

# 25.1.26 am How does God respond to our sin and how should we respond?

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, everyone. A warm welcome to the service this morning. A special welcome to those! It's good to see as usual one or two visitors with us and you're especially! If you're able to stay behind at the end of the service there's tea and there's coffee you'd be most welcome to join us for that time of fellowship. The notices have been on the screens and you've seen them on the emo I guess as well. I think I'm probably a little bit too loud through the microphone just now so you can turn me down. Don't turn me off please but turn me down a little bit.

Tonight we've got the Gaelic service, the monthly Gaelic service that's at six o'clock and that will be taken by Hamish Taylor from South Harris and there'll be the English fellowship about quarter past seven just after that so all are welcome to stay for that. The YF will join with the fellowship tonight at the usual time. Tomorrow there's a community lunch from 12 till 2 so please note that and for those who are making donations can you label the soup and the bacon please just so we know what we've got. Poor meeting on Wednesday at half past seven in person and on zoom Scott will take that meeting on Wednesday. Men's breakfast this coming Saturday 9 till 10 please note that and hear the welcome for all men and the services next Sunday will be taken by myself God willing. The only other thing to note is just that we have a congregational meeting on Thursday night that's this coming Thursday half past seven partly following on from the last one and just a little bit of clarity on the the road ahead. Duncan do you want to say something about that just now?

If you do I'll give you this Thank you So yeah just having a congregational meeting on Thursday night and the background to that comes out of the Presbytery oversight visit we had a year ago and various recommendations that came through that and also each church has to have its own development plan going forward and at the the congregational meal we had before Christmas we had a really good conversation about how we develop as a congregation lots of good ideas there and we also raised the issue of looking to try and pay off the church loan and that we have a bit faster which was used to buy the church and the manse and to renovate both these properties and We've thought of a way ahead on that and want to present information to that on you not on you but to you and just to to give folk plenty of information for going forward and especially for those who weren't here when we first got the properties and

We'll aim to have the meeting last for no longer than an hour and we'll have a cup of tea and a biscuit so if you're in a hurry coming home from work you don't have much time no need to have your own cup in the house you can have it here So we look forward to seeing as many folk as possible on Thursday and We'll also print a short letter to the congregation which will be available after the meeting and next Sunday to Give folk the key points from that So look forward to seeing as many of you as possible then that'll be great Thank you Duncan When Duncan says it will be an hour you've got much more confidence than me saying it will be an hour so it'll be an hour tea and coffee as well just for the time so These I think are all the notices we'll begin now this time of worship and we'll sing to God's praise from psalm 40 Psalm 40 verses 1 to 5 I waited for the lord my god and patiently did bear at length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear we'll stand to sing to God's praise

I waited for the lord my god and I Our fearful death, and from the mighty grave, And on our own, He set my feet,

[ 5 : 17 ] He's now wishing my way, He put a new song in my mind, A God to magnify, Many shall see it, and shall fear, And on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies, Respecting not the proud nor such, As turn aside to light.

O Lord my God, O many are, The wonders of us done, Thy gracious thoughts to us were found, Above all thoughts are not, In order none can recommend, To thee in them defer, And speak of them,

I would pay more, Than can be numbered on.

Well let's unite our hearts in prayer, Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you, That on this day you have brought us together, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Saviour.

[ 8 : 22 ] We thank you for all of us who are here, Gathered together in the building, We thank you for the encouragement that we receive, As we meet one with the other, And as we have the assurance that you are with us.

And we thank you for those that we can't see as well, For those who are online in their houses, Watching and seeking to come together, In worship of the one true God.

We pray for your hand to be upon them, And your hand to be upon us. We pray that as we gather together, In this way, As we wait upon the Lord, As we are instructed to in that psalm, That we would know the saving touch, And the blessing of God on us.

We thank you for the psalms, We thank you for these expressions of praise, And these written prayers, That often give words to the thoughts, And the feelings that we find hard to express.

We thank you that in that psalm, We are led to confess the fact that we are sinners, That we all struggle with that burden, With that weight of sin, That causes us to have that feeling of sinking, Into the depths.

[ 9 : 46 ] And yet we thank you, That we're not left in that place. We thank you that as we call upon the name of the Lord, As we cry out, Asking for help, You're the God who hears our cry.

We thank you that Jesus is the rock of our salvation. And we thank you that as we stand upon him, We are safe, We are secure.

We are given that assurance, Of your hand upon us, And your blessing over us. So we do pray, That you would forgive us this morning.

As we confess our sin, And as we think of the ways that we have fallen and failed, We ask, Lord, That you would cleanse us in the blood of Christ, That you would wash our hearts, That you would make us clean, And that we would be given that new song to sing, That song of salvation, That song that we are given as we go to the cross.

We've spoken in the psalm of your gracious thoughts towards us, And we thank you for the grace of the Lord Jesus. We thank you that he went to the cross to pay for our sin.

[11:02] We thank you that he laid down his life, So that we could have life that is eternal. We thank you for the resurrection life that is promised, To all who believe in him.

So give us faith, We pray, That we would believe, And that we would have the assurance and the joy, Of your salvation, That is gifted to us as we come to Jesus.

And we pray for each other as we gather in this place. We thank you that you're the God who knows us. You know how we are feeling this morning. You know what's going on in our homes.

You know what's going on in our hearts. You know the things that maybe cause us to be restless in our sleep. The things that give us anxiety. We thank you that as we name these things even now before you, We can rest assured that you are the God who helps us and who cares for us.

Cast all your cares upon the Lord, we are told. For he cares for you. So even now, Lord, we bring to you those that we worry about.

[12:15] And we ask, Lord, that you would help them. We bring to you the situations that trouble us, That we may know that we have to face in the days or weeks ahead.

We pray for your help and for your guidance. We bring to you the struggles that we have. Perhaps the sins that we don't seem to be able to break free from. Addictions that grip us. Dark thoughts that may seem to overwhelm us.

We ask, Lord, that you would help us. And as you search our hearts and know us, We pray that you would meet us at the point of our need.

And that you would draw us closer to yourself. We pray for those who struggle today with grief. We are conscious once more of the fact that we have no continuing city in this world.

[13:16] And we pray for those who are grieving. For those whose hearts are sore today. We think especially of the MacDonald family and Scalpy. And for Jane and for Kirstie Marie here especially.

We ask, Lord, for your comfort to be upon them. And for all the family as they gather. And as the island comes together. As we so often do.

With a sense of loss. We pray, Lord, that you would be to them and to us the God of all compassion. And we pray that even though we grieve, we would grieve as those who have hope.

Knowing that Jesus gives us hope that is beyond the grave. So help us, Lord, we pray. And go before us in this day.

We pray for our nation. As you have told us to. Those who you have allowed to be in leadership over us. We see so little evidence of the fact that they are looking to you.

[14:17] But we pray that they would look to you. And, Lord, that you would hear our prayers for our nation. And we pray for many nations.

For this world that is broken in so many ways. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are the Redeemer. And we pray that you would redeem. That you would help.

In all these situations that we pray for. So go before us. Help us, we pray. And lead us by your Spirit. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward? It's nice to hear Brendan's found us laugh. So, how are you today, boys and girls?

I've got something to show you. And I wonder if you can guess what this is. Now, I'm not going to allow Lily or Katie to answer until towards the end.

[ 15 : 30 ] Because you probably do know. But for the rest of you, I want you to guess what this is. Benjamin.

It's a toolbox. It kind of is a toolbox. But it's more, I'm looking for a more precise answer than that. A little bit more than that. Fraser, did you know?

Not sure? Well, we open it up. To see what kind of tools are in it. Let's open it up. There we go.

So, there's this little thing here. Don't think there's any boys and girls over that way. So, it's just us, really. So, there's this thing here.

See that? And then there's this thing here. And there's a wee cable here. So, what do you think this is?

[ 16 : 39 ] What's it for? Any ideas? What about Katie and Lily? I think you might know.

It's for a what? It's for a car. So, how do you work it? I don't know. I don't know, they say. Your dad knows all about cars, though, doesn't he? Well, do you know what this is for?

I don't know how to use it either. So, don't think I'm clever. I'm just telling you what Scott told me. This is for when your car is sick. You ever had a car that's been sick?

It's been breaking down? Yes, you have. I know you have. Well, sometimes, you know, your car, maybe it's not running quite well.

And you don't know what's wrong with it. It might look... What's that? Your daddy's van is broken. Your daddy's van is broken. Maybe Scott will give him a shot of this. Well, sometimes a car can look shiny, and it can look like it's okay, but it's not running quite right.

[ 17 : 45 ] And if you want to know what's wrong with it, you can take this and plug that in somewhere in the car, and then switch that on, and you know what it'll tell you?

It'll tell you exactly what's wrong with the car. And then you can ask somebody who knows about cars to help you fix it.

But you know what? When you're a bit older, what you'll find is that every time your car is a little bit sick, it costs you a fortune.

So you might go to Scott, and you'll plug it in, and he'll say, well, there's this, and there's that, and there's the next thing. And then if you go to a garage and say, can you fix my car?

He'll say, no problem. Oh, there's this, and there's that. Oh. And then you've got to pay the bill. So it can be quite expensive to have your car fixed.

[ 18 : 52 ] Now, you know, in some ways, this book is a lot like that toolbox.

What book is this? It's the Bible. And what's the Bible? Whose word is the Bible? Who speaks this through the Bible? God does. And you know, when we are plugged into the Bible, when our hearts are plugged into the Bible, God tells us the problem with our hearts.

What's the problem with our hearts? What's it called? Joseph, do you know? No? Really? It's sin. And if we want the problem of sin in our hearts to be fixed, how much will it cost us?

Because it costs a fortune to have your car fixed. But if we want the problem of sin to get fixed, how much will it cost us? Really?

Nothing. Who paid the price for the problem of our sin? God. God. Exactly right, Joseph. Jesus went to the cross, and he died.

[ 20 : 11 ] Why did he die? To take away our? Our sins. And if we ask him to take our sin away and fix our hearts, he promises he'll do it.

It costs us nothing. But it costs Jesus his life. He shed his blood, and he gave his life to take our sin away, so that we can be saved.

So, well, we pray now, and ask Jesus to fix our hearts. Let's close our eyes, and let's speak to God in prayer. Lord God, we thank you that you love us, and we thank you, Jesus, that you came to this world to fix the problem in our hearts, that problem of sin.

We ask, Lord, that you would fix our hearts even today. And we thank you that you went to the cross to take our sin away, so that we could be safe forever.

So hear our prayers and help us, we ask. Make us saved. Make us your children, and give us joy in our hearts. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

[ 21 : 20 ] Amen. Thank you, boys and girls, for listening so well. We're going to sing now, and we're going to sing to God's praise from 671 in Mission Praise.

There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all our guilty states.

and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all our guilty states. Let's sing to God's praise. Let's sing to God's praise.

Let's sing to God's praise. May this a fountain filled with blood, all from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all our guilty states.

Who's all our guilty states. Who's all our guilty states.

[ 22 : 25 ] And sinners plunged beneath that flood, whose all our guilty states.

But dying may rejoice to see the fountain in his day.

And there may I ask by the sea wash all my sins away. For sure my sins away.

For sure my sins away. And there may I ask by the sea for sure my sins away.

If dying longer precious blood shall never lose his mind.

[ 23 : 29 ] Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more. Be saved to sin no more.

Be saved to sin no more. Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more.

And since by faith I saw the stream, your glowing words of mine. Redeeming love has been my feet and shall be till I die.

And shall be till I die. And shall be till I die. When desperate, spring, standing down, I sighed in the grave.

And in an open sweet song, I sing your heart to sing.

[ 25 : 00 ] I sing your heart to sing. I sing your heart to sing. I sing your heart to sing.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Okay, boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school, remember to pray for them as they go. Amen. If we could turn to Matthew chapter 18, please.

Amen. Matthew chapter 18, and we'll read from verse 12 through to the end of the chapter, although we won't actually study all the way through to the end of the chapter today.

Matthew 18, and at verse 12, this is God's word. Jesus is speaking, and he says, What do you think?

If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

[ 26:48 ] So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound on heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them. Then Peter came up and said to him, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?

[ 27:56 ] As many as seven times? Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but 77 times. Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed 10,000 talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold with his wife and children and all that he had and payment to be made.

So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, have patience with me and I will pay you everything. And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him 100 denarii. And seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, Pay what you owe.

So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, Have patience with me and I will pay you. He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

[ 28:58 ] When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed and went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

Then his master summoned him and said to him, You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you?

And in anger, his master delivered him to the jailers until he should pay all his debt. So also, my heavenly Father, will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

Amen. And may God bless that of his word to us. We're going to sing again now to God's praise. Psalm 40, the last two verses, the last two stanzas of the psalm.

In thee let all be glad and joy who seeking 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.

[ 30:04 ] Thou art my help and saviour, my God, notary and make. These two verses in Gaelic will remain seated to sing in Gaelic with God's praise. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 32:44 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[ 35 : 43 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

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

Thank you. And sin.

[ 38 : 31 ] And what I want to do.

And what I want to look at today is, as I'm going to call it as, sin and yours, and how we are to respond to God as he speaks to us in the gospel. Three very simple points as we think this issue through. Point number one, point number one, God seeks sinners, so we are to come to him. Point number two is God convicts sinners.

So we are to confess our sins. And point number three is God forgives sinners, so we are to ask him for forgiveness. That's the structure for our thoughts this morning. So first of all, God seeks sinners, so we are to come to him. Verse 12, the parable of the lost sheep, as it's called in the title in the ESV. What do you think, says Jesus? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father, who is in heaven, that any one of these little ones should perish.

Now as Jesus teaches us about sin, he uses lots of simple pictures.

And he uses pictures to show us what sin causes us to do. And as we think about the whole of the Bible, we have pictures that teach us what sin causes us to do. And the picture that Jesus uses here is of a sheep that has strayed from the shepherd and from the flock. A sheep that once was safe and yet now is lost and in danger.

[ 41 : 53 ] And that picture of straying, that picture of becoming lost, is found over and over again in the Bible, right from the very beginning.

If we were to rewind all the way back to Genesis chapter 3, we see Adam and Eve, and they're in the garden, and they're listening to the voice of God, and everything is perfect.

And then Satan enters in and starts to whisper to them and cause them to question the character and the goodness of God. And they listen to Satan, and Satan leads them into sin.

And once they are in sin, what happens next? They run away from God. Those who were once close, they go astray like the lost sheep.

They're hiding from God. And if we were to go from Genesis chapter 3 to Isaiah chapter 53, that chapter that points us so clearly to Jesus, we have in verse 6 of Isaiah 53 this statement about our own condition.

[ 43 : 13 ] And God, through Isaiah, says to us, all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.

So what causes us to do that? What is it that causes us to go astray and to go our own way? Well, the answer, repeatedly in the Bible, is sinned us.

But how does God respond to our sinful condition? Does he leave us in our lost state? Does he leave us in a place of danger far from him?

No, he seeks sinners. So in Genesis chapter 3, we see Adam and Eve, they're hiding from God, but God, in verse 9 of chapter 3, called to the man and said, where are you?

He's seeking him. He's not willing to leave him in this lost state. He's calling him back. And here in Matthew chapter 18, we see the good shepherd.

[ 44 : 40 ] And he's leaving the 99 and he's going out onto the hills to seek the lost sheep. And it's a picture of Jesus.

Jesus is giving us a picture that teaches us about who he is. Jesus said in John chapter 10, I am the good shepherd.

This is a picture in Matthew 18 of Jesus who will say in Luke chapter 19 that he came to seek and to save the lost. So if we apply this to ourselves, we need to ask the question, who are we?

Who are we in this parable? And the answer is, we are the lost. That's how we're born. We are the lost.

We are sinners. sinners. And that can sting a bit when we first come to realize it. That's the bad news. But the good news is that God seeks sinners.

[ 46 : 04 ] And this morning, God has ordained that you will be in this place. If you're still tuning in, God has enabled your ears to be open to hear this message from Jesus.

And he's calling us as sinners to come to him. And if we come to Jesus, he is able and he is willing to save us.

To save us from our sin. To save us from our lostness. So what are we to do? We're to come to him.

It's not complicated, is it? We're to come to him. If you see that you're a sinner, Jesus is calling you.

You're to come to him and receive the forgiveness, the rest, the gladness of heart that only he can give.

[ 47 : 20 ] God seeks sinners, point number one. So we are to come to him. Second point is God convicts sinners. So we're to confess our sin.

I remember a TV show that was on when I was a child before I was 12, 13. I remember in primary school this used to come on.

I never watched it, but it will maybe be remembered by those of a certain age. It was called The Gaffer. And what I remember was that in the opening credits when the programme was starting, you had this picture of The Gaffer.

And he was a Bracco kind of character. He got into his car. It was always parked in double yellows. There was always a parking ticket on it. And he'd rip off the parking ticket and he'd throw it over his shoulder onto the back seat and there was just a sea of parking tickets, of traffic offences that he just cared little for.

And the point was that all these offences and these charges meant nothing to him. He was a gaffer. And some people think that way about sin.

[ 48 : 41 ] And they think, well, you know, if I take the Lord's name in vain, it's no big deal, I'll do it. If I want to lose my temper, I'll do it.

If I see something and it's starting to turn into a flame of lust, I'll feed that, I'll do it. If I want to pursue a relationship that God forbids, if it feels good to me, I'll do it.

There's no sense of the seriousness of sin. But Jesus shows us very clearly here that God takes sin seriously.

He doesn't brush it under the carpet. He doesn't turn a blind eye to it. And that comes through in how Jesus teaches us to deal with sin, even in a church context.

Look at what Jesus says in verse 15. He says, if your brother sins against you, your brother or your sister sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

[ 50:04 ] If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. So we have this kind of case study that Jesus brings. And the scenario is this, a man has sinned against you.

And so there's offense, there's tension, there's a disconnect, there's trouble. We're not told what this man did, we're just told that he's at fault.

So what should we do? Well, Jesus doesn't say, just ignore it, just pretend the sin didn't happen. He doesn't say to us, say nothing so just that we avoid any awkwardness and we keep the peace.

No, Jesus says, go and tell him his fault. Just you. Don't chat to the whole world about it.

Don't tell all the friends in your contact book about it. Don't put a Facebook post on about how you feel concerning this. Just go to the person who has offended you and tell him his fault.

[ 51:18 ] Why? Is it so you can look down at him? Is it so that you can get won over on him? No, it's so that hopefully he will recognize and confess his sin and come back to Jesus and be your brother again.

So the end game in this initial confrontation is to gain your brother. Not crush him, but gain him. One in Weirspeed, the commentator says, our attitude should be not that of a policeman out to arrest a criminal, but rather that of a physician seeking to heal a wound in the body of Christ that will spread sickness if left alone.

So Jesus says, problem, sin, offence, go to him, look him in the eye, just you, tell him.

Hopefully that will be the resolution point. But what if you go and speak to your brother or sister and they won't listen? Well, Jesus says in verse 16, if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

So we have that situation. There's been the one-to-one chat. There's been the initial challenge about their sin, but they won't listen. What then? Did Jesus say, well, you know, you tried, just leave it.

[ 53:05 ] No, he says, go back to him. The sin is still there. The infection is still there. Go back to him. This time, take two or three witnesses and any evidence you have, and hopefully that will be enough to bring him to his senses.

Hopefully that will be enough to bring him to the point of repentance and bring him back to the Lord. So go and do that. But what if that doesn't work?

There's still just a pushback. What if he or she still won't listen? Well, Jesus says in verse 17, if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

And this is the point where we start to think, well, this is about heavy duty. You know, is this not a bit over the top? And Jesus says, no, it's not.

Because sin is more serious than you estimate. Because Jesus so loves us, he will not allow us to settle in sin.

[ 54:27 ] So he says, no, you need to tell it to the church. Don't leave it. Tell it to the church. Now, just for some context, at that time, the church was very small.

We're talking probably house fellowships, so telling it to the church was not some big public statement to a huge number of people. That goes out on several social media platforms.

It may have been that telling it to the church meant telling it just a small group of leaders, what we would call elders. So Jesus is saying, that's what to do.

Eric Alexander helpfully says on this point, what is taken for granted is that the church will recognize that person's sin, and then the hope is that he will repent and turn from his sin and be restored to Christ and to his brothers.

All the time, it is with a view to winning the brother, not crushing him. It is healing, not hurt, that is designed.

[ 55 : 46 ] That's why Jesus is saying, tell it to the church so that they can be praying and seeking to reach this brother who has gone astray.

But sometimes even at that stage, there's no impact. Sometimes that person will not listen to or even meet with the church. So what next?

Well, Jesus says in verse 17, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector and so on.

So what's Jesus saying here? He's saying if that person who is in sin refuses to listen to the church of Jesus as they follow the instructions of Jesus, then treat that person like you would an unbeliever, a tax collector.

Essentially what Jesus is saying is don't pretend that they are Christians if they don't listen to what I say and are not willing to repent openly of their sin.

[ 57 : 19 ] And on first listen, that might sound harsh, but think about it. Jesus says treat them like an unbeliever, like a tax collector.

Ask yourself the question now, how did Jesus treat unbelievers and tax collectors? Did he cut them off?

Did he ignore them? No, he came to them over and over, and he ate with them, all the while telling them the truth about their sin, and yet calling them, and calling them, and calling them to confess their sin, and to come to him.

And still today, Jesus is calling, and he is calling sinners, he's calling us, sinners, whether it's sinners who have never come to him, or maybe it's sinners who have wandered from him and become hard-hearted.

And Jesus today, once more convicts us of our sin. He doesn't sweep it under the carpet. He tells us, lovingly and plainly, that we are guilty.

[ 59 : 03 ] he calls us to confess it and to come to him. And he assures us that if we come to him, there is forgiveness.

It doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't matter what the sin was or is. There is forgiveness for all who come to Jesus, who come back to Jesus.

So the question is, will we confess our sin and ask Jesus to deal with the infection?

Will we come to Jesus? Will we come back to Jesus? He will never turn away anyone who comes to him.

All that the Father gives to me will come to me, says Jesus in John 6, 37, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. God convicts sinners so we are to come to him.

[ 60 : 18 ] God seeks sinners so we are to come to him. God convicts sinners so we are to confess our sins and come to him. Last point, very briefly, God forgives sinners so we are to ask him for forgiveness.

Again, it's just staggeringly simple. verse 21, then Peter came up and said to Jesus, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?

As many as seven times? We can just imagine Peter, because we know Peter is quite hot-headed. So Peter, because of his personality, he's probably had more than a share of fallouts with people and he's just trying to process everything that Jesus has said.

So he asks Jesus, how many times should I forgive my brother? As many as seven times? And he's looking for a pat on the head and an apple for an excellent answer, an excellent question.

Warren Weerspeed, the commentator, says, Peter thought he was showing great faith and love when he offered to forgive at least seven times. After all, the rabbis taught that three times was sufficient.

[ 61:33 ] That was their rule. Three times and you're done. Three offenses off the friend list. Strike them off. So Peter says, well, how about seven?

Jesus, that'll surely get me some points. But the answer that Jesus gave to Peter was beyond any expectations or any known limits.

Jesus said to him in verse 22, I do not say to you seven times, but 70 times seven. There's different renderings and different translations, but the numbers don't really matter.

We could say, well, what is 70 times seven? It's 490 times. forgiveness. So what are we to do? Are we to kind of have a spreadsheet labelled forgiveness?

We have all the names of the people in our lives and the fellowship in this spreadsheet. Every time they offend us, every time they do something that we have to forgive them of, we put a mark against them.

[ 62:44 ] Do we have to have a kind of running league table with numbers of times we have forgiven people against the names of the people who offended us? Well, clearly that's not what Jesus was teaching.

The number that Jesus gave was there to indicate that we are to forgive without limit. Peter says seven times.

Jesus says, no, there's no number attached to this. You are to offer infinite forgiveness. because that's how God has forgiven us if we are Christians.

Some of us use phones where we have a contract and in that contract you have an allowance for a certain amount of data.

At the beginning of the month when the contract renews, you might have 10 gig of data or whatever it is. It seems like a lot. And you go away to the mainland and you're away for a few days and you begin to burn through it.

[ 64:03 ] And all of a sudden you're at the end of the month and you're hitting the limit. You're trying to get your emails and you're trying to get onto social media and you can't get anywhere because there's no more data.

The limit has been exceeded. The good news really to finish with today is that when it comes to God's forgiveness, when it comes to God's grace, there's no limit.

We sang it. There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

Or we could go to 1 John 1:9 where we're told if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Or we could go to Psalm 103 verse 12 and it says, as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

[ 65:35 ] God's forgiveness. There are just some pictures that don't really give us an HD vision, but there are pictures there for us of God's forgiveness.

And that's offered to us. But to receive it, we have to ask for it.

Remember, the price is paid, the children told us. It's the free offer of the gospel, but we have to ask for that forgiveness.

God forgives sinners, but we have to ask for it. so have we asked for that forgiveness?

If not, will we come to Jesus confessing our sin and asking for that forgiveness today?

[ 66:55 ] That's the question. and we can respond, I hope, in the final praise. I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest.

Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad.

I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad. 275 and mission praise to conclude. I hear the voice of Jesus say, come up to me and bless.

Lay down the weary one, they have thy head upon my breast.

I give! I the voice of Jesus say, behold queen be in give!

[ 68:18 ] I found in him a resting place, and he has made me hand.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, behold I believe in the living water first he wants to down and drink and live.

I give to Jesus and I can of that life giving stream I first was blessed my soul revived and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.

Look on to me, thy Lord shall rise, and all thy daily pride.

[ 69:43 ] I look to Jesus and thy blood, in him my star my son, and in the light of thy my war, till traveling days are done.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more. Amen. God You