but he says I look at the lights like that so nobody can see that they're starting to well up because we don't want other people to see but God he wants us to know that we can be real with him and we can tell him when we're scared and we can tell him when we're worried and we can tell him whatever's going on in our lives and he loves us and he knows us and he promises he'll help us when we ask him so what are we to be with God real be real let's pray okay let's be quiet put our hands together let's close our eyes and let's pray

Lord God we thank you that you are God that you are the one who is holy and great and bigger and more amazing than we can ever imagine and yet we thank you that you're the God who knows us better than we know ourselves and you love us and we pray that you would forgive us we confess Lord we tell you that we are sinners and there are things that hide in our hearts that other people can't see but we know that you can see them and so we pray that as we think of them even just now that you would take them away we thank you that Jesus your son came into this world to shed his blood so that our sin can be taken away and so take away our sin we pray as we think about it and we confess it and help us Lord we pray with the things that worry us with the things that sometimes scare us we know that we can hide that from other people but we can't hide anything from you and so we ask that you would help us to trust you and to call on your name when we're struggling to hear our prayers be with the boys and girls bless them help them to trust you help them to know you and help them to be real with you and not just the boys and girls but all of us help us Lord to remember that you know everything and we can come to you and must come to you just as we are and we ask this in Jesus name Amen we're going to sing now sing Psalms 139 and we'll sing from verses 1 to verse 10 I think it is

Lord you have searched my life and know my heart and we'll stand to sing Lord you have searched my life and know my heart you search me and you know me through and through you know me when I sit and when I rise and from afar my thoughts are known to you you see my going out and lying down and you have perfect knowledge of my ways before

I speak a word you know it Lord for nothing can be hidden from your gaze behind behind me for you and me in oh Lord and you have lived on the mighty hand such knowledge is too wonderful for me too high to grasp too great to understand where from your spirit can

[30 : 22] I go and hide and from your presence Lord where can I fly if I ascend to heaven you are there and in the lowest depths sit there I lie if I take flight upon the winds of dawn and if I settle far beyond the sea there also you will guide me with your hand and still your right hand will keep hold of thee remember to pray for them as they go and we can turn in our

Bibles now to Luke chapter 22 Luke chapter 22 and we are just continuing where we were studying so we are in the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus has been betrayed he's been in prayer and then we see the arrest and the verses preceding verse 54 and we see the control of Jesus he recognises

this is the hour when darkness reigns but this was the purpose for which he came so we pick up at verse 54 we'll read just a few verses to verse 62 then seizing him they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest

Peter followed at a distance but when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together Peter Peter Peter Peter sat down with them a servant girl saw him seated there in the fire light she looked closely at him and said this man was with him but he denied it woman I don't know him he said a little later someone else saw him and said you also are one of them man I am not Peter replied about an hour later another asserted certainly this man was with him for he is a Galilean Peter replied man I don't know what you're talking about just as he was speaking the cock crowed the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him before the cock crows today you will disown me three times and he went outside and wept bitterly amen and may

God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing now two verses two stanzas of Psalm 1 the first two stanzas of Psalm 1 that man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray in counsel of ungodly men nor stands in sinners way nor sitteth in the scorner's chair but places his delight upon God's law and meditates on his law day and night these two verses of Psalm 1 we sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic M that word now CHOIR SINGS

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worship and to open your word we thank you that we have your word in a language that we can understand we thank you that we have the freedom in this country to be able to gather as as we do so just now again lord we pray for our country as we have done in past weeks again looking back with thanksgiving for the freedom that we have had for the fact that we have been able to to meet and to have that peace which allows us to come together in this way and as we look back we give thanks once more for the queen and the many pointers that she gave to us of Jesus and we continue to pray for those that you have allowed to be in authority over us we pray for King Charles and we ask lord that he would be found increasingly looking away from himself and looking to you we ask now lord that as we meditate for a few moments on your word that you would help us that you would pour out your spirit upon us we pray that we would be able to speak and listen and understand and understand and respond in a way that brings glory to your name and blessing to our souls and we pray this in Jesus name amen Luke chapter 22 if you could have that open in front of you that would be helpful I don't often take a text maybe uh Ian McCritchie from Gravel has inspired me to to do this um I usually go through a bigger section but as I was looking through uh the section that we're we've come to today and and studying uh I focus particularly on just half a verse that's what I want to take as our text today and it's a look chapter 22 and verse 54 where it says Peter followed at a distance Peter followed followed Jesus at a distance and as we come to that text in some ways this comes to us as a great surprise because if we were to to glance back through the the this gospel or any of the gospels it's very clear to see that Peter was one of the disciples that followed Jesus most closely he's part of the inner circle he was always around Jesus and yes he got things wrong and yes he was outspoken and yes he was impulsive but it was crystal clear that Peter loved Jesus and so he followed Jesus closely but now we can see here that Jesus uh he has verse 54 uh been seized by those in authority uh he has been led away he's under arrest the disciples have scattered as Jesus said they would and Peter is no longer with Jesus remember that was the the call of the disciple Jesus called them to be with him and to serve him and yet at this point in time Peter is no longer uh with Jesus he's no longer following Jesus closely uh Peter followed at a distance and I want us to think today about what it looks like to follow Jesus at a distance I want to to think through some of the the things perhaps in our lives that cause us to follow Jesus but remain at a distance I want us to with the help of the Holy Spirit uh look for some of the signs that we can recognize in our own lives that indicate that we are following Jesus at a distance and not as close as he would have us be so the first point

that we come to uh today is we we look at peter and as we think about why and what was causing him to to follow jesus at a distance the first thing that we see in his life very clearly in the last wee section is his self-confidence peter he wasn't short in self-confidence now it was the girls actually were telling me this as they were doing some uh popular culture uh general knowledge apparently the the most famous person in the world of popular culture today according to google is uh somebody called the rock and the rock he was a wrestler uh he's now an actor and uh the name fits the persona if you google him and you look at him uh later on uh he has this kind of rock-like self-confidence that's his image but peter was called the rock before that guy was called the rock remember the the name that jesus gave peter in matthew 16 and verse 18 uh was was the rock he had been simon jesus says i'm giving you the name peter which means rock so what was it that would make peter rock-like well jesus is very clear that it wouldn't be peter's own strength that would make him rock-like but the strength that jesus gave him as he stayed close to jesus that's what would make him strong that's what would make him stable that's what would make him him rock-like but but sometimes peter seemed to forget that you know peter had an eagle peter had this this uh irrepressible self-confidence and sometimes it went to to overdrive if you step back just a few verses and just glance at uh verse 22 of uh uh of verse 24 sorry of of chapter 22 uh we see there uh in the upper room i'm not going to go into the the the depths of it but um we looked at it a few weeks ago we see at that point where jesus is taking time to be intimate with his disciples at that point where jesus is telling them about how he will suffer uh we were incredulous as we saw the disciples uh they're having an argument and when jesus says what are you arguing about he discovers they're arguing about who was the greatest and although luke doesn't name and shame peter if we crossed over to mark's gospel which we're not going to do just now well we may be doing a moment you can flick to mark chapter 14

put your finger in mark chapter 14 for a minute and at verse 27 so the context is the upper room as jesus prepares to go uh to the cross the disciples are having an argument about which one of them is the greatest and right in the middle of that argument is peter and peter is telling jesus that actual in actual fact he's the greatest disciple and although everybody else might fail jesus uh peter never would so at verse 27 uh to verse 31 in mark chapter 14 uh jesus tells the disciples you will all fall away for it is written i will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered but after i have risen i will go ahead of you into galilee peter declared even if all fall away i will not truly i tell you jesus answered today yes tonight before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times but peter insisted emphatically even if i have to die with you i will never disown you and that was peter's self-confidence speaking but in spite of all the bravado in spite of all the self-confidence we know that peter will and he very soon does disown jesus so the first thing we could say that caused peter to be following jesus at a distance at this point what's his own self his own self-confidence and as we take this ourselves and try to apply it to our own lives i think the first thing i would want to say and the first thing i think we'd probably all want to say is that you know none of us want to be overly critical of peter i mean he is without sin pick up a stone and start to throw it we don't want to be overly critical of peter here when peter said to jesus i will never disown you i think he meant it i believe he he meant it from the bottom of his heart he genuinely loved jesus the problem with peter was he just didn't realize how weak he was he had a whole lot of confidence in himself and he has not enough confidence in the words of jesus and you know self-confidence that kind of confidence that self-reliance where we think we can do things in our own strength that will always cause us to become distant from jesus that kind of i can do it i can handle this you don't need to worry about me attitude will always cause us to drift from the way and the will of jesus so what did peter need and what do we need to be effective close disciples of jesus well we need humility we need to know ourselves well enough to know that we are weak that we are sinful and that we can fall and we can fail and often do

john in john chapter 15 when he takes us into the upper room just before this episode he records in john chapter 15 the words of jesus where he says to his disciples apart from me if you are distant from me you can do nothing and we need to remember that we need to know that we need to have humility of heart we need to know that we are weak but he is strong and so our trust is to be in him so the first thing we see here in peter's life is uh is this self-confidence that caused him to be distant from jesus the second thing here we see is uh the slowness of of peter to listen to jesus on occasions and that's another thing that will that will cause us to become uh distant from jesus if we're slow to listen to him take his his words to heart again rewind just a few verses and if you look back to verse uh 14 we can see that jesus has been speaking to the disciples and peter and what

had Jesus been repeatedly saying to them well he said to them pray you need to be praying we have that in verse 40 flick through a few more verses to verse 46 and Jesus again he repeats that that command he says to the disciples uh you need to be praying see Jesus knows there's a storm coming now Jesus knows that the devil is poised and he is waiting and he is alert and he is ready to attack Peter he knows that temptation is coming he knows that testing is coming and so Jesus says to Peter and the disciples pray that's his word to them but what did Peter do well if you glance at verse 45 and verse 46 uh we can see that he slept he didn't pray but he slept and again let's not get on our high horses and start lambasting Peter because looking at Peter is a lot like looking in the mirror we see ourselves don't we you know we know if we know ourselves at all we know that we don't pray as much as we should uh we know that we don't listen to Jesus as much as we should do so as we see Peter we're looking back at a reflection of our of our own lives so we're not pointing the finger in in this kind of legalistic judgment saying how awful of him because we see it in ourselves but the fact remains whether we see it in Peter uh or whether we see it in our own lives the fact remains that when we neglect prayer as Peter did in this instance and when we become slow and reluctant to open uh the Bible and listen to the words of Jesus when we become undisciplined about you know our quiet time and reading the Bible uh in the secret place and praying in the secret place and when we become uh undisciplined about you know being in God's house with God's people as we're commanded to be and being in the place of prayer it's inevitable when we

[54 : 03] fall into that state that we will become distant from Jesus and we will become much more vulnerable uh to fall as Peter did so the positive lesson is uh listen to Jesus you know it's the the lesson that the sun is you go keep singing week by week read your Bible pray every day and you'll grow grow grow third point to Peter he was slow in this instance to listen to Jesus he uh he had self-confidence which was causing this distance from Jesus and the third thing that we see in the decline uh that we is recorded for us in this in this um section is we see Peter sitting with the world in verse 55 it says Peter sat with them so who are them well well them they are they are the world Peter is he's distant from Jesus he's at a distance uh from Jesus uh but at this point he's actually close with those who were who were in the world he's in the place where those who were against Jesus are all gathered together JC Ryle uh says Peter was mingling with bad company he went into the high priest's house and sat among the servants by the fire so Peter he's he's sitting with the world he's sitting in the world and maybe Peter thought on that day that he was he was strong enough to be there maybe that maybe Peter had kind of reasoned this all out and thought well you know I'm one of the stronger disciples and no one else can probably do this but I think I'm steady enough to be able to sit here I want to keep an eye on Jesus but I don't want to be seen with Jesus so I'll I'll I'll stay just on the periphery but the reality is he was he was in the world and he wasn't strong enough to be in that place Peter had put himself in the place of danger as he sat with the world we sang in the psalm that man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray and counsel of ungodly men nor stands in sinners way nor sitteth in the scorner's chair and we see Peter here he's in that place he is sitting with those who are scorning Jesus he's sitting in the company of those who are mocking and resisting and rebelling against Jesus and there's no sense of God's blessing in that place he's not close to Jesus as he sits with the world he is he's distant from Jesus and we saw this actually a couple of weeks ago as we looked at the life of Abram and Lot remember we see Lot and Lot has an eye that keeps on drifting into the world so when he has a decision to make about which way he goes Lot has a look at the land and he says well it's lucrative over on that side and

I know Sodom is a dangerous place but the land is good the profit returns the investments will be good I'm heading in that direction and so we see Lot drifting in a direction that is dangerous and we noted there a couple of weeks ago Lot he looks towards Sodom and then the next thing we see is he's pitched his tent near Sodom and the next thing we saw is that he is living in Sodom and he's distant from God and he's in danger and he gets caught up in a hole at world of pain because of it and that's where Peter was also he's sitting with the world we can picture him at that fire he's sitting with the world I'm sure he was uncomfortable in the extreme I'm sure he probably knew in his own heart he shouldn't be there but he was there and he was in great danger and the application for this for our own lives we can we can put it in another

Sunday school song the Sunday school sing that song watch your eyes watch your eyes what they see watch your ears watch your ears what they hear watch your hands watch your hands what they touch watch your feet watch your feet where they go there's a saviour up above he's looking down

in love watch your feet watch your feet where they go and Peter we could say hadn't been watching his feet he drifted into that place of danger and we need to recognize the pool of this world is very often much stronger than we realize it's like these currents that you see in certain beaches it looks quite calm there's certain places and if you go in the wrong area there's currents that pull you into a place of real danger and we need to realize that there's so often a much stronger pull into this world than we recognize and we also need to recognize that we are much weaker than we estimate so we find it hard to swim out of there

I was thinking back to student days and so many people that I knew were Christians and they would have that dilemma of do I go to the pub or do I not go to the pub and so many Christians over the years I would hear saying well I'll just go to the pub for one drink I can be a witness there but one drink became two became five became ten and so often it was far from witnessing there was just spiritual ruin because the pool was too strong and all of a sudden they found that they were so deep in they couldn't get out and today we don't even have to leave our houses the whole world is on our phones we don't need to leave our room in fact often our rooms with the door closed are the most dangerous place we can be in as long as these things are in our hands we have to be so careful that we don't drift into the world and drift away from

Jesus so that's the third thing the fourth thing here is we can note that for Peter there was silence from Peter there was silence there's no profession of faith in Jesus in that environment and in this section Peter he's got three opportunities to witness he's got three opportunities to actually stand up and say that he is following Jesus that he's a disciple of Jesus but he doesn't take them verse 56 first of all a servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight she looked closely at him and said this man was with him with Jesus but he denied it woman I don't know him he said he it's it's it's kind of hard to believe on the one hand that it's a little girl that would cause Peter the rock to crumble but that's what happened a little later verse 58 someone else saw him and said you also are one of them man I am not

[62 : 46] Peter replied strike two about an hour later another asserted certainly this fellow was with him for he's a Galilean Peter replied man I don't know what you're talking about and if we were to switch from Luke into Mark where we have a more honest confession of Peter's downfall because remember Peter's telling Mark what to write Peter adds that in that moment as he denied Jesus he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them I don't know this man you're talking about so Peter he has great opportunity in that place to be a witness but he is silent about the faith he has in Jesus he is silent about the relationship that he has with

Jesus and maybe there's someone here and you know you know Jesus you trust in Jesus you're following Jesus even but you're at a distance and another communion season has passed and you've remained silent again and for every time you and I remain silent it becomes harder to speak up you know it's easy to criticise Peter although I don't think there's any will in the room to do so but we've all been there with him haven't we I remember back to university days again I'll tell you a story just because it paints me in a bad light but I remember on the first day

I went to university I went into halls sharing a room with three boys four of us and on the first night well people were drinking all the time and I kind of decided I think this is the wrong thing to go out to pubs and clubs I'm not going to go there and on night one the guys was meeting them all and getting to know them and they said you coming out tonight we're going on a pub crawl tonight you coming out tonight and I said no no not tonight why not I said well I've got to unpack my bags tonight oh your bags can wait no no I've got to unpack my bags tonight please yourself weirdo night number two you coming out no not tonight why you not coming out tonight well I'm going round to my aunties and my uncles for dinner and I was you can do that another day well no no I'm going I promised I'm going round so I'm going there for dinner tonight so you know I can't go out with you tonight okay night number three heading out tonight you coming out tonight you've got to come out tonight no I'm not coming why are you not coming and I kind of took a deep breath and said well because

I'm a Christian and I don't think it would be the right thing to do and I've never forgotten the response well why didn't you say that in the first place you know for every time we're silent it's harder to speak McKinley the commentator says if you have ever remained silent when you should have spoken up for Jesus as I did remain silent I mean or if you have ever hidden what you really believe so that people will not reject you you are not so different from Peter so Peter teaches us when we are determinedly silent about knowing Jesus it's both an indicator and also a cause of a

distance from Jesus fifth point we're almost done sadness and that's where this section that we read ends if we just pick back up at verse 59 we get the tail end of the denial an hour later another asserted certainly this fellow was with him for he is a

Galilean Peter replied man I don't know what you're talking about and just as he was speaking the rooster the cock crowed the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him before the rooster crows today you will disown me three times and he went outside and wept bitterly and this is one of the saddest most poignant scenes ever painted with words that's recognized across the whole world of literature we see this awful moment where Peter has this realization as his eyes meet Jesus' eyes that he is denied the one that he loves the most and in this moment

[68 : 38] Peter who had been so close to Jesus and so devoted to Jesus he felt this distance that his sin had caused and it was just like a stake that was driven between him and the Lord and in that moment this soul sadness overwhelmed him and he went outside and he wept bitterly and you know there's always sadness in our souls if we're distant from Jesus I mean think of the rich young ruler in Mark chapter 9 or 10 he has all that cash he has all the reputation he has all the status the kudos of this world but he walks away from Jesus and we're told he walked away sad and I want to just say to the person who's not yet a

Christian you know you can have money and you can have success you can have land you can have crops you can have property you know you can have a great reputation you can be the most popular person in the whole area you can have this kind of 24-7 party lifestyle but there will always be this deep soul sadness that is caused by being distant from Jesus and can I say to the person who's a Christian about who is following Jesus at a distance you know with increasing distance because remember we are those who are prone to wander as the hymn goes with increasing distance comes increasing sadness so as we come to the end of this section there is sadness we leave

Peter and he's weeping but praise the Lord this is not the end it's the end of the section we read but I can't finish there because the last point is saved because that's what Peter was Peter was saved Jesus was his saviour he was his Lord and Peter was saved and because it's Jesus who saved him Peter can't be lost Peter followed at a distance and it's always sin that causes distance from Jesus but remember Jesus as we see him fading from this scene Jesus is going to the cross to close that distance

Jesus is going to the cross to remove Peter's sin so that the one who was distant could be brought close again Peter at this time he'd let go of Jesus but Jesus had not let go of Peter and in that look of Jesus into the eyes of Peter something happened whereby Peter was being called back Dale Ralph Davis says what did Peter see in that look sadness disappointment grief compassion whatever it was it was the beginning of Peter's recovery once

Jesus had rescued Peter with the grip of his hand remember as he was sinking and Jesus rescued Peter with the grip of his hand now he rescued Peter with the glance of his eye and I wonder if Jesus is looking straight at any of us here today because we've been distant and he's calling us to repentance he's promising us recovery he's assuring us of the joy of salvation that we receive as we come to him or as we come back to him as Peter would and we'll pray our heavenly father we thank you for these words we thank you for these testimonies these these accounts which sometimes make for hard reading because we see failure in the life of the disciples and yet we receive encouragement as we read through these accounts because we see a reflection of our own hearts and our own lives and we see the wonderful truth that there is always hope we thank you that you are the

[74 : 52] God for whom failure is not final and we thank you that when we fall and when we fail and when we let go of you Lord Jesus as Peter did just one prayer one look is able to cause us to be brought back we thank you that when our faith fails you are the God who holds us fast and we praise you for that in Jesus name Amen we're going to sing to finish the words of that hymn when I fear my faith will fail Christ will hold me fast when the tempter will prevail

Christ will hold me fast when the tempter will prevail heal heal the body fast I could never keep my hold through I steer for back for my love is often cold heal a stroke die fast heal a love die fast heal a or beat bad for my savior loves me so heal the role The Lord, He saves our history light Christ the Holy Father Precious in His holy sight He will hold the cross Dear God, let my soul be lost His promises shall last Though I am at such a cost 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 For my life He bled and died
Christ the Holy fast Just as God's been satisfied He will hold me fast Raise with Him to endless
flight He will hold me fast Till our faith is turned to stride When He comes at last 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 He will hold
me fast For my Savior loves me so He will hold me fast
And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of
God the Holy Spirit Be with us all now and forevermore Amen