

7.1.24 am

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Date: 07 January 2024

Preacher: Reverend Kenny I Macleod

- [0 : 0 0] Good morning everybody and welcome to our service this morning. It's our pleasure to welcome Reverend Kenny Ima Cloud. He'll be preaching both this morning and this evening. If there are any visitors here today, I would encourage you to stay behind for a cup of tea after the service.
- It would be great to get a chance to know you. Most meetings through the week are kind of as normal or getting back to normal again.
- So Ladies' Fellowship, Little Fishers, Road to Recovery, Prayer Meeting and Hika Kluch. And the Friday clubs are all at the normal time. And then a kind of key thing just to flag up for a month's time from now, the Island Study Conference is on once again on the weekend of the 2nd to the 4th of February.
- So all the lectures will be held here in this building and everybody's welcome to attend that. And just mention that I printed off a few copies of the intimations.
- If anyone wants to pick up a copy and take away, please do. If there are not enough, I'll print more for next week. Or if nobody wants them, then we'll not carry on doing it again.
- [1 : 1 3] But certainly before COVID, we printed and there are quite a few people taking copies away. So please feel free to pick one up on your way out. That's great. And we look forward to Kenny leading us in worship and pray for God's blessing upon his ministry today.
- We extend a very warm welcome to everybody this morning as we begin to worship God. And we pray that we will know the riches of his grace throughout our time of worship. And we're going to begin singing from Psalm 36 and sing Psalms, verses 5 to 10.
- Psalm 36, 5 to 10. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great.
- Thy judgments deep as floods. Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How precious is thy grace. Therefore, in shadow of thy wings, men's sons, their trust shall place.
- And so on. Verses 5 through to 10 of Psalm 36. Thy mercy, Lord, is... Well, it's from Sing Psalms. I'm reading from the Psalter here.
- [2 : 2 7] But it's on the screen. So we sing, Your steadfast love is great, O Lord. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord.
- It reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful.
- Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high on sea.
- Your righteousness is like ocean air. For blood and peace you give.
- How precious is your steadfast love. What confidence it brings.
- [3 : 4 7] For high and low, find shelter in the shadow of your wings.
- They feast within your house and drink from streams of pure delight.
- For with you is the source of life. And cure thine we see light.
- To those who know your hands, their God. Your steadfast love impart.

Maintain your righteousness. Maintain your righteousness. To those of pure and upright heart.

[4 : 58] Let us bow in prayer. O Lord, as we gather before you today, we give thanks that we were able to sing there of your greatness and the extent of your mercy.

We pray, O Lord, that our own minds might be focused upon you because we know how easily it is to be distracted. We give thanks, Lord, for your day. We give thanks, Lord, for your day.

It's wonderful to have this day that is set aside from all the other days. A day where our focus can be more upon you and where we are able to meet with you as we do just now.

Lord, we give thanks for this wonderful privilege and the promise that you have given that even where two or three are gathered in your name, that you're there in the midst. And we pray today, as we've all gathered here, that we might be conscious of your presence, of your nearness, of your guidance, and of your love.

We give thanks, Lord, for the display of love, a love which is beyond our understanding. There are times we try to figure out in our own minds just the whole extent of the Father's love and the Son's love and the love of the Spirit and the whole way of salvation.

[6 : 16] And sometimes we have to say, like the psalmist said, such knowledge is too strange for me. It's too high to understand. Although we believe it and we rest in it, yet we have to confess there are times that we struggle just to lay hold upon the enormity of it all.

But we pray, O Lord, that you'll be gracious to us and patient with us. Because so often, even as we look at our own lives, we let ourselves down.

How much more we must let you down. And we pray that you will help us each day to walk in a right way. Pray your blessing upon us as we meet for the first Lord's Day of a new year.

And we give thanks, Lord, for all the blessings as we reflect on the past and the way that you have guided us and kept us all these days. And although as we look back there are undoubtedly sorrows and sadnesses, there are losses and pains, yet you have always remained faithful to us.

And we give thanks, O Lord, for that. And as we move out into this year and we seek your blessing on us, we pray that you will guide us and lead us in the right way. That you will be merciful to us and forgive us our constant sin.

[7 : 34] We pray, Lord, that you will bless this congregation and its witness in the community here. Lord, we give thanks for it and for David and for his family and for the whole team that work here.

We give thanks, Lord, for all the involvement of so many different people. Because for a congregation to work, there have to be so many people working. Some work behind the scenes and in less prominent places and areas and others.

But every service to you is noted. And every service to you will receive its own reward. And we give thanks, O Lord, that even a cup of water given in your name will receive its reward.

And so we pray that you will be with each and every one of us today. And that you'll grant us your grace as we wait upon you. We pray, Lord, that you will bless this community and bless our islands, we pray.

We pray that you'll open the windows of heaven and pour down blessing upon us. Not according to our deserving, but according to the riches of your grace and mercy. Lord, that you will touch hearts that so far have remained stubborn and unmoved under the gospel.

[8 : 48] That your spirit will penetrate into hearts that so far are steel-like almost against the gospel. And that you'll bring us softening so that people will be ready to hear and ready to believe and ready to follow the Lord.

Grant us your grace, then, we pray, in all that we're about. Bless your word as we've sung it and will be reading it and thinking upon it for a little. Lord, may your word become ever more precious to us.

May we see it as the rule of our life. May we see it as the joy that lifts us up. May we find constant support and guidance from it.

And may you make your word a delight to our hearts. Pray your blessing upon us as a nation. We have to confess that we wandered so, so far away from you.

That we don't want to know you and we don't want to hear about you. That is so often the way of our land. But despite where we are and how far we've gone, oh Lord, still be merciful to us.

[9 : 57] Grant wisdom to all our leaders, whether that be at Westminster or Holyrood or locally here in the council. And even those who don't seek you or acknowledge you. We pray that you will give divine wisdom.

Because if we're left purely to the wisdom of men and women, it will not do us any good. And so we pray that that heavenly wisdom will be given and imparted to our leaders and those in authority.

We give thanks, Lord, for all your people in places of prominence and places of influence in our land. And there is much good that goes on that maybe we're not aware of or that never makes the news.

But we give thanks, Lord, for everything that is done in your name and everything that is done in a right way. Pray to bless this world that we're part of and all the nations of this world.

And we remember the places of conflict. And every day we put on our news bulletins. It's so depressing. And where we see war and rumour of war. Where we see hostilities.

[10 : 58] The day we're living in where the media reports can be so real, so graphic, so up to date. That we're entering into these things in a way that previous generations weren't able to comprehend or understand.

And so we pray that it might please you to bring peace. That this might be a year where more peace will be brought to bear. And so we ask, Lord, for those who suffer today.

And those who are going through just the horrors that we can't comprehend. Pray, Lord, for those who mourn, those who've lost loved ones.

We pray for healing and help to broken hearts. We pray, Lord, that you'll be with those who are unwell and ask that you'll be near to them. Pray for those who are old in age and no longer able to get out.

We give thanks for all the caring that goes on in our communities. We pray for carers and we pray for those that they care for. We ask, Lord, now that you'll watch over us and keep us and do us good.

[12 : 01] And take away from us our every sin, we pray. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen. And I'm just going to say a wee word to the young folk before they go out.

We live, of course, on an island. And one of the things about when we live here, we're surrounded by the sea. And I'm sure it's something that we're all familiar with.

We all love the sea. And on a good day like this, I'm sure this is the kind of day you'd say it'd be nice to be out in a boat. On a wild day, and I'm sure all of us love going down to watch the waves crashing onto rocks, onto cliffs.

Because it's spectacular. Waves are brilliant when you're on shore. Not when you're in a boat, but they're brilliant when you're on shore. And, you know, the Bible tells us that it's quite a strange thing in a sense.

But it says that our righteousness, no, not our own, but the rightness that we get from Jesus. If we come to believe in Jesus, we get what's called his righteousness.

[13 : 15] His righteousness is put to us. And God looks at us through that righteousness of Jesus. And it tells us that our righteousness are like the waves of the sea.

So I wonder what we can think of with that. Well, there's three very simple things. If you're out in a boat, and whether it's a flat day or whether there's a bit of a swell, you always think, I wonder what's down there.

You know, sometimes on a really, really clear day, if you go out in a wee boat, and you're able to see at the beginning, you can see down. The water is so calm.

The sun is bright. And you're able to see a wee bit of the rocks, the seaweed. And you might even see a few little fish swimming about. Then as you go further out, it gets deeper.

You can't see it. But it's there. There's another world way down there of great big rocks and ravines and all sort of things. It goes down so, so deep.

[14 : 20] And in a sense, that's what it's like with regard to us. That our righteousness, the righteousness that Jesus gives, it's like all our sin is covered so that you can't see it.

God isn't seeing our sin. He's just looking on the perfect righteousness of Jesus when he looks at us. It's amazing. So it's like all that down there in the depth of the sea.

In fact, the Lord tells us that he's cast our sins into the depth of the sea. Another thing about the sea is when we go down to the seashore and you've got beautiful beaches here.

And one of the things that you always do when you go, it doesn't matter. It's not just when you're young. I still do it as a bother. You start, you draw, you always draw. You have a wee stick there.

You draw a face, draw your name. You might even dig a hole or you might even build a wee castle or whatever. You never go across the beach without leaving something behind.

[15 : 23] You always stop and do something, even if it's with your feet. But you know, if you stayed there long enough and the water started to come in, it doesn't matter the funny face you may have drawn or your name that you've drawn or the castle you've built or whatever.

The water comes in and it washes it all away so that there's nothing left to be seen. Your name isn't there. The funny face isn't there. The castle isn't there.

Nothing's gone. It's all gone. Flat as anything. And that's again what the Lord does with our sins. We're told that he washes them away as if there's no sign at all of them.

All the bad things we've done. If we trust in Jesus, that's what he does. He washes our sins away. The last thing we'll say is, if you were out in a boat and you've got a big wooden box and it's sealed, you can't get into it, it's sealed, and you threw it over the side.

Eventually, that box, it might be bobbing about for a day or a few days or weeks, but eventually it would reach the shore.

[16 : 34] It would bob its way eventually one day and it would become washed up on the shore. And you know, in a sense, that's what the Lord is doing with us. If we trust in him, he is carrying us along like on the waves of the sea, carrying us to the shores of heaven.

And one day, when it comes time to leave this world, the Lord will, like that, it's like he will wash us up onto the shores of heaven, bringing us home to be with himself.

So next time you're down at the sea, yeah, enjoy the sea, enjoy the sand, enjoy the cliffs, all that. But think also of these things, of what God is doing for us and in us and with us.

The picture that we have of the waves of the sea. Now we're going to sing again in Psalm 63. This is from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 63.

Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek my soul, doth thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry parched land, wherein no water should be. That I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face.

[17 : 51] As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place. Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live.

And so on, Psalm 63, verses 1 to 8. Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek. Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek.

My soul, doth thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry parched land, wherein no water's meal.

That I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face.

As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place.

[19 : 11] It better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give.

I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live.

Even as with marrow and with heart, my soul shall give.

Lord, thee may be, then shall my mouth with joyfulness sing praises unto thee.

When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight, but when on thee I meditate in watches of the night, in shadow of thy wings I'll join, for thou mine ever hast been.

[20 : 51] My soul thee follows, pardon me, thy right hand does sustain.

Amen. We're going to read in John's Gospel, the Gospel of John chapter 1.

John chapter 1 and we're going to read from verse 19 through to verse 42. John chapter 1, reading at verse 19.

And this is a testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you?

He confessed and did not deny, but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, what then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not.

[21 : 55] Are you the prophet? And he answered, no. So they said to him, who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?

He said, I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord, as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.

They asked him, then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet? John answered them, I baptize with water.

But among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.

These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

[22 : 55] This is he of whom I said, after me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me. I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.

And John bore witness. I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, that is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God. The next day again, John was standing with two of his disciples. And he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, behold the Lamb of God.

The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, what are you seeking? And they said to him, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying?

He said to them, come and see. So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon, Peter's brother.

[24 : 20] He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, we have found the Messiah, which means Christ. He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, so you are Simon, the son of John.

You shall be called Cephas, which means Peter. Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. I'm now going to sing in Gaelic in Psalm 62.

Psalm 62 and at verse 5. O manam fegw fudnyoch, rwij jia van marchlachk. O rawn san ham o vunigin hrein, smogoch o sfein gu piachk.

She van as karig ilus gong, she van molant jes. O her man dang an eferin, o shin chaglua shwyrt mich. These two verses are Psalm 62.

O manam fegw fudnyoch. O manam fegw fudnyoch, rwij jia van marchlachk.

[25 : 32] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Let's turn again for a little to the chapter we read in John's Gospel, chapter 1.

[29 : 00] And we read from verse 35. The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, Behold the Lamb of God.

The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to him, What are you seeking? He said to him, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying?

He said to them, Come and see. So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. It's great to have a testimony, and every Christian has a testimony.

People enjoy testimony meetings, hearing about how the Lord worked in them. Of course, some people have extraordinary testimonies, particularly in the way that God kept them before they came to faith.

One of the most remarkable that I ever heard was a man in this, a presenter there, Callum McLeod, Callum Nuiggy, this by name.

[30 : 08] He was lined up to be shot in a Japanese prisoner of war camp, and some were shot. He wasn't. He wasn't a believer at the time. So when he was talking about how the way the Lord preserved, you say to yourself, Well, there's not many people who could enter into something as powerful or as radical as that.

But everybody is a testimony. But a testimony isn't just a matter of how we come to faith. A testimony is a matter of not just coming to faith, but our journey of faith.

Because a journey to faith is just the very beginning. Afterwards, it's a journey of faith. So we all, every believer has a testimony.

And I hope if there's anybody here today who has not yet come to faith in Jesus, that it won't be too long until you too will have a testimony. Because it's a wonderful, great thing to be able to share what the Lord has done in you and for you.

Now, John shows something very clear here about testimony. Because in verse 19, it tells us, and this is the testimony of John. Now, the main thing in John's testimony is that his testimony is pointing to Jesus.

[31 : 25] And at the end of the day, that's what every testimony should be about. It's not really about us. We can't help but speak about us because we're giving, about ourselves because we're giving our testimony.

But ultimately, it is about Christ, about what the Lord has done, who he is, what we have come to discover of him. The way he continues to work within our lives. And so, while John is giving something of his own personal testimony as regarding who he is, his main focus in this testimony is, of course, pointing to Jesus.

So John bears testimony of himself. And the reason that he does that is because a delegation has come from the Jewish religious leaders to investigate, who are you?

Because John was on everybody's names. His ministry was capturing the attention of the whole nation. They were keen to find out, who are you?

Because he didn't come through the normal, like, rabbinical schools or all that. He didn't come the normal way that the religious leaders came. But they could all see this man as an authority about him.

[32 : 36] This man is different. This man is a religious man. He's a good man. So they're wanting to find out, who are you? Are you the Christ? Are you Elijah?

Are you one of the prophets? Who are you? And so, John bears very clear testimony to himself. And he says, very simply, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Make straight the way of the Lord. That he's here quoting, of course, from Isaiah. Yeah. And how true it is that John talks here about a wilderness.

Making straight the way of the Lord in a wilderness. Because that's where we are. We're in a wilderness. It wasn't a wilderness that God created at the beginning. It was a beautiful garden.

We turned it into a wilderness. Because we were tied into Adam. And when Adam and Eve sinned, they plunged, as we know, this whole world into a wilderness.

[33 : 35] That's why we're told in Romans that the creation groans. God didn't make it a groaning creation. But because of the fall, the fall didn't just affect you and me.

It affected everything. That's, we see it with the earthquakes, the tsunamis, and volcanoes. That's why it says that the whole creation is groaning.

And that is as a result of sin. It affected everything. And so, as we say, God made in the original, he made a beautiful garden.

But we know if Adam and Eve were thrown out of the garden, and they couldn't find their way back in because there was an angel with a flaming sword guarding entrance back to the garden.

And the wonderful thing is that just as Adam and Eve couldn't get back into the garden, at the end of the day, when the Lord takes his people to glory, just as Adam and Eve couldn't get in, those in glory will never be able to get out.

[34 : 42] It's a dwelling place. That's why Jesus says, I go to make, I go to prepare a place for you, a dwelling place, a place forever. And that's one of the wonderful things is that there will be no exclusions from heaven.

Nobody thrown out. Once you're in, you're in forever. It's a wonderful concept, a wonderful truth that the scripture tells us. Now, as John is here and he's witnessing about Jesus, he says many great things.

And he continues on. We find John's own testimony again further on in chapter 3 and so on. And one of the things that John said about Jesus and about himself is something that we all ought to discover.

He says, he must increase, but I must decrease. And that is so true within our own lives. Because one of the ways that we see the Lord increasing is when we would see the answer to the Lord's prayer, thy kingdom come.

We pray that, Lord, may your kingdom come. We want God's kingdom to come, its influence, its power to be discovered throughout the whole land and in our own community.

[36 : 04] When we pray that, and, you know, we should pray. I know we were taught the Lord's prayer. We should actually pray the Lord's prayer every day and use it as a base for our own prayer.

Because all the different petitions and requests and thoughts in it should lead us into other areas. And it's a wonderful prayer. And your kingdom come. We want the Lord's kingdom to come within our own heart.

In other words, that the Lord would grow. His spirit would work in our hearts so that we would grow more and more. And that's what John is saying for the increase to be in his own life of the Lord and at the same time that he would decrease.

And the two go together. We will always decrease as the Lord increases within us. In other words, when we decrease, we become humble before the Lord.

Now, humility is not something that you just put on. You know, some people think that I better look humble. And they say, and I don't know how you're supposed to look humble. They think, well, I better put on a particular kind of pose of humility.

[37 : 14] But that's not humility. We can't just adopt a position or a look of humility. In fact, that's offensive before God. That's not humility. Humility is where we begin to see less and less of ourselves and more and more of the Lord.

And the more we see of the Lord, the less we think of ourselves. The more we see of the Lord, the more we're liable to fall down before him. You see these men in the scripture, people like, you see, Abraham and Daniel and John and all these people.

When they got a glimpse of the Lord, they fell down before him. His glory was so great. And that's what we need to be seeking in and for ourselves, is that we will see more and more of the wonder and the glory of the Lord.

Because that is where real, true humility comes from. Anyway, the next day, John, he's here and he sees Jesus coming.

And John bears witness or testimony about Jesus. Now, supposing John never said anything else in his life but what he says, first of all, in verse 29.

[38 : 32] And then he says it again in verse 35. Yeah, in verse 35. Verse 29. The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and he said, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

If that's all John ever said, what a ministry in itself that would be. Because that is the most wonderful statement to make. When you think about it, the sacrificial lamb take away the sin of the world.

Now, when John said that, we see the scope of it. The world. The world. The world. Not just the locality where Jesus was. Not just at the time that Jesus lived in the world.

But all the time. throughout every generation. Throughout every generation. Throughout the whole world. And it's ongoing to this very day throughout the nations of this world. This great truth is taking place.

Behold the Lamb of God. Today, in Russia and China and Africa and different parts of this world, people are beholding the Lamb of God. They are seeing him and he's taking away their sin.

[39 : 48] That's God. It's an ongoing. It's happening. We pray it will happen here today as well. That someone or some will be able to see the Lamb of God as the one who takes away the sin of the world and is able to take away my sin too.

And again, when you think the sin of the world, it talks here of all sin. Every type of sin. All manner of sin. Every.

When you think about just look into your own life and look into what you've done. What you say. What you think. You and I all know we have a cesspool of thought that's in there that's sometimes frightening.

Have you ever been frightened by the thoughts you have? They just come from nowhere. I know sometimes Satan can, with his arrows, just fire darts in and all of a sudden you get the most awful thoughts.

And I believe sometimes these are satanic. But we mustn't blame Satan all the time because all sin, manner of sin, is deep within our own selves. And sometimes when we come to have a wee glimpse of that.

[40 : 53] But as we said, the Lord is able to wipe it all clean. Just like as we were saying to the young folk about the shore. Just wash away all sin. So this is what John is proclaiming here about Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Now it tells us again, and the next day John was standing with two of his disciples. And he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, Behold the Lamb of God. And we see there that two of John's disciples who were following John.

One of them was Andrew. And we believe the other was the writer of this gospel himself, John. They turn and they go and they follow Jesus. They leave John and off they go to follow Jesus.

Now some people may say, Oh, that was hard on John. Man, that's showing a total lack of loyalty and disregard to John. Surely John would be hurt about it.

No. John wasn't in the business of building up a following for himself. His whole ministry, his whole work was pointing to Jesus. He was wanting everybody to follow Jesus.

[42 : 03] And so it ought to always be in the work of the gospel. We are never, ever, ever in the work of the gospel for ourselves, for our own glory. It doesn't matter at what level. Because everybody who's working in the gospel, yeah, it can be preaching.

But we can be, there's 101 things within ministry. And whatever we're doing, we must never be doing it for ego or for self or for self-promotion or for a pat on the back or anything of that.

But it is always to and for the Lord. And that's what John, John wasn't somebody who was saying, Oh, come on, look at them. John, Andrew, where are you going? He was delighted that they went off to follow Jesus.

It's part of what John had been saying. He must increase. I must decrease. And, of course, this is a great message that John was proclaiming. Jesus himself said, I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me.

That, of course, he was speaking about his crucifixion and all that that was to involve. But it's what we're about every Lord's Day, is preaching Christ crucified.

[43 : 09] I, if I be lifted up. We're wanting to lift Christ up so that people will see him and believe him. Believe in him. So John's message, behold the Lamb of God.

But you know the encouraging thing here is that John said in verse 29, One day, Jesus coming, behold the Lamb of God.

Here's the next day. And John says exactly the same thing as he walked by, behold the Lamb of God. It doesn't tell us the first day that anybody began to follow Jesus.

But it's the next day as John gives the same message, we find these two people get up and follow Jesus. What an encouragement to us. Because, you know, sometimes we can preach the same message over and over.

And it is, although we preach different texts and different themes, it is the one message at the heart of it. And sometimes nothing happens.

[44 : 13] Sometimes things do happen. But here's an encouragement that one day John gives a message, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. It doesn't tell us that anybody was moved, anybody was stirred, anybody got up to follow Jesus.

The next day, exact same message. And we find a response. So that's an encouragement. It doesn't matter what work you're doing. You might be working in Sunday school. You might be working in youth.

You might be working with old people. You might be witnessing in whatever. Maybe you have witnessed all your life and you haven't seen anything come of it. You don't know. I believe that's going to be one of the great surprises on the great day.

And the reason I believe that is because when the Lord gives us this picture of giving the well done to people. And he's saying to them, you know, you did this and you did that and you did the next thing.

When I was cold, when I was hungry, you fed me. And what do they say? When did we do these things? And I say, well, as much as you did it to one of the least, you did it as unto me.

[45 : 23] So I think on the great day there's going to be a lot of great surprises. Where we find that sometimes when we plowed away and witnessed and worked and nothing seemed to be happening.

On that great day we'll discover, yes, there were things happening. And the Lord will make clear to us what was happening. So it's a great encouragement for us to keep going in this.

But again what's so encouraging is that we find, we're jumping on a wee bit here, but that Andrew, who was one of the two who responded to the message of John and got up to follow Jesus, what did he do after he had spent time with Jesus?

One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon, Peter's brother. He first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, we have found the Messiah.

And he brought him to Jesus. See the knock-on effect. Andrew finds this is the Messiah. What does he do? He can't wait to go and find his brother.

[46 : 32] Convinces his brother, come with me and see in Jesus. Peter comes and meets with Jesus. One leads one. Now fast forward three years.

This man, Peter, who became a leader amongst the apostles. And you watch Peter preach. And thousands come to faith through his preaching.

Remember at Pentecost. It all began with John bearing testimony to Jesus. Andrew hearing, going to get his brother Peter.

Three years forward, thousands have come to faith. It always begins just with one. And that's so encouraging. Because here we're seeing, we're able through in the word, just to see the great spread of the gospel.

The great power that follows it. And so, I'm sure Andrew would never have thought that day how it was going to unfold. And then Jesus turns to them.

[47 : 37] I see. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, what are you seeking? It's interesting. Jesus asked, what are you seeking? Not who are you seeking?

Well, it was obvious who they were seeking. They were seeking Jesus. They were seeking because they wanted to be with him. But he's asking, what are you seeking? And you know, I think that's one of the most important questions that the Lord asks us.

And he's asking us this today. What is it that you're seeking? What is it in life that you really want? What is it that makes you tick?

What is it that is right at the very heartbeat of who you are? Because often we don't really probe down and sort of think, okay, what am I about?

What is the driving force of my life? Because something pushes us on. We're not just drifting. Some days we drift a wee bit to this and that and don't think too much about it.

[48 : 38] Very often we're saying, right, what is life really about? What's at the very source of my life? What's at the heartbeat of my life? What gives that impetus to my life? What is it I really want?

Am I somebody and the main drive of my life is, I want money? That's what propels me on. Or is it I want power?

Or I want influence? Or my great goal is the pursuit of pleasure? You know, there's lots of different things that people, that sort of, it's at the very core of what they're about.

Because it influences everything else that they do, really. So Jesus is asking them, what are you seeking? And so it's a question that only you can answer and only I can answer myself.

What is it that we are really seeking in life? And obviously, the fact that they're following Jesus in itself speaks to us that it's Jesus, of course, that they want above all.

[49 : 44] But we've got to ask ourselves this question. Is Jesus first in our life? Is he the one that we are really seeking? Is he the one that we want?

And can I say to you, if you don't have Jesus, you have no idea what you're missing in life. Because Jesus brings a new dimension and a new perspective to everything.

You see things differently. You're the same person. Don't become somebody brand new, in a sense. You retain your own personality. You retain your own identity.

And all these things are part, become part and retain, remain part of your Christian life. But through it all, Lord is at work and he's molding and shaping you and working in you and changing you bit by bit to become more and more like himself.

But you know, without Christ, life just is not a full picture. Because, you see, we're spiritual beings, not just physical and mental.

[50 : 49] We're spiritual. And we need a spiritual satisfaction, peace, nourishment, because otherwise we're not complete. And I assure you, if you've never come to know the Lord, ask him.

It'll make a huge difference to your life. Not only for now, but for eternity. But when the Lord comes into your life, he changes everything. I remember when I was converted, even the very nature itself seemed different.

Initially, everything. But there was a new, a new, I just got a new sense, even going out on a starry night. Looking out and I said, oh my word.

The Lord, you made all that. You made all these stars. And you number them. You know them. It's just, it changes your whole way of thinking, of seeing things. And so, that's why it's so important that we lay hold upon Jesus.

The most important. He is the most important. That's why Jesus said of Mary, Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall never be taken from her. And in response to the question, Rabbi, they ask him, where are you staying?

[52 : 03] Jesus says, come and you will see. Come and you will see. And you know, that's one of the most wonderful things. And that's what I leave with you today.

Jesus says, come and see. Do you know, a lot of people dismiss Christianity. And they dismiss because they have no knowledge of it. They have no knowledge of Christ.

And not interested to find him. Or know anything about him. But they dismiss. And that's a really, that's a very unfair thing. Because until you dismiss or you say, oh well, he's not for me.

You've got to come and discover a bit about who this person is that you're ready to dismiss. And I would urge people who don't know anything of Jesus.

That you would start in the Gospels. Pick up the Gospel of Luke. And really begin to read through it. And the Gospel of John. And ask the Lord to open your heart so that you will see.

[53 : 07] You know, we can read the Bible from it. I used to do that out of, I suppose because of my upbringing. And out of a sense of duty.

And maybe to solve a conscience. No matter how far away I was from God. Most nights I tried to read a few verses. And it was no more than solving a conscience.

But I often tried to read through the Bible. But you know, I never really saw anything in it. It's not until the Lord opened my eyes to see. And that's why we need to pray as we read.

Lord, open my eyes to see. And the Lord, if you mean that prayer, the Lord will. He will open your eyes in order to see. And they went with Jesus.

They came. They spent the day with Jesus. They saw. And what an impact it had upon their lives. Here's this Gospel writer, John. He was one of the two.

[54 : 06] Andrew, as we said, who went. And he got his brother, Peter. And we see what followed on from that. Well, I hope today that you too will come and see Jesus for yourself.

Let's pray. Lord, our God, we pray that we may indeed see Jesus. That we will see him as the Saviour who is there. The Saviour who is there for me.

And that we might be able to lay hold upon him. So often there are things in the way. Just like that, what do you seek? So often it is the things that we seek that keep us away from Jesus.

Help us, Lord, to see that you are more important than all these other things that so often get in our way. Some of the things can be absolutely right and proper in their own way.

And it's good even to be seeking some of these things. But not above and beyond Jesus. Help us then, Lord, to seek him first.

[55 : 08] And we're told, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And all the other things will be added to you. Bless us then, we pray. And cleanse us from our every sin.

In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen. We're going to conclude singing from Psalm 25. From Sing Psalms.

I'm going to sing verses 4 to 9. Psalm 25. O Lord, reveal to me your ways. And all your paths help me to know. Direct and guide me in your truth.

Instruct me in the way to go. So we're going to sing verses 4 to 9 from Psalm 25. O Lord, reveal to me your ways.

O Lord, reveal to me your ways.

[56 : 07] And all your paths help me to know. Direct and guide me in your truth.

Ensure me in the way to home. You are my Savior and my God.

All day I hope in you alone. Remember, Lord, your love and grace.

From strong past ages you have shown. Do not recall my sins of youth.

Remember me in your great love.

[57 : 28] For you, O Lord, are good always. Because the Lord is just and good.

He shows His path to all who sing. He guides the meek in what is right.

And teaches them His holy way. Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore.

Amen.