

30.5.21 am

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 May 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, everyone. Warm welcome to the service, those who are in the building and those who are on the live stream as well. It's good to see a few visitors with us this morning, and you're especially welcome.
- One or two intimations. The first is to remind you that in the evening there'll be a live service here. It's a Gaelic service, and it's also broadcast on YouTube.
- And that service will be taken this evening by John McSween. So that's this evening at 6 o'clock, the monthly Gaelic service. On Wednesday, the prayer meeting will continue on Zoom, as has been the course over past months.
- And this coming Wednesday, we have Donnie from the Faith Mission, who we haven't seen for a wee while. He's going to be with us this Wednesday, so be encouraged to come along to that meeting.
- A couple more things. One is to say, boys and girls, there's a few of you here, a few more probably watching online. Jam and Connect will start again this Friday.
- [1 : 0 6] And Jam is at what time, Mary? Jam starts at half past one, and Connect is on at four o'clock, I think. So boys and girls, be encouraged to come out to these clubs.
- We'll do them for the month of June. YF this evening will be on Zoom. And it's a bigger YF that's got various YFs from across the island.
- And there's a special speaker on this evening, a guy called Donnie Campbell, who I remember from my days in Sky as a wee chubby guy in the church. And now he's an elite runner, and he's a Christian.
- And he's going to speak about his faith in Christ and just a little about his life and testimony this evening. So for the YFH, you know about that.
- For those who maybe have an interest in tuning into that who are not YFH, you speak to Stuart. He can give you the code to allow you to connect on that. Next Sunday, two things for next Sunday.
- [2 : 1 3] One is that it's a communion service both in the morning and the evening. So we'll celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the morning and the evening next Sunday.
- And you'll be given details about coming to the service in the course of the week as is usual. So that's a communion service next Sunday morning and next Sunday evening.
- That will be taken by myself. There won't be a guest speaker this time. Good morning. Come in. Good to see you. Good to see you. And the final thing about next Sunday is that the masks for the, I'm sorry, the masks for everybody have to stay on.
- Apart from the presenter. But what we can have next Sunday is congregational singing. So there's a small step forward. This Sunday, Adam is going to lead us and there will be two solo praise items that we'll have.
- But next Sunday, we'll be able to go back to congregational singing. But we'll still have to have the masks on. So that's something to be encouraged by for next Sunday also.

- [3 : 21] So these, I think, are all the intimations. And we're going to begin the service now by hearing the hymn sung, Mission Praise 1008.
- It's a paraphrase of Psalm 23. These familiar words of Psalm 23. The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want. He makes me lie in pastures green. He leads me by the still, still waters.
- His goodness restores my soul. And I will trust in you alone. The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want.
- He makes me lie in pastures green. He leads me by the still, still waters.
- His goodness restores my soul. I will trust in you alone. I will trust in you alone.
- [4 : 36] For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.
- He guides my ways in righteousness. He anoints my head with oil.
- And my cup, it overflows with joy. I feast on his pure delights.
- I will trust in you alone. I will trust in you alone. For your endless mercy follows me.
- Your goodness will lead me home. Though I walk the darkest path, I will not fear the evil one.
- [5 : 44] For you are with me. For you are with me. And your rod and staff are the comfort I need to know.
- I will trust in you alone. I will trust in you alone.
- For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.
- Let's unite our hearts in prayer.
- Let's pray. Our heavenly father, we thank you for this morning.
- [6 : 45] We thank you for this, your day. We thank you for the beauty of your creation. We look around us. We feel the warmth of the sunshine on our faces.
- We see the majesty of the environment that you've placed us in. And we thank you for these signposts that point us to the fact that you are the God who made us, who made everything.
- And we bow in your presence. We worship you. We thank you that not only did you make everything, not only did you make us, but you have revealed yourself to us.
- We thank you for your word, which we have sung, that paraphrase of that psalm that's so precious to us, which reminds us that the Lord, the Lord Jesus is our shepherd.
- He is the good shepherd. The one who laid down his life for the sheep and who took his life back up again so that we can be saved.
- [7 : 46] We thank you for the comfort and for the joy, for the assurance that that brings to us. We know that as we come into your presence this morning, we cannot come in our own name because we are those who are sinners.
- We think about our lives. We know how far short we fall of our own standards, never mind the standards of God, which are perfection. that we are sinners, there is none righteous, not one.
- But we thank you that Jesus came to seek and save sinners like us. We thank you that as he died on the cross, he died to pay the wages of our sin.
- And we thank you that as he rose from the dead, he rose to justify us, to make us righteous, to give us peace with God. And so we thank you this morning that we can come in Jesus' name, looking to his cross, trusting in his finished work, knowing that our sins are forgiven if we are trusting in him.

And knowing that as we stand before you at this time and this place, you look upon us, Lord, and you see us not in our sinful state, but if we are trusting in Christ, you see us clothed in the righteousness of Jesus.

[9 : 12] We thank you that we have that assurance, that peace that comes from knowing that we are in Christ if we are trusting in him.

And for any who are not yet trusting in Jesus, any who may be here this morning, any who may listen in or who may watch at a distance, we pray that they would see their sin, that they would see Jesus as the great Savior, that they would see the cross and the open tomb and be given the faith to believe and the courage to profess that faith.

We think about next Lord's Day, should we see it. We think about the sacrament of the Lord's Supper where we take the bread and we take the wine to remember all that Jesus has done for us.

And we pray for all who will attend. We pray for those who have been saved but have not yet stepped forward to profess faith in Christ.

And we ask, Lord, that you would give them the courage to come, that you would speak to them, that you would enable them to stand up and say, I'm not ashamed to say that Jesus is my Lord.

[10 : 27] We know that in coming to the table, we say that we are not worthy but we're trusting in the one who is worthy. So give us eyes to see and ears to hear and faith to believe and courage to obey you in the call that you place upon our lives.

We pray for each of us as we gather here and elsewhere. Bless us, we pray, from those who are very young. We thank you for the very young who are with us this morning.

We thank you again for little Joseph whom we hear, the joy that that brings to us to hear a baby in the church building. And we pray your blessing upon all the young people, especially those who come together this weekend for Jam and Connect once more.

Lord, we ask that they would know your presence with them. We pray that they would remember you and trust you in their early days. And for those in middle age through to those who are coming to the end of life, we pray for each one, Lord.

You know our needs, you know our hearts, you know the details of our lives and we thank you that we can entrust ourselves to you. So hear our prayers and bless us in this time of worship.

[11 : 39] Enable us to fix our eyes upon Jesus. For we pray these things in his name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, it's good to see you this morning and to hear you as well.

Don't worry about little Joseph. I love to hear him. Now I've got to, well before we get to the video that I'm going to show you. So you'll be able to see okay.

Emily, you might have to come forward just a little bit so you can see that screen. And those that are at the door, you can just sneak around and make sure you can see, you can get around so you can see the screen.

I think for the younger ones, you're a bit easier to be able to move freely. So maybe get yourself in the position. But I want to start by asking the question.

Ailey, you want to come around? You sneak around here and you can maybe see. Did you hear the psalm that Mr. Johnson sang?

[12 : 45] Were you listening? Yeah? Do you remember what he sang? He said, The Lord is my... Any guesses?

Did you hear? The Lord's my... Shepherd. I don't know who said that, but it was the Lord's my shepherd.

And so we know that, Sam. There's different versions of it. We sing it quite a lot. And if the Lord is my shepherd, what does that make me and you?

He's the shepherd. The sheep. Yeah, the sheep. Now, boys and girls, put your hand up if you've ever seen a sheep.

Who's seen a sheep? We've all seen sheep, haven't we? Now, are sheep the cleverest animals in the whole world? No, they're not the cleverest animals in the whole world, are they?

[13 : 48] They're not stupid. They're crafty creatures. They can find amazing ways to get into my garden. But they're not the cleverest creatures in all the world.

When I was running along the road the other day, I was seeing two sheep. Both of them had fancied the grass on the other side of the fence so they'd stuck their heads through the fence and then tried to reverse back out and they couldn't get their heads back through.

And this was an old sheep. He must have done it a million times. So, sheep aren't the cleverest animals in the world. They're not stupid but sometimes they do silly things.

Sometimes they get lost. Don't they? Sometimes they get stuck. Sometimes they get themselves into all kinds of trouble and they need to be rescued by the shepherd.

So, I'm going to ask Stuart now. Sneak around so you can see the screen. The boys and girls at home will be able to see it on your screens at home. But can you see that?

[14 : 48] So, you ready? Ready? So, look at, there's a boy there. He's the shepherd. There's a sheep. Look at it. Stuck in a ditch.

What do you make of that? Finally liked it. Okay. There you go. See it?

Okay. I'll put the video off because I know the ones at home can't hear me until the video goes off. All good? So, boys and girls, what happened there?

Sheep. Stuck in a ditch. Along comes the wee shepherd. He gets hold of the sheep. And what does he do? Callum? He pulls it out of the ditch, doesn't he?

Until the sheep's free. And then what did the sheep do? What did it do next? Boys, let me see your hands.

[15 : 59] Go this. It charged off. It bounded off out of the ditch. It jumped up high and it got stuck straight in the ditch all over again.

And that's what the sheep did. And you know what that reminded me of? Do you know who that reminded me of? It reminded me of me. Because we are so much like sheep.

Jesus knew what he was talking about when he spread that we're like sheep and he's the shepherd. Because sin makes us stuck, doesn't it? And we can't save ourselves from sin.

No more than that, sheep could get out of the ditch. So what do we do? We cry out to Jesus. A little Joseph there, he was crying out. He was saying, I'm hungry.

I want some milk. And when we are needing something, when we are needing Jesus to save us, we cry out to Jesus. And he hears us. And he helps us. And there's that psalm that says, he took us from the fearful pit.

[17 : 07] He takes us out of that. And he saves us. But see, once we're saved, once we become Christians, are we perfect forever? Well, let me answer that question.

We're not perfect forever. We keep making mistakes. We keep getting stuck. And we keep needing to cry out and saying to Jesus, please help me.

Please free me. So, let's remember the sheep and let's remember the shepherd to be trusting in him and to be crying out to him. We'll pray.

Lord God, we thank you for this day. And we thank you for the psalm that we sang. And we thank you that Jesus is the good shepherd. And we thank you that when we are stuck in sin, we can cry out to Jesus.

We can't save ourselves. We know that. But we thank you that we can cry out to Jesus. And he heals, he helps, he saves every single person who cries out to him.

[18 : 08] And yet we know, Lord, that after we become Christians, we're not perfect. We still sin. We still make a mess of things. We still get stuck. And we thank you that we can keep on crying out to Jesus.

And he never says, I've heard enough from you. He never says, stop, stop crying out to me. He always responds by coming and helping us.

So help us, Lord, we pray, to know your love and to never be scared to cry out and ask that you would help us. We thank you that you go right through life with us, every step of the way.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you're the good shepherd who not only takes us through life, but who takes us through death into life that's everlasting. And so help us, Lord, we pray to be trusting you.

And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, boys and girls, for listening. You can head now through to Sunday School. We can turn in our Bibles, please, to Luke chapter 10.

[19 : 35] Luke chapter 10.

And we'll read from verses 25 to verse 37. This is God's word. On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

Teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? What is written in the law? He replied. How do you read it? He answered, love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

You've answered correctly, Jesus replied. Do this and you will live. But he wanted to justify himself. So he asked Jesus, and who is my neighbor?

In reply, Jesus said, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

[20 : 52] A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was, and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper.

Look after him, he said, and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have. Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?

The expert in the law replied, the one who had mercy on him. Jesus told him, go and do likewise. Amen.

[21 : 56] And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Again, let's pray just for a moment. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word once more.

We pray that as we study it, as we meditate upon it, that you would help us to hear, help us to see, help us to understand what you would have us see and hear and understand.

Help us, we pray, to be like little children and not like the wise and learned that Jesus speaks of earlier in that chapter. We pray that you would enable us to look simply and trustingly to the Lord Jesus.

Not to lean on our own understanding, but to put the faith that you give us in him. So hear our prayers and help us, we pray. We pray for any who are in particular need this morning.

We're always conscious of those who are sick, some distant from us, some in our own community, some who are struggling with minor ailments, some who may be coming even towards the end of their days in this world.

[23 : 11] And as we think of them, we bring them to you in prayer and we ask that you would lay your hand of healing upon them where that's your will. And we pray, Lord, for the comfort of God and the grace that's sufficient that comes from Jesus to be given to all those that we bring to you even in the silence of our own hearts.

We pray on for those who are grieving. We ask, Lord, that they may know your comfort, that in your compassion, Lord, you may draw near to them and give to them the comfort of your spirit and the hope of the gospel.

We ask, Lord, now that you would be with us as you would be with the children, we pray that you would give them understanding as we pray that you would give us understanding.

Open our eyes, we pray, that we would see Jesus. And we pray these things in his name and for his sake. Amen. Well, if you could have your Bibles open, please, at the passage that we read in Luke chapter 10.

I think I've said this before and I'll probably say it again, but Luke's gospel is full of signposts. We look around us here, we see so many visitors on the island now and they're looking for signposts, they're reading signposts, they're following signposts and Luke's gospel is full of signposts.

[24 : 47] We're given little hints at various junctures as to what's coming next. And we read from verse 25 and following of Luke chapter 10.

But if we rewind just a few verses, we see that Jesus is having a conversation with his disciples and he's speaking to his disciples about spiritual truth and the importance of grasping spiritual truth.

And he's teaching his disciples and as he's teaching them, he breaks into prayer. And if you glance at verse 21, this is one of these signposts.

Jesus, he prays and he says, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things, these spiritual truths from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.

And Jesus, throughout the Gospels, he was teaching his disciples to be like little children.

[25 : 57] To simply, to dependently trust in him and follow him. We have such a good example of it in the little children.

They're they're not asking, they're not asking questions about every step. But day by day, they trust, they follow. They don't wake up in the morning and say to their parents, let's figure out the menu for the week.

They just eat what's before them or they should do. They don't sit down and say, can we have a meeting about family finances? They just trust that what they need will be provided. And Jesus is teaching his disciples to be like little children, to simply, to dependently trust in him and follow him.

And they were starting to get it. They were starting to see who Jesus was. They were starting to understand why he came.

But now Jesus, having given us the disciples as an illustration of little children, he introduces us in the section that we read to one of the so-called wise and learned.

[27 : 12] Remember what he says? He says, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned. You've revealed them to little children.

And so now we have in these verses that we studied, we have an example of a wise and learned person. This is a man who's an expert in the biblical text. This is a man who has a PhD in theology in our terms.

And yet he just doesn't get it at all. He doesn't see who Jesus is. He has no concept of why Jesus came into the world.

And so that kind of sets the scene, that sets the context for the conversation and for the parable that follows. as we see these two categories, little children, trusting in Jesus, wise and learned, they just don't get it.

So the first point we have in verse 25 is we hear a good question. There's a good question that is asked. On one occasion, says Luke, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus.

[28 : 25] Teacher, he asked, what must I do to inherit eternal life? So that was the question that this man asks of Jesus.

Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? And it's a question that was often asked in that day and age.

The expert in the law asks it. If we were to fast forward to Luke chapter 18, we find a man that we know as the rich young ruler.

He's a man who's made it in terms of the world. He has money. He has status. He has power. He has very good manners as he approaches Jesus.

And he comes to Jesus with this question, the same question, what must I do, he says, to inherit eternal life? It was a good question. And these are just two examples of many more.

[29 : 29] We can think of many who came to Jesus and the apostles with that same question, what must I do to be saved? Remember the Philippine jailer? What must I do to be saved?

Remember on the day of Pentecost, the same question was asked of Peter, what must we do if we're going to be saved from the sin that we see? How do we inherit eternal life?

It's a good question. It's a question that Jesus has hardwired into our hearts. Ecclesiastes chapter 3 and verse 11 says, he, that's God, has put eternity into man's heart.

Deep within us, we know that there is a God. We know that there has to be more to life than just this.

Making money, building a house, staying in it for a few years and then going on. There's got to be more to life than this. We know that. Romans 1, chapter 1, verse 20 actually makes that clear.

[30 : 48] It says in these verses, for since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understand from what has been made so that people are without excuse.

You know, God says to us through the apostle Paul, there are no atheists. Deep within us, we have that awareness of eternity.

There's so many people I've met who have been atheists until a crisis point, until life starts to crumble, until someone that they love dies.

and then you begin to see this awareness of the eternal, this awareness of the fact that God exists coming back up.

It's been suppressed, but it comes back up. We have eternity wired deeply into us.

[32 : 02] So the question, how do I get eternal life? it's a good question. It's a crucial question to be asking. And I want to just prod a little and say, are you asking it?

Are we asking this question? You know, we can ask questions about pensions and education and romance and politics, and these are good questions.

But they're this world questions. And we're only here for a while. We have no continuing city here.

And so, the better question for us to be asking, the best question to ask, the crucial question for us to ask is, how can I get eternal life?

So that's the first point. There's a good question. The second point we see here as we continue to look at this man and listen to this conversation is, we see that he has bad motives.

[33 : 08] Good question, point to bad motives. He has bad reasons for asking it. Because sometimes it is possible to ask a good question for bad reasons.

in every class there's at least one smarty-pats. I remember in university days there was a mature student in my class.

And the class probably had a hundred plus people in it. But there was this little stocky mature student. and every single lesson that we went to.

After the lecturer had given his lecture Mr. Smarty Pants would put his hand up. He always had a question. He always had a question. Even if it was five past the time we're supposed to be finished, he still had a question and he never seemed interested in the answer.

He asked the question and he sat back in his chair, folded his arms and kind of grinned and looked around the class. He wasn't looking for the answer. He just wanted everyone to see how clever he was in asking the question.

[34 : 18] They were good questions but we could see it was bad reasons that prompted them being asked. And this man here, this so-called expert in the law, he asks a good question.

The law by the way is God's law. We're not talking about a solicitor here. We're talking about an expert in the Bible. And so this so-called expert in the Old Testament scriptures, he asks a good question but he has bad motives in asking it.

And we know that because Luke tells us that. We can picture this man standing up for all to see him and firing this question, verse 25, Luke tells us, he asks it to test Jesus.

Jesus. And so we see the pride of this man coming through. He's standing before the creator of heaven and earth, the king of kings.

And he's up on his feet with his chest out, asking this question to test Jesus. And even the way he addresses Jesus kind of gives us the impression of the attitude that he has, a teacher, he says, not Lord.

[35 : 37] Davey says, master, I think, which is not the best translation. The word is didaskus, I think. It's the word that we get didactic from, teacher.

So this man, he says to Jesus, Jesus, you're a teacher. And you know, Jesus, I'm a teacher too. In fact, I'm a teacher who probably has a few more letters after my name than you do, Jesus.

I've been to seminary, don't you know, when you were in your joiner's shed. So let me just set you a little test question, teacher.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? And note the emphasis there, what must I do? It's all about I. It's all about me.

That's where the emphasis is. And so this man's question, even the way he asks it, shows he actually doesn't care very much about eternal life.

- [36 : 40] He's not interested in trusting Jesus. He just wants to look good himself. He has bad motives. And still there can be people like this.
- We can come across some people who love to talk about spiritual things. They love to ask questions.
- They love to have a bit of sport with Jesus and the gospel. But they have no intention of trusting in Jesus.
- They have no desire to inherit eternal life. There's a minister called Richard Bewes. He was a preacher of a previous generation.
- He was in also church in London. He tells a story about being at a university. He was on a panel answering questions at a university and there was various questions that evening posed to him on the panel about spiritual things.
- [37 : 48] Lots of students were there that evening as he answered questions in this panel. But there was one older man there. He wasn't a student. He was a lecturer. And he was a lecturer in theology.
- And yet he was a lecturer in theology who described himself as an atheist. So he fired a few aggressive questions at Bewes and then he went on his way.
- And after the meeting at Bewes the minister he caught the man. And he thanked him for his questions. And then he thanked him for his questions.
- That's okay. We'll take a wee break. See, things like that are good because those who have been sleeping they wake up for just a minute. So where were we? Bewes.
- He's at university. He's had the panel. The questions have been fired at him. The lecturer in theology who's an atheist is now in a conversation with Bewes.
- [39 : 00] And Bewes says to this lecturer in theology, why do you study theology if you're an atheist? And he says he just looked at him and he said, because it amuses me.
- It amuses me. God amuses me. And that's a little like this expert in the law.
- I may be over-egging it a bit, but in asking this question, it seems he intended to showboat his theological knowledge. rather than trust in Christ.
- This conversation with Jesus was not for his edification. It was not in order that he would receive eternal life. This was for his amusement. Good question.
- Bad motives. Third point, we see the good book. In verse 25, following this expert in the law, he asks the question, what must I do to inherit eternal life?
- [40 : 12] One of these massive questions. We can see his motivations wrong behind it. But notice how Jesus responds to his question. Notice the straightforwardness of Jesus' answer.
- His answer is crystal clear. His answer is very concise. He says, if you want to know how to inherit eternal life, read the Bible.
- Full stop. Read the Bible. He doesn't say, well, that's a big question.
- Have you studied the world religions? He doesn't say, have you considered a course in popular spirituality? spirituality. He says, if you want an answer to this question, there's only one place you need to look.
- Read the Bible. What is written in the law, verse 26, he replied, how do you read it? You're an expert in it, Mr.
- [41 : 18] Mr. PhD. So what do you find? Do you want the answer to this question? Open the book that you're an expert in.
- Read the Bible. That's the kind of clarity we actually need today. You know, today, I think there is a greater openness to spiritual things than there has been for quite a long time.

I can have lots of spiritual conversations with people. There's an openness, there's an interest. People have questions, but there's such confusion over where to find answers.

Speaking to someone just in this last week, who described himself as a very spiritual person, and I would agree that he is. He said he often speaks to God in prayer.

But when I asked him about the Bible, he says, no, I never read the Bible. Never. I don't even know where to find one. So I said, well, where do you get guidance?

[42 : 35] Where do you get clarity? Where do you get answers to your questions if you don't read the Bible? It's good to be praying and speaking to God, but how does he speak back to you?

Where do you get answers to all these big questions? And he answered by saying, well, the world gives me answers. I get answers from nature.

I get answers from the people that God puts around me, but the difficulty with that is that this world is a mixed up place. And the prince of this world, Satan, he is described as the great deceiver.

God is the father of lies, not truth. And nature is a signpost to the fact that there's a creator, God, but we won't find the answer to the question, how must I inherit eternal life on the top of the creature?

And if we start asking everyone who comes into our circle the answer to the question, how do we get eternal life, we'll get a dozen different answers from every person that we ask, which leaves us in a state of confusion, which is where so many people are.

[43 : 55] And Jesus cuts through all that. And he says, to get the answer to the question, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

To get the truth, we need to open the good book, the Bible. Full stop.

Good question, bad motives in asking it. Jesus directs him to the good book, to God's word. The fourth point is we have a good response now from the man.

There's a bit of kind of ping pong going on here as Jesus responds and he asks questions and so it goes on. So Jesus responds with clarity but with a bit of a question.

And we have a good response now from the man to Jesus. Now, if we take this back to our world for a minute, if we think about conversations that we have of we're Christians, and if we're speaking to someone who's searching spiritually, and if we say, well, what you should do is you should read the Bible, very often we won't get a good response.

[45 : 09] Very often when I've had that conversation, I've had a bad response. Sometimes a response that shows a total ignorance of the Bible, willfully so, and sometimes there's a response that shows a kind of deep, ingrained prejudice against the Bible.

People, they're willing to sort of look at crystals and stars and all kinds of hocus pocus, but the Bible, no thank you, get off the table. That's a common response.

It's a bad response, but it's not this man's response. And in one sense, this man's response to Jesus' question here is good.

Remember, Jesus asks the question, what is written in the law? How do you read it? This man answers, verse 27, he says, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

That's the answer. And Jesus says in verse 28, you've answered correctly. If you do this, you'll live. So this man, he has the right answer to the question in one sense.

[46 : 27] He makes a good response. he knows his Bible, as we'd expect him to. And so he takes Deuteronomy 6, 5, and Leviticus 19, 18, and he gives Jesus the answer.

He says, to get a turn of life, you have to love God and your neighbor perfectly all the time. Because that's the tense that's used in the Greek. It's the perfect tense, which means this is about loving God with all your heart, mind, soul, strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself, always, continually, never stop it.

And so this man says to Jesus, if I do that, then I'll live. That's the way to eternal life. And in one sense, that was correct.

But if this man really wanted eternal life, he would be saying, Jesus, I can't do this. I haven't done this.

It's not possible for me to do this. I haven't always loved God with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind. I haven't always loved my neighbor as myself.

[47 : 49] I've failed to do this in the past. I know, Jesus, I'll fail to do this in the future. If that man was honest, that would be his response. He might be able to quote these verses, but he would be saying immediately afterwards, but I can't do this.

So is there any hope for me? And you know, that's what God's law is designed to do. Take the Ten Commandments, for example.

So many people have the Ten Commandments and think of this as as a ladder that we climb to get eternal life. We step up through all these good works that we try and do.

We step up through all these bad works that we try not to do. And if we do well enough in this legal ladder that we've got in front of us, we're going to get to eternal life.

That's not what God's law was designed to do. The law of God is not a ladder that we climb up to heaven on. The law of God is a mirror that shows us that we're not good enough to get into heaven.

[49 : 00] We can't do this. We can't love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength for ten minutes at a time. Never mind forever.

And we can't love our neighbor as ourselves for five minutes at a time. Because we love ourselves so much.

And yet this so-called expert in the law, he can't see that. He won't see it. And he's still determined to catch Jesus out with some more questions.

This time his question is about who is my neighbor, verse 29. So this man's good response. It's good at head level. He could quote the law.

But it's bad at heart level. Because he can't see his own heart problem. He can't see that the law of God doesn't lift him up, but it pushes him down.

[50 : 03] It condemns him. And so Jesus is patient with this man. He wants him to see. And so he tells him a story.

A parable about the good Samaritan. That's our fifth point. And this is a parable I'm not going to spend long on. It's a parable that we know well, I think.

And it's a parable that it doesn't have the same impact on us, on first hearing, as it would have had on then. And for the Jew who was listening to this on that day, the words good and Samaritan were shocking words to put together.

You didn't put these words together. Probably the closest we could get to this would be to talk about a good suicide bomber. Good terrorist. We wouldn't put the words together.

And yet Jesus, he puts these words together and he tells the story where the punchline of the story is that the Samaritan, the one who is hated, the one who is despised by the Jew, he's the good guy.

[51 : 14] And that would have taken the wind out of this man and everybody who was listening. So we see the story here from verses 30 to verse 32.

We see this man, presumably a Jewish man. He's attacked. He's robbed. He's beaten. He's left for dead. This is something that often happened on that stretch of road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

It's about 17 miles of road. There were caves on it. It's an ideal place for bandits to hide out and then pounce on victims. So this was a common story. So this man, this Jewish man, presumably, he's attacked.

He's robbed. He's left for dead. Verse 31, along comes a priest. Good guy. Will he help? No, he passes over to the other side.

And then in verse 32, we have a Levite, another worker in the temple, another religious professional, another good guy. He sees the man on the road left for dead.

[52 : 21] Will he cross over or will he help? When he crosses over, he's having nothing to do with it. See, to touch a dead body for these religious professionals would be, it would be inconvenient.

It would make them ceremonially unclean. It would be messy. It would be time consuming. It could be costly. And so these two so-called good guys show themselves to be not that good in the story that Jesus is telling.

And the crowds that were gathered as they listened to this would have been loving this. This kind of anti-clerical story where the guys who are the religious teachers, those in authority, are casting a bad light.

The man on the street would be loving this. But they would have been anticipating the next chapter of this. And what the people would likely have been expecting was for the hero to be an ordinary Jew.

No dog collar, no reverent, no status, no position in the temple, just an ordinary salt of the earth, good normal man, walks down the corner, sees the man, comes in to save the day.

[53 : 39] That's what they were expecting. But Jesus brings a twist into the story where the Savior is the Samaritan.

The example of the good neighbor is the Samaritan. And remember, all this is in response to the man's question, who is my neighbor?

And Jesus says to him, your neighbor is the Samaritan. Your neighbor is the person that you hate the most.

Your neighbor is the person that you consider to be your enemy. That's the one you're to love. And now at this point, this expert in the law should have said, Jesus, I can't do this.

This is opportunity too. For the man to confess his sin and say, Jesus, this is too much. I can't do this. I haven't loved the Samaritans.

[54 : 55] I don't love the Samaritans. And if I'm going to ever love the Samaritans, I need your help. I need a new heart for this. And if he'd said that, at that point, the gospel would have kicked in.

At that point, Jesus would have told him good news. If the expert had said, I can't keep your laws, Jesus, so how can I be saved?

How can I get eternal life now? At that point, Jesus would have preached grace to him. But this man, he will not accept Jesus' teaching.

He will not repent. And note in verses 36 and 37, when Jesus eventually asks him, tell me, who was the neighbor?

The man can't even pronounce the word Samaritan. He says, the one who showed mercy. And so Jesus, seeing this man's hard heart and his determination to carry on hating the Samaritans, to carry on trying to save himself, he sends him off with his tail between his legs.

[56 : 15] Now, what was the problem with this man? What was causing him to be the way that he was? We were told the problem in verse 29.

The problem was he wanted to justify himself. And so he was using the law to try to justify himself.

And he was using his religious status to try to justify himself. And he was using his Jewishness, his family background, his family name, to try to justify himself.

But Jesus showed him he couldn't justify himself and inherit eternal life. And what Jesus showed to him, he shows to you and I today.

We cannot justify ourselves by any means. Sometimes I'll ask the direct question of someone, are you a Christian?

[57 : 20] We're having a spiritual conversation and I'll say, are you a Christian? And often the response is, well, I'm trying to be. It's the wrong response.

This man was trying. He was trying to be religious. He was trying to be good. He was trying to keep the law.

But Jesus showed him that his trying wasn't enough to justify himself. See, to inherit eternal life, if we're going to try and go down the legal route, means that we have to be more than a trial.

We have to be perfect. 100% of the time. And none of us are perfect. And so the law of God, it confronts us with a stark truth that we cannot justify ourselves.

ourselves. We need a Savior. And we have a great Savior in Jesus. That's our final point.

[58 : 34] We see, in conclusion here, Jesus as the great Savior. See, the parable that Jesus told here of the Good Samaritan, it was designed to reveal to this man that he was a great sinner.

But it was also designed to reveal to this man that Jesus was the great Savior. Because as we look at the Good Samaritan, who do we see?

Well, we see Jesus. Sometimes we take this parable and we go straight to the position where we say the Good Samaritan was kind to his neighbor.

He did things that cost him, that inconvenienced him. He was a good guy. We need to try and be like him. And that's one application, but it's not the main application.

The main thing that we should see through this parable is that Jesus is the Good Samaritan. And who are we?

[59 : 45] Well, we're the guy who's lying half dead on the road. That's where we fit. And what the Samaritan did for the half dead man, Jesus has done for us.

That's the key point. Eric Alexander says, Jesus is the perfect neighbor. When we were broken and bleeding and helpless in our sin, he did not pass by on the other side.

He came to us and took us up in his arms and gently brought us to the glorious fullness of his saving grace.

He healed our wounds and made us whole. So as we look at this, we see Jesus.

We see Jesus come in and lift us from the side of the road and tend to our wounds and do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

[60 : 58] We see him come in to save us. See, because the expert in the law wanted to justify himself, as far as we know, this man was lost.

Unless there was a change, this man, for all his PhDs and reverent titles is in hell. Those who want to justify themselves are lost.

But those who will look to Jesus, the great Savior for justification, will be saved. Will inherit eternal life.

Paul drills that home to us in Romans chapter 3. We're just about finished. In verse 20 to 25, Paul says, No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law.

Rather, through the law, we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known to which the law and prophets testify.

[62 : 11] This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ. To all who believe. There is no difference.

For all have sinned and all fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Jesus. God presented him, Jesus, as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood.

And although this was not my design or my timings, this passage very much prepares us for next Sunday.

This passage answers very clearly for us who should be at the Lord's table and who should not be at the Lord's table. Who should not be there?

[63 : 18] Well, anyone who's trying to justify themselves has no place at the Lord's table. Whether we're trying to justify ourselves through our reputation or our good works or our biblical knowledge or our church attendance.

If we're depending on any of these things, trying to make ourselves good enough through these things, we shouldn't be at the table.

And we can't be saved. So who should be there? Well, those who should be at the Lord's table are those who see that we are the guilty, broken, bleeding, helpless sinners.

Who are lying at the side of the road. Those who should be at the table are those who in the state of our sin have called out to Jesus to be our great Savior.

Who have come to the cross and put our faith not in us, but in him. In his blood.

[64 : 37] And if that's you, whether you've come before or never come before, don't hesitate. Don't be held back with doubts.

But in obedience to his call, if you've trusted in him, come. And we can respond in prayer in the last hymn.

Just as I am, without one plea. Mission praise 396. We can conclude by praying this hymn as we hear Adam singing this hymn.

396 in mission praise. I'll just read the words. Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot, to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come. Just as I am, though tossed about, with many a conflict, many a doubt, fightings within, fears without, O Lamb of God, I come.

[65 : 52] Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind, sight, riches, healing of the mind, yea, all I need, and thee I find, O Lamb of God, I come. Just as I am, thy wilt receive, welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve, because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down, now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come.

We'll hear this hymn sung, and we can pray, and respond to God, as we hear it. Just as I am, without one plea, that thy blood, was shed for me, and that thou bidst me, come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not, to rid my soul, of one dark blood, to thee whose blood, can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, O wretched blind, sight rich, is healing of the mind, yea, all I need in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come.

[68 : 27] I come, I come. Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve, because thy promise, I believe, I come, I come, I come.

I come, I come, I come. I come. Just as I am, thy love unknown, hath broken every barrier down, now to be thine, yea, thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all, both now and forevermore.

Amen.