

13.4.25 am

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Date: 13 April 2025

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning and a special welcome to any who are visiting with us today. If there's visitors with us, then you're especially welcome there are and there's tea and there's coffee after the service.

If you're able to stay behind, it'd be good to get a chance to meet and enjoy fellowship together. Now, the creche continues during the service just through here, as you know.

I don't think there's any visitors who would need to know that, but the creche is through here. There's no, there's no, the Sunday school is a holiday Sunday school for today, so it's only the primary school children that will go through to Sunday school.

The secondary ones will stay in for the service this morning. Would it have been the holiday still? There's no YF tonight, so you can note that. And there's no children's clubs, no Jam Connect and Rooted this week either, because it's the Easter weekend.

There's a whole lot of intimations here. I'm not going to go through all of these. I'll highlight just a couple more. One is to say there's a Kirk Session meeting tomorrow at 6pm. The other one is a date for your diary, 25th of April for the Big YF in Stornoway.

[1 : 1 6] And one more is the men's breakfast. The session has been talking about this, and we're going to begin a men's breakfast, monthly breakfast. The first one will be on the 26th of April, Saturday the 26th, 9 till 10am.

If you want more information about that, speak to either Anthony or Richard, and they can give you more information. But that's an open invitation to all men for that breakfast.

I don't think it will be a continental breakfast either. I think there will be bacon or sausages or something inviting. So be encouraged to put that in your diaries. These, I think, are all the notices to draw attention to just now.

So let's come together and let's worship God. We'll sing to his praise from Psalm 84. Psalm 84, the words will be on the screen in just a moment.

And we'll sing verses 1 to verse 10 of the psalm. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me. The tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant Lord they be.

[2 : 2 3] My thirsty soul longs vehemently. Ye fainth thy courts to see my very heart. And flesh cry out, O living God, for thee. Down to verse 10, to God's praise.

How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me.

The tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant Lord they be.

My thirsty soul longs vehemently. Yea, face thy courts to see.

My very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee.

[3 : 3 3] Behold the spiral, findeth earth and house wherein to rest.

The swallow of all snow for herself, and purchase head and end.

In thine old altars where she's saved, her young ones for me bring.

O thou almighty Lord of hosts, through art my God and King.

Blessed are they in thy house that dwell, they ever give thee grace.

[4 : 40] Blessed is the man whose strength thou art, in whose heart are thy ways.

For the passing thou art, O living God's name. For the passing thou art, O living God's name. The name to take up wells.

Of soul, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain,
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the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain,
the rain, the rain, the rain, the rain When Zion they appear before the Lord of the land.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God, give the earth.

See God our shield on the face of thine anointed ear.

[6 : 14] But in thy courts one day excels a thousand brotherhood.

My God's house will I keep adore and dwell in debts of sin.

For God the Lord's a sun and shield, he'll grace and glory give.

And will with hope no good from them but uprightly to live.

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

[7 : 44] In every place, at every time. We thank you that as we sing them we learn more of who you are. We thank you that you are the God who loves us.

We thank you that you are the God, as we sang there, who gives to us grace and glory.
and we thank you for the wonder of that grace that we who we confess are not those who
live uprightly.

We are those who are sinners. We fall, we fail in our thoughts, in our words, in our deeds. And yet we thank you that you give to us grace.

We thank you that when we deserve punishment for the wages of our sin, you have applied that punishment, Father, to your Son, to the Lord Jesus Christ, to our Saviour.

And we thank you that as we look to him, as we believe in him, we are promised that we will be shown grace, that we will be shown love, that we will receive mercy.

[8 : 55] And we thank you that this is a free gift we only have to ask. And you have promised that all who cry out, Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner, that that prayer will be heard, that that's a prayer that brings justification, that brings salvation into our souls, and gives to us the promise of glory, the promise of peace, of rest, of salvation, which we taste in this world, but we experience in fullness in the world to come.

We thank you that Jesus is the way, that he is the truth, that he is the life. We thank you that when we come to him, we are promised that there is a way opened into heaven, into the Father's presence.

And we ask that each one of us today would have our eyes fixed on Jesus, that we would be given faith, that we would believe in Jesus. And we pray that we would know something of what the psalmist sang of also, that there is satisfaction for our souls, that our soul's thirst is quenched as we come to Jesus, as we abide in Christ.

So help us to do that, we pray. Lead us and guide us as we would seek to worship you today. We pray that our worship would be in spirit and in truth. We pray that you would take away every distraction from our minds.

We pray that you would cleanse us from sin, that you would empty us of all that so, so continuously reverts back to ourselves.

[10 : 34] And help us, we pray, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, that we may be looking to Jesus. We ask, Lord, that not only would we look to Jesus, not only would we believe in Jesus, but we pray that when we do believe, that we would take the opportunities that you give us to tell others about Jesus.

And we pray, especially on this Easter week, as we think about the cross of Christ, and as we think about the fact that not only did he die to take our sin away, but he rose from the dead and promised eternal life to all who believe.

We pray that that message would come through clearly and that those who would seek to reach out with that message would know the help of God, the Holy Spirit, in every endeavor.

We pray for organizations that will reach out, especially with that message of Easter, of resurrection life.

We think of the faith mission, whom have been such a blessing here over the years. Help them, Lord, whatever it is that they reach out with the gospel this week.

[11 : 44] We pray for Scripture Union, for the work in schools, and not least the work in the school here. And we ask that that work would flourish that would flourish and that Jesus would be lifted up.

We pray for the assembly in the school, and as the message of Easter likely will be heard, we pray that the children's ears would be opened and that many would look to Christ and believe in him and walk with him from the earliest of the years right through their lives.

Let me pray for ourselves and the conversations that you lead us into, that we would be salt, that we would be light, that we would not be shy, but that we would be ready always to give the reason for the hope that is within us if we are in Christ.

And for any who may be watching, who may be listening, who may be present, who are in the church building but not yet in Christ, we ask that you would show that to them this morning.

We pray that we would see, each one of us, that we are great sinners, and we pray that each one of us would see that Jesus is the great Savior, and he calls us to come to him for that salvation.

[12 : 58] So, help us, Lord, we pray, as we come together to worship. You be at work here in this community, Lord, with all the different needs that we have. We pray that you would be at work in this nation.

We confess that we have drifted, we are drifting, far away from you, but we ask, Lord, that you would draw us back, and we pray for those you have allowed to be in leadership at this time, and we ask that they would be humbled, and that they would look to and call us also to look back to the Lord Jesus.

And we pray that you would be at work across the world, that all nations may know blessing in and through him. So, hear us and help us, we pray, and we ask all this in Jesus' name, and for Jesus' sake, coming.

Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? How are you all today?

Good, good. Tell me this, do any of you have a favourite toy? Favourite teddy?

[14 : 19] Favourite teddy? Shawnee? She's got a name? Pardon? Lala? Nana. Nana. Okay. Good stuff.

Anyone got a favourite gadget? No? Yeah? Shawnee? Pardon? The PS5? We've all got favourite things, don't we?

Might be teddy bears, might be gadgets like PS5s, it might be a special toy. And when we get these things at first, maybe we've been asking for ages for this, this thing that we really, really want.

Maybe we've been saving up our pocket money, or maybe we've been asking for this for our birthday. Maybe like a favourite football strip even. And then when we get it at first, how do we feel?

Really? No. How do we feel? Happy. We feel happy, don't we? We feel really happy. And we feel happy because the thing that we've asked for and the thing that we now have, at least to us, it's really valuable.

[15 : 34] valuable. And I want to show you a couple of things that at one time, certainly, were very valuable.

I don't know about this one. Does anybody know where this came from? Came from the creche? And I don't know who got this in the first place, or do we buy it in for the church, but when you're maybe four or three or five, you'll get a toy like this, like a mixer, a truck, and you'll think, this is amazing!

And you'll play with this, and it'll be one of the favorite toys, maybe. But see, when you get to maybe the age of 40 or 50, do you think this will still be as amazing and valuable to you?

A real one? Pardon? A real one, yes. But maybe not. We don't see Dahl kind of driving around going, but he's happy in the big lorry.

So, that maybe, it's valuable when you're little, but it's not so valuable when you get a bit older. Got this to show you.

[16 : 49] Do you know what this is? It's not an iPod. It's an iPhone. And it's an iPhone SE. And this iPhone SE, it was bought back in the olden days, 2016.

And do you know how much it was worth when it was bought first, if you ever bought it, in 2016? Do you know how much it was nine years ago when it first came out?

Shawnee? Sorry? £100, no. Higher? Not £700, lower. Finley?

Good guess. She's smart. £399. £29. That's how much that cost on the day that it came out from the Apple shop or whatever it was bought.

Do you know how much it's worth today? Have a guess. No? Lower? Lower?

[18 : 06] Well, the highest price that I could find for one of these on eBay was £29.99. But I think if you'd actually tried to sell this, then you probably couldn't sell it because it's so slow, it doesn't switch on, camera's not great, it's really worth nothing.

And the thing is, boys and girls, whether we're talking about gadgets or toys or teddies or football strips, or even money, everything that this world would say is valuable, everything that we would say in this world that is valuable, the thing about these things, no matter how valuable they first are, as they get old, they lose their value.

So toys break and they kind of lose their shine. gadgets get dated and they start updating and then they're useless. Football strips, I think from the you got an amazing football strip at Christmas time.

Football strips, when you get them at first, they're great, but as you start to get a bit wider around the belly like me, they're not as great anymore.

And even money. We can have money in the bank, but when we get to the end of our time in this world, can we take our money with us from this world?

[19 : 44] No. We can't take a penny. We can't take a possession. So, here's the question, really simple question. What is more valuable, or maybe a better question is who is more valuable than anything in this world?

Who can make us truly rich in this world and forever? Who?

I can hear Joseph saying it. Jesus. It's exactly right. And how do we get Jesus?

How can we have Jesus? Do we have to buy Jesus? Do we have to work really hard before he'll come into our lives? How do we get Jesus in our lives?

Finally? We pray. We just ask him to come, don't we? And we close our eyes, we put our hands together. Not that we have to do that, really, but we just pray and we say, Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner, and I know that you're the Savior, and I know that you're the best friend that anybody can ever have, and I know that you're the Lord who can show me the right way to go all through life and then from this life forever.

[21 : 12] Will you please be my Savior and my friend and my Lord? And when we pray that prayer, we're promised that Jesus he'll hear, and he'll come into our lives and he can make us rich in our hearts forever.

So let's pray and thank God for that. Lord God, we thank you that you love us and we thank you that, we thank you for all the things that you do give us in this world.

We're thankful for phones and for toys and for football strips and for all the things that you allow us to have, but we recognize that these things don't last for long and we recognize that these things don't make us truly rich.

We pray that you'd forgive us when we put too much love into these things and when we sometimes forget about you. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are the one who makes us truly rich.

We thank you that you can take our sin away. We thank you that you can give us a peace and a joy that is not from this world, it's a peace and a joy that comes from heaven.

[22 : 24] And we thank you that when we trust you, you promise to come into our lives and be our best friend, the one who will never leave us or forsake us. We thank you that you promise to be with us through all of life and even take us through death and into life forever, that place called heaven.

So help us, Lord Jesus, to trust you, to treasure you, and to ask you to be our friend and our saviour and our Lord. Lord, and we pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing from Mission Praise 799 and it's a hymn about how precious the Lord Jesus is.

All I once held dear, built my life upon, and then the chorus says, knowing you, Jesus, there's no greater thing. And we'll stand to sing in just a minute.

All I watched, held dear, built my life upon, all this world revealed, and wars to Lord, all I watched, but gave, thy account to lost, sent and worthless now compared to this.

[23 : 55] Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater thing.

you're my all, you're the best, you're my joy, my righteousness, and I love you, Lord.

And my heart's desire is to know you, Lord, to be found in you, and known as you, to possess my faith, what I could utter, was a passing year, of righteous man.

Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater thing, you're my own, you're the best, you're my joy, my righteousness, and I love you, Lord.

Oh, to know the power of your risen life, and to know you in your sufferings, to become like you, in your death, my Lord, so would you to live and never die.

[25 : 44] Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater faith, you're my all, you're the best, you're my joy, my righteousness, and I love you all.

Okay, boys and girls, if you head through to Sunday school, and remember to pray for them as they go. and if we could turn in our Bibles please to Matthew chapter 13 Matthew chapter 13 and we'll read from verse 44 to the end of the chapter Jesus is teaching, he's preaching he's with his disciples and he's teaching them about the kingdom of heaven and so Jesus says in verse 44 the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it again the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind when it was full men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad so it will be at the end of the age the angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth have you understood all these things they said to him yes and he said to them therefore every scribe who's been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old and when Jesus had finished these parables he went away from there and coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogues that they were astonished and said where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works is not this the carpenter's son is not his mother called Mary are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas and are not all his sisters with us where then did this man get all these things and they took offense at him but Jesus said to them a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household and he did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again now this time from Psalm 19

Psalm 19 verses 7 and 8 of the Psalm in Gaelic I'll read the verses in English God's law is perfect and converts the soul in sin that lies God's testimony is most sure and makes the simple wise the statutes of the Lord are right and do rejoice the heart the Lord's command is pure and doth light to the eyes impart these two stanzas of Psalm 19 we remain seated to sing to God's praise in Gaelic singing singing voy voy voy!

voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 29] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Please pray.

[34 : 12] Please pray. Please pray. Please pray. Please pray. Please pray. Please pray. Please pray.

see the true riches that there is only in Jesus. So help us, Lord, we pray. We thank you that you know us. We thank you that you are the God who promises to help us, and we pray for that help.

You know our struggles. You know those of us who may be here wrestling with grief, wrestling with illness, wrestling with anxiety, and we ask that you would meet us at the point of our needs, we pray.

Also for those who are absent, those who may desire to be here, but who are struggling in different ways, and as we think of them, we pray for them, and we ask that you, the God who is everywhere, would minister to them in the power of the Holy Spirit, and we pray for those that we may have left behind in our homes as well, any who may be healthy and not in any particular material need, but have no desire for the things of God. And we ask, Lord, that you would work in their hearts, that they would have their eyes open to see that there is true riches found only in Christ. So help us, Lord, we pray. We pray for Scott also today. We thank you for him, and we thank you for the safe arrival of Angus Alistair. We pray that you would bless him, as we pray that you would continue to bless the girls, Katie and Lily, and be with Fiona, and sustain her, give us strength for these days.

We thank you, Lord, for the blessing of a new life, and we pray for your hand to be upon them as a family. And as Scott preaches in Copebridge today, we pray that you would equip him, give him strength for the day. And Lord, that you would be guiding him, and Fiona, and the family, and that they would be brought to the place in your time where you would have them serve you. And what we pray for Scott, we pray for Gordon also, as he begins his studies, and that you would be with himself, and Jillian, and the family, and lead them and guide them as they acknowledge you. We pray that you would direct their path. So hear our prayers. Help us in every place where your word is opened, every denomination around us in the village here, and across the nation, and in all nations, we pray that whatever Christ has lifted up, that many would be drawn to him. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

[36 : 51] Amen. Every year, the Sunday Times print a rich list for the UK. And as I was preparing this week, I glanced through the rich list for 2024. Number one on the list was the Hinduja family.

I didn't know anything about them, but they have a fortune of £37.196 billion. And they've made their money, apparently, in industry and finance. They're number one on the list. And as I scanned through from number two to number 10, there were some names and organizations that I recognized, many that I didn't. Some were in retail. Primark was on that list. There were others in entertainment and music.

Some in property. Some in technology. Dyson was on the list. There were chemical companies, pharmaceutical companies, and so the list goes on. But the metric, the measurement that was used to determine who was rich and who was not rich, it was money.

Depending on how many dollars or pounds that you could demonstrate were in your bank or in your empire. And that's actually the point that Jesus addresses and objects to in his teaching as he continues to tell parables in Matthew chapter 13. And so we've read this morning four parables, and these four parables teach us that real riches are not found in the currency of this world. Real riches are found in the kingdom of heaven.

Or to put it another way, maybe a simpler way, real riches are found in Jesus, in knowing Jesus. So four points this morning, if we get the time to go through them. The first point is that there are riches in Jesus.

[39 : 29] That's the first two parables that we see that point through. The second thing we'll see is that there's righteousness in Jesus, and that takes us to the third parable. The third point is that we have a responsibility to share Jesus if we are Christians. That takes us to the fourth parable. And the final thing we see, sadly, at the end of this chapter is that rejection, that very clear rejection of Jesus. In spite of everything that he taught, everything that he did, he is rejected by those whom he called his own people.

So first of all, we see riches in Jesus. And if you pick up at verse 44, the first parable is the parable of the hidden treasure. And Jesus says in verse 44, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up.

Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. So there's the story. It's not a complicated story. It's actually a common story. We might think it seems a bit far-fetched. It wasn't in that day. They didn't have banks. They didn't have secure places to store the riches like we might have. So what would happen is treasure, it was buried in fields.

And very often, the person who buried the treasure would be there. And if that person died, the treasure would still be in the field. And the field would pass from one person to the next to the next. And nobody knew that there was great treasure just under the surface. And so we have this story where we see a man who seems to stumble across treasure that's been hidden in a field.

We don't get the impression in this first parable that he was searching for treasure. He's just doing his stuff in the field. It's almost as if the treasure is searching for him, and he finds it. And he very quickly realizes the worth of it, and he's overjoyed that he's found this fortune, and he goes about securing it. He covers it up. He makes a careful note of where it is.

[41 : 55] And then he goes back home. He speaks to his accountant. He liquidizes all his assets. He sells everything that he has. And he does that because he realizes that this treasure that he's found in this field is better, it's more valuable than everything he has. So it was worth losing everything to gain this treasure that he's stumbled across. The second parable is similar, but it's a little bit different.

The parable of the pearl of great price. Jesus says in verse 45, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

And again, this isn't a complicated story. The difference between this parable and the last parable is that in the last parable, the man is not searching for riches. He just kind of stumbles across it. But in this parable, the merchant is searching intently for fine pearls. That was his business.

And he finds the finest of pearls. And so he takes his whole business. He takes his whole pearl collection. And he sells it all so that he can acquire this perfect pearl.

So there's the two stories that Jesus told. And they're two connected stories, two connected parables.

[43 : 50] But what do they actually mean? Well, the meaning isn't complicated. The meaning of the two stories is that gaining the kingdom of heaven is more precious, it's more valuable, than gaining anything, or indeed everything, in this world.

That's the message that runs through both stories. Gaining the kingdom of heaven is more precious, it's more valuable, than gaining anything or everything in this world.

So how do we gain the kingdom of heaven? How can we be sure that we have a place in the kingdom of heaven? Well, through Jesus. That's how. It's the children's story.

The treasure of verse 44 is Jesus. The pearl of great price in verse 45 is Jesus.

And sometimes, like the man in the field in the first parable, we find Jesus when we're not even looking for him. And I'd almost be tempted to get one or two people to come up and share their testimony of how when they weren't looking for Christ in any way, he's something to come looking for them.

[45 : 37] I remember the story of a man called, a minister called Kenny Ban. He was an apple cross years before I was an apple cross.

And he was converted in the time of the revivals. He was half drunk.

And he had a half bottle in his pocket. And as he slurped away on the whiskey, he decided he would go along to church. And he would have a bit of fun, a bit of mischief.

And he would heckle the minister. So that's what he did. He went in church, whiskey in his inside pocket. Minister starts to preach. His every intention to start to cause a bit of mischief.

But as the word of God went forth, he was gripped. And his eyes were opened. And he saw Jesus. And he saw his need of Jesus.

[46 : 43] And he was saved. So he came in half drunk, with no intention of looking for Jesus. He left the service sober. And saved.

Another story of somebody who wasn't looking for Christ, but who was saved very unexpectedly, would be the story of C.S. Lewis. And he wrote a book with his testimony, his autobiography.

It's called Surprised by Joy. He was an atheist, a notable, notorious atheist.

And he was firm in that conviction. He wasn't looking for Jesus. But Jesus was looking for him.

And he came to Christ, somewhat reluctantly. And his story was, he was surprised by joy. And sometimes we can be like that.

[47 : 46] We can be like the man in the field, not looking for Jesus. He breaks into our lives. We discover him. And some people can be like the merchant who finds Jesus after a long period of searching.

Truth is, it doesn't matter too much how we discover Jesus. What matters is that having discovered him, we trust him. And we treasure him.

Above all things. Now one question we might ask, as we look at these two parables, is, do we have to sell everything to follow Jesus?

You might say, well, I thought salvation was free. I thought it was the free offer of the gospel. Do I have to sell everything in order to have Jesus?

Well, Matthew Henry, the commentator, says, though nothing can be given as a price for salvation, yet much must be given up for the sake of it. And probably the best illustration of this point is found in the rich young ruler.

[49 : 08] You can go and read about him later in the afternoon. Mark chapter 10, verses 17 and following. You see the story there of a man.

He's a rich man. He's a young man. He has everything in terms of this world's riches. But he knows that he doesn't have peace.

He knows that he doesn't have eternal life. And so he comes to Jesus. And Jesus says to him, you need to sell all your possessions and follow me to get to heaven.

Because Jesus could see the hold that his possessions had on him. And so Jesus says, if you're going to follow me, if you're going to have me as God, you have to walk away from all your possessions, which are currently your God.

And it says in that story in Mark chapter 10, that this rich young ruler went away sorrowful. He went away sad. Because he overvalued his possessions.

[50 : 16] And he undervalued Jesus. And Peter, who's watching all this happen, Peter, the disciple of Jesus, he walks, he watches the rich man walk away.

And Peter says to Jesus, see, we've left everything to follow you. And they kind of had. Some had left families at home for a period.

There's a sacrifice in that as they went and followed Jesus from place to place. Some had put the call of Jesus above the demands of a family business.

And that was costly. Some had given up lucrative careers like tax collecting, where there was huge money.

And they'd all become poorer in terms of money, these disciples. But they had eternal riches in Jesus.

[51 : 28] All that is except Judas Iscariot. And he seemed to be following Jesus. He said he was a disciple. But his hand was still clutching on the money bag.

His riches in his mind were still being measured in pieces of silver. And consequently, Judas Iscariot lost out in the kingdom of heaven.

There are riches in Jesus. And the response, I suppose, as we apply this, is probably better sung, as we'll do at the end of the service, than it is spoken.

I think Matthew would love us to be able to sing this from our hearts. I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold.

I'd rather be his than have riches untold. I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I'd rather be led by his nail-pierced hand.

[52 : 49] Riches in Jesus. The second point is righteousness in Jesus. And that takes us on to the third parable.

Verse 47, the parable of the net. Again, says Jesus, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So Jesus tells another story and whenever Jesus tells stories, they're so simple.

They're so relatable. And it's a story about fishing. The congregation, back then, as it is today actually, would have been full of fishermen. And those who weren't fishermen understood what fishermen did and so that the story is told by Jesus.

A net is thrown out into the sea. And fish of every kind were gathered in this net. And when the net was full, time was called and fishing stopped.

[54 : 05] Then the net was dragged up from the sea onto the shore. And all the fish are sorted. They're separated. The good fish were put into containers.

They were saved. The bad fish were thrown away. They were lost. So that's the earthly story.

Parable, remember, is an earthly story with a spiritual meaning. And Jesus himself, he doesn't leave us to try to figure out the spiritual meaning. He gives us very clearly the spiritual meaning of this story.

So verse 49, Jesus says, so it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And actually, if you glance back just a few verses to the parable of the weeds in verse 46 to verse 53, as Jesus gives the explanation of that, the message that goes through the parable of the weeds is exactly the same message that comes through the parable of the next.

[55 : 39] And the repetition, it's not an oversight, it's not that Jesus has forgotten he's already covered this. The repetition is for emphasis, so that if anybody was asleep for the last one, maybe they'll wake up for this one.

Jesus is saying the message of these parables is important. And these parables are teaching us how to escape what Jesus calls the fiery furnace.

His words, not mine. It's a picture, it's an allegory of hell. Jesus is teaching us through these parables how to escape that place where he says there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Which is a funny phrase, not a phrase that we would really use. We might wonder what it actually means. And one of the commentators in explaining the phrase says this, part of what the gnashing of teeth communicates is pain, especially when the gnashing is combined with weeping.

When a person hits his thumb with a hammer, he will commonly squeeze his eyes closed and grind his teeth together hard.

[57 : 18] The weeping and gnashing of teeth in Scripture, however, is much more dreadful, partly because it lasts for eternity.

It's an awful picture, but again, this is not my picture. This is Jesus' picture, this is Jesus' teaching. He's telling us about a place that he describes like a fiery furnace.

He's telling us about a place where there is continual weeping, gnashing of teeth, where there is constant pain, which is connected to the punishment that is applied for sin.

And he's telling us this so that we will know how to escape this place. So how do we escape this place?

Well, by turning away from evil, by turning away from sin, by repenting, to use Jesus' words, and by turning in faith to Jesus.

[58 : 36] Because as we do that, Jesus promises to take our sin away from us. And he takes it into his body on the tree, as it says in 1 Peter 2.24, and in exchange, he promises to give his righteousness to us.

It's the great exchange. Our sin transferred to Jesus, his righteousness transferred to us.

The pain that is connected to our sin transferred to Jesus that he endures on the cross, and the bliss, the rest, the peace, the joy that is within him gifted to us.

That's the great exchange. But for that to happen, you have to ask him.

We have to ask him to effect that great exchange in our lives. We have to ask him to do what is taught to us theologically.

[60 : 04] We have to ask him to do that personally for us. And if we do that, he promises that he will hear, and he will answer, and he will do it.

Oswald Chambers says this, what our Lord wants us to present to him isn't goodness or honesty or endeavor.

It's real, solid sin. In exchange, he gives us real, solid righteousness.

righteousness. So, let us ask the question, have we in prayer confessed our real, solid sin and asked Jesus to take it from us?

and have we asked him in exchange to give to us his real, solid righteousness?

[61 : 24] us. Because if we've done that, then listen to what Alistair Begg says in this morning's devotional notes.

He says, the Spirit of God testifies through God's Word, reminding us of the wonder of what God has accomplished for us through Christ's finished work on the cross.

Christ's offering means you stand perfected in God's sight.

Your sin has been removed by his son and you are clothed in the righteousness of his son.

that's his promise. There is riches in Jesus, eternal riches, peace, joy, the promise of heaven.

[62 : 41] There is righteousness in Jesus. we stand perfected in him. But we have to ask for that.

We have to come to him and ask him to be our Savior, to be our Lord, to take our sin away, to give his righteousness to us.

God will have you done it. What a tragedy it would be to hear this, to hear the offer of the gospel, to hear about this great exchange and to walk out and not ask.

All you have to do, all we have to do, is ask believing. And we are rich in Christ.

We are righteous in Christ. To what you ask. I'm going to close there.

[63 : 59] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for your son. And we thank you that we are promised eternal riches if we believe in him.

We thank you that we are assured that we are righteous, that we are perfect if we are trusting in him. And so we pray that you would give to us that faith, that we would not simply be hearers of the word, but that we would act upon it.

And that we would even now confess our sin and take that real solid sin that weighs us down and bring it to you, Lord Jesus, us and ask you to take it to the cross for us.

And we thank you that as we confess our sin, we are promised that you are faithful and just, you will forgive us our sin. Because of that cross, you will purify us from all unrighteousness, and that is amazing news in itself.

[65 : 17] But then, the more amazing news than that is that we are made righteous. we are made like Christ as we come to Jesus.

We thank you that, as Scott said last week, the robe of our sin, our stained robes are taken off us by Jesus.

And the robe of his perfect righteousness is put on us so that we can stand even in the presence of the Holy God, and know that we are accepted because of all that has been done on our behalf.

We thank you for that great exchange. Do this for us, Lord, we pray, and give us the joy of your salvation as we go from here. Help us to share the good news about Jesus with those that you put in our path this week, that we may, and that they may receive him and not reject him.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude the hymn that I quoted, Mission Praise 319. Mission Praise 319.

[66 : 31] We'll maybe play it through the verse and the chorus first, because it's a while since we've sung it, just as a reminder of the tune, and then at the end of the verse and the chorus we'll stand and sing this hymn, I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold.

and the song and song and song and!!!!

voy voy voy! voy!

Amen. Amen.

I cry of Jesus and dance of cross. I cry of He faithful to His here cause. I cry of Jesus, the world my name. I cry of He true to His holy name.

[68 : 41] Come to me, the kingdom of us, no way. Or be held in sin's red strain. I cry of Jesus on anything. This world I'm forced to live.

He's been a place of Israel. He's seen a life from out of the cold. He's all that my heart is fed me.

I cry of Jesus and let Him play. But to be the kingdom of us, no way. Or be held in sin's red strain.

I cry of Jesus than anything. This world affords today.

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 forevermore. Amen. Amen.