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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see everyone. It's good to see some visitors with us as well. And you're especially welcome as we gather together to worship God. One or two intimations, I guess they've been on the screen before I come in, but I'll just run through one or two intimations. First of all, to remind you that the prayer meeting will be on Wednesday at half past seven. We'll stay on Zoom at this point in time and the services next Sunday, God willing, will be taken by myself. I know things are changing slightly in terms of restrictions and we're waiting on confirmation and details and what that looks like over the next few days. So my assumption is that the way we've been doing things over the last period will probably continue for the next week or so, or potentially a few weeks until we just get clarity on what we are and what we're not allowed to do in terms of screens and masks and all these kind of things. So you can expect to get an email from Cami or a text from Cami over the next few days and we'll hopefully be able to give a bit more detail on what comes next by next Sunday.

An intimation also which you got last Sunday regarding the Lewis Christian Conference. Again, I can just read that one out. This year's Lewis Christian Conference will, God willing, take place from Thursday 12th August through to Saturday 14th August. The conference will be hosted in the main road building of the Garibost Free Church. The speaker will be the Reverend David Johnson, retired minister of Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church in Bangor, Northern Ireland.

Online booking will be available before the event and COVID regulations will be observed throughout the conference weekend. The theme of this year's conference will be Trusting God in Troubled Times with three messages on Habakkuk. And there's a meeting on Thursday 12th August, half past seven, Friday 13th August, half past seven, and Saturday 14th August, half past seven.

So that's some information on the Lewis Christian Conference. And one more information I was given from Stuart regarding youth work. And it says, following a recent meeting about youth work, it has been agreed to try a new outreach on Friday evenings for secondary aged young people.

This will take place after both Jam and Connect clubs as well as one Sunday evening each month to dig deeper into God's word. The name of this new club will be Rooted and we seek to see the youth in our community grounded and rooted in God's work. We are therefore looking to identify anyone willing to join the ROTA and get involved with this new outreach. If so, please contact Stuart or Joyce for further information. And as always, we commit this outreach to the Lord and ask that he would richly bless this work. Also, can I just say a thank you? We had the holiday club over the last few days, this week passed, and Stuart's going to share a little of that at the children's talk. But thank you to all those who took part in lots of different ways. There's some people who are seen up front, there's many people who are unseen by us, but they're seen by the Lord and the work that they do. So for all who were involved, for all who prayed, we would want to say thank you and encourage us to continue praying that the seed that was planted would take root in the lives of these young people.

- [3 : 43] So I think these are all the intimations. So let us now worship God and sing to his praise. We sing from Mission Praise number 33. Mission Praise 33, and it's that great Charles Wesley hymn.
- And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? We'll stand to sing in just a moment. Died he for me.
- Died he for me.
- That thou my God, that thou my God, shouldst die for me. Tis misty all the immortal dice, who can explode his siege design.
- It may the firstborn sacrifice, to sound the depths of love divine.
- [5 : 37] Tis mercy all the immortal dice, who can explode his name. Let the angel's mind, who can explode his name.
- Tis mercy all the immortal dice, who can explode his name. Let the angel's mind inquire, Lord. He left his father's throne above.
- So free, so infinite his grace. Emptied himself of all but love.
- And bled for Adam's grace. And bled for Adam's helpless ways. Tis mercy all the immense and free.
- For all my God, it bound me. Tis mercy all the immortal dice, who can explode his name.
- [6 : 47] Tis mercy all the immortal dice, who can explode his name. Tis mercy all the immortal dice, who can explode his name. Then Churchill's song you to grow. But please, strangers accept them by Miller, who can explode his name.
- Thineibles are medley 1000-6 seen.
- For now I don't see anyone on the stage. I rose, went forth and followed thee. My chains fell off, my heart was free.
- I rose, went forth and followed thee. No condemnation now I dread.
- Jesus and all in him is mine. Alive in him, my living head.
- [7 : 56] I'm clothed in righteousness divine. Hold I approach the eternal throne.
- I'm clean in the crowd through Christ my own. Hold I approach the eternal throne.
- And claim the crown through Christ my own. Let's unite our hearts in prayer.
- Let's pray together. Our Heavenly Father we thank you for this your day.
- And we thank you for the words of the hymn that we've been singing. We thank you for the gospel message that comes through so clearly in that hymn.
- [9 : 00] We thank you for the wonder of these gospel truths that angels long to inquire into, to look into, but are barred from.
- That we are able to open in scripture and consider and meditate upon. We thank you for the strange design of your salvation of us.
- We recognize, Lord, that we are sinners, that we are sinners, that we are sinners, that we are sinners by nature. We are sinners by practice.
- And we confess that, Lord, we thank you for the Savior Jesus. Who came into this world, who left heaven to come into the grit and the grime and the sin of this fallen world.
- To make it possible for sinners who look to be picked up by the grace that is freely offered. We thank you for the mercy that you show to us, Lord.
- [10 : 09] We are not deserving of that grace. We are not deserving of anything but punishment for our sin. But we thank you, Lord God, that you have looked upon us in mercy.

You have told us in love of the sin that separates us from you and from each other. And you have pointed us to Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior.

So we pray, Lord, that we would have our eyes fixed upon Jesus in this day. We pray that we would see Jesus in the pages of scripture. We pray that we would hear the voice of Jesus as we meditate upon the words which have been preserved and carried to us through the ages.

So that we are able to open the Bible. Enable us as we open the Bible to have hearts that are opened to the word of God. And we pray that you would speak into our lives, that you would make us here.

And we pray, Lord, that you would lead us this morning, that we would be truly in the spirit of worship on this your day. We pray for those of us in the building.

[11 : 22] We thank you that we have the relative freedom to be able to meet in this way and to sing. We pray for those who meet at home. And we ask, Lord, that we would be bound together by the one spirit of God.

And that truly we would be in worship. We pray for those who meet like us in different congregations here and across the land and across all lands.

We pray for places where there is a desire and an appetite and where there is freedom to be able to lift up the name of Jesus. We pray for places where there is a desire and an appetite to lift up the name of Jesus.

But it's against the law to do so. And yet they do it anyway. And for those who are persecuted for Jesus' sake, we remember them, Lord. And we ask that you would bless them and protect them.

And for many, Lord, to have the freedom in this country and even in this community to come to the place of worship. Whether here or elsewhere or in the privacy of their own homes.

[12 : 30] For those who have the opportunity and the freedom but who have no desire, no appetite. We pray for them. And we ask, Lord, that you would awaken the souls of those who are lost.

We pray that you would speak with the voice that wakes those who are dead in transgression and sin. We pray that you would make them hear. And for those who are your people, Lord, we pray that you would touch us, that you would quicken us.

We pray for your reviving touch. We confess we are prone to wander. We confess that we can be lukewarm. We confess that we drift.

But we thank you that as we look to you, as we seek to return to you, you are the God who returns to us. And as we humble ourselves and as we pray, your promise is, Lord, that you will hear our prayer.

That you will heal our hearts. That you will heal even the land. So, Lord, be at work among us, we pray, for your glory, for salvation's sake.

[13 : 41] And bless us. We pray for those who are struggling this morning. We think of those who are sick. Those who have recovered or are recovering from procedures in the hospital.

We think of Gerangus in particular. Having had surgery this week, we pray that your hand of healing and protection would be upon him. We pray for others, Lord, who are struggling with sickness in their own homes and different places.

And we commit them to you as the God who is the great physician. We pray for those who are grieving. Once more, we are conscious of the touch of death and the community here.

And we pray for all who are grieving, that you would comfort those whose hearts are sore. For loved ones past and past days and past weeks and past months.

You know, sometimes it can be months, even years down the line, where the pain is the sorest. And we thank you that you know the heart of each one. And we pray that you would grant your comfort to all who mourn.

[14 : 45] And we pray now, Lord, that you would be close to all of us. We pray for the children. And as Stuart shares with us something of the holiday club in the last few days, we pray that the word that was shared would be retained.

It would be blessed. It would take root in the heart of these young people. That they would remember. That they would trust their creator in the days of their youth. So hear our prayers.

Take away our sin. And help us to fix our eyes on Jesus. For we pray these things in his name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, it's good to see you after a few weeks when I've been away.

Some of you I saw in the holiday club over the last few days. And Stuart's going to come up now and he's going to tell us a wee bit about the holiday club. So that we can all be praying about this in the congregation.

So I'll move to one side and Stuart can come and share. Thank you very much. David, I'm looking around to see who was at holiday club.

[15 : 50] So maybe if you put your hand up if you were here. I don't think there's that many. We've got Emily, David, Adam. Some of the more childish of the group. Jillian, sorry.

So can anyone tell me what the name of the club was? Maybe I think some of the younger ones. Emily, what kind of holiday club was it? What was the three words before the word holiday club?

Oh no. Run the race. Run the race. Now I would get you all to stand up and do the action that we were doing. But there's probably not enough of you. Unless the adults are willing to join in.

But we'll maybe keep that one for another time. So any of you at home, there's many of you at home that were there as well. So how many days did we have at holiday club? I'm looking at you, Emily.

You're right in my eye line. Three. Three days of holiday club. And we were learning about Jesus. Which we always learn about at holiday club. But there were three different stories that we heard about.

[16 : 51] And I'm going to ask Emily. You're going to have to go alone here for a lot of this. On the first day, we learned about a king who cares, didn't we? And what happened on the first day when we were at holiday club?

And I'll give you a clue. I'll look up to the roof. Can you tell us what the story was about on day one? Caitlin, you were there as well, anyone?

Bethany as well? Bethany? Bethany? The story of the paralysed man. And the friends took him down through the roof in order to see Jesus, which showed us that they had great faith.

Would they have taken him through the roof and gone to all that effort if they didn't think Jesus was able to save him? No. They wouldn't have. So we learned from there that Jesus cared about the man because he, what was the first thing he tried to do?

Did he try and fix the man's paralysed state? Did he try and fix his physical body first? What was the first thing Jesus said to him? What did he try and cure him of first before he looked at his legs?

[17 : 55] Anyone? His sin. His sin. His sin. So he focused on his sin. Because Jesus realised that the sin is the greater concern that we have in our own lives.

So that was day one. We looked at how Jesus cares about people. Jesus cares about us, doesn't he, Emily? He cares about us. He cares about everyone here as well. And day two, we looked at a king who was a substitute.

Now you might remember Gordon was going on a run and what happened to him? He fell over, didn't he? He fell over. Did his hamstring in. And I think he thought Usain Bolt was going to be the only substitute suitable for him.

But I think we all realised that was not the case. But who did we learn about? Who was the great substitute for all of us? Anyone? Bethany?

God, Jesus. Yeah, so Jesus was the great substitute. We learned how he died for our sins. And Emily, I've got a question for you. Did Jesus have sinned? So was he a sinful man when he was here on earth?

[18 : 54] He wasn't sinful, no. So do you think he deserved to die for us? No, he didn't deserve it. But he chose to again because he loves us and because he cares for us.

And all we need to do is ask for forgiveness for those sins. And Jesus will forgive them. And on the third day, we looked at a king who came back. So what does that mean, a king who came back?

Can we remember what happened? What do you think it means, Lily, if a king came back? Did Jesus ever come back from somewhere? What happened on the cross?

Did he die on the cross or did he stay alive? He died on the cross. But then what happened three days later? Did he come back? He did. He came back.

And that's the most amazing part of it. And that's what we were remembering. That Jesus rose from the dead as he promised. So Emily does this a lot in our house. If we tell her to do something or if we promise something.

[19 : 54] Pinky promise. You have to do a pinky promise. Which is apparently legally binding. I don't know how official that is. But a pinky promise means a lot. But Jesus, has Jesus ever broken a promise?

Has he? No, I don't think he has. No, he's never broken a promise. So when he tells us or when we know that if we trust him, if we let him enter into our lives, that he will save us and he will forgive us for our sins.

Do we have confidence to believe that? Yeah. Do we think we're able to believe him when he tells us these things? We do. So when we're talking about running the race, what race do you think we were talking about?

What race were we running? Is it the race throughout life? Throughout our Christian lives, we need to run a race. And we heard from Gordon last week that we need to first of all get to the start of our race.

And we need to trust Jesus. That's the first thing that we all need to do. Everyone, young or old, we need to trust Jesus. Get to the start of our race. And we need to run it. But I'm going to test you. I know this is a tough one.

[20 : 57] There's only really two of you that were there. I'm going to see if you can remember the verse that we learned just as we close for everyone to be able to hear it. This is a tough one. There's only two of you.

That's brutal. So maybe some of the leaders can help as well. So it started off with, Let us run with perseverance.

The race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus the King.

What was the verse? Emily, Caitlin, Bethany. What was the verse? Hebrews? Hebrews 12, verse 1. So I'm just going to read it again. Not in such a slow pace for everyone.

Maybe at home. So Hebrews, I'm going to read verses 12, verses 1 and 2 of Hebrews 12. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely.

[21 : 55] And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne.

So Jesus died for all of our sins and that's the race that we want to be running, knowing that Jesus did that. Knowing that Jesus died for us. Jesus loves us. He cares for us.

Does he turn away from any of us if we go to him and ask for help? He's a God that we can listen to. He's a God we can speak to. He's a God that's near.

How can we talk to God and how can we hear about who God is? Emily. On the spot. How can we talk to God? Praying.

Yeah. And how can we learn about who God is? Give you a big clue. The Bible. So we can learn a lot. So that's what we need to do. We need to run the race. We need to read our Bibles.

[22 : 51] We need to pray every day. And what will happen if we read our Bibles and pray every day? We will grow, grow, grow. So that's what we need to do. We need to remember that. And we need to run the race.

Run the race that's been marked before us. But knowing that Jesus has gone before us. And we need to be confident knowing that Jesus is the one that we should be following in our lives. So that was just a short update as to what we did in our holiday club.

And in the evenings, just as an update, we had the secondary aged kids. We had slightly older ones. And we were kind of following the same theme about walking by faith, not by sight, and running the race.

And we heard a testimony at the end of the week just for the young ones to be able to be encouraged by hearing of somebody's walk and how they run the race in their own lives. So that was it, really, for ourselves.

And I'll just say a short word of prayer just as we close for the young ones before they go off. Lord, our eternal and ever-blessed Father, Lord, we give you thanks again for these opportunities we have to speak to the young ones in the holiday club, Lord.

[23 : 54] And we pray that you would continue to bless them, Lord. We pray that these seeds that were planted over these last few days would bear fruit. And that they would grow into the hearts of these young ones, Lord.

And that maybe those that possibly don't come to church as well, that those seeds would be planted in their own homes. That we would see parents, aunties, uncles, grannies and grandpas of these young children thinking we're in their own hearts.

Asking about who you are and about why people would set aside time in their own week to speak to these young ones. And to share of Christ and the wonderful gift that was given to us by you.

We pray, Lord, that the young ones would continue to learn. And that they would continue to be inquisitive and energetic for God, Lord. And that they would be able to continue remembering the memory verses.

Continue remembering the songs that they learned as they seek to understand more about who you are. So we pray, Lord, that you'll be with them as they go off into Sunday school. That you'll be with Sunday school teachers as well, Lord.

[24 : 52] And ask that you would continually set it upon the hearts of Christians to speak to these young ones. To share their faith with these young ones. And to work for you to see your will done on earth as it is in heaven, Lord.

And we are constantly guided back to the first catechism where we see that our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. Knowing that that enjoyment was very evident over these last few days here in your house, Lord.

So be with us just now. Go before all these young ones, Lord. And we ask that you would bring them all to you. And that they would live lives for you. Seeking to see your will done here on earth as we know it is in heaven.

So go before us just now. Forgive us for all of our many sins. In Christ's most precious name we pray. Amen. Thank you, Stuart and Emily and those who answered the questions.

And we pray on for the work. We're going to sing now about Jesus and how he died and how he rose from the dead. We're going to sing Mission Praise 1217. 1,217.

[26 : 00] It's a hymn about the power of the cross. Christ on the road to Calvary. Oh, to see the dawn of the dark is in.

Christ on the road to Calvary. Christ on the road to Calvary. Christ on the road to Calvary.

Torn and beaten then, nailed to a cross of good. This the power of the cross, Christ became the same for us.

To the pain, o'er the wrath we stand forgiven at the cross.

O to see the pain written on your face, fill in the awesome weight of sin.

[27 : 24] Every bitter thought, every evil deed, clouded in your blood, sing by.

This the power of the cross, Christ became the same for us.

To the pain, o'er the wrath we stand forgiven at the cross.

Now the daylight flees, now the ground beneath, quakes as the taper bows his head.

Curtain torn in two, dead erased in life, finish the winking eye.

[28 : 26] This the power of the cross, Christ became the same for us.

To the pain, o'er the wrath we stand forgiven at the cross.

Oh, to see my name, written in the woods. For through your suffering, I am free.

Death is rushed to death, life is mine to live. One through your selfless love This the power of the cross Son of God, sing for us What a love, what a cause We stand forgiven at the cross Okay boys and girls, if you head now through to Sunday School please.

And we can turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 12. Luke chapter 12, we'll read from verses 35 through to verse 59.

[30 : 26] Through to the end of the chapter. This is God's word. So Jesus is speaking to his disciples and to the crowd. And he says, Peter asked,

Lord, are you telling this parable to us or to everyone? The Lord answered, Who then is the faithful and wise manager whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?

It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put them in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, My master is taking a long time in coming.

My master is taking a long time in coming. And he then begins to beat the men servants and maid servants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him.

And at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.

[32 : 27] But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded.

And from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. I have come to bring fire on the earth and how I wish it were already kindled.

But I have a baptism to undergo and how distressed I am until it is completed. Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other.

Three against two and two against three. They will be divided father against son and son against father. Mother against daughter and daughter against mother.

Mother-in-law against daughter-in-law. And daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. He said to the crowd, when you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, it's going to rain and it does.

[33 : 29] And when the south wind blows, you say, it's going to be hot. And it is. Hypocrites. You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky.

How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time? Why don't you judge for yourselves what is right? As you are going to your adversary, as you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, try hard to be reconciled to him on the way.

Or he may drag you off to the judge. And the judge turn you over to the officer. And the officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again now to God's praise. And we sing this time from the Psalms. From Psalm 116.

And we sing four stanzas of that psalm. Verses 1 to verse 6. I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear.

[34 : 33] While I live, we'll call on him who bowed to me his ear. Down to the end of verse 6. And we'll stand to sing to God's praise. I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear.

I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear.

Of death the courts and sorrows did about me comfort.

The Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear.

I, while I live, will call on him. I, while I live, will call on him. Deliver thou my soul, O Lord.

[36 : 17] I give thee hungry praise. God merciful and righteous is.

Yea, gracious is our Lord. God saves the meek I was brought low.

He did me help afford. If you could turn now in your Bibles, please, to the passage that we read from Luke chapter 12.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And as we go there, let's again ask for God's help.

our heavenly father we thank you for your word and we thank you for the the holy spirit who inspired the word and who presses that word into our own lives we pray that we may know the help of God afforded to us as we consider the the message of the gospel we pray that the pains of hell would not take hold of us in the final time but that we would know the the salvation of Jesus the one who is able to lift us from the the the pit of sin the pit of hell and give to us a place in heaven so hear our prayers and help us we ask to help us we we pray to hear your voice and not my voice or not the voice of any other person but we pray that we would hear the voice of God and that our hearts would be responsive that you would give us faith to believe and to respond we pray this in Jesus name amen this year I think I'm writing saying that history was made in the Olympics and it was in the the event of the triathlon this history was kind of made for the wrong reasons a report said that I read this week 56 men lined up on a pontoon in Tokyo Bay for the 630 local start but as the starter sent them away the opening 15 as the starter sent them away for the opening 1500 meter swim leg around a third find their way blocked by a camera boat and some of us probably saw the scene as all these triathletes dove into the water furiously started to swim and then found that there was this boat for for about a third of the athletes this boat was impeding their way and the organizers had to call a halt to the race they had to stop it all take the athletes back out of the water and sometime later the the race restarted but it had to be stopped and it had to be started again all because all because the guy in the boat the camera boat somehow he wasn't ready he wasn't ready and as we turn to the passage that we we read it begins with the call of Jesus to be ready and that's our first point uh we have this morning uh we hear the call of Jesus uh upon us uh we're to be ready verse 35 would step through the text be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him and Jesus always used pictures that the the people were familiar with and the the picture here uh from that culture is that of men waiting for their master uh to return the master's at a wedding and in that day and in that culture a wedding didn't start at one and finish at ten a wedding could go on for days many days and so the master although he's at the wedding when he'll return is unknown might be tomorrow might be today might be the day after it might be a week's time and so the men who were in charge of the property and the possessions of the master

[41 : 31] they needed to be ready for their master's return and in order to be ready we are given a picture of what they needed to do they needed to be dressed to be dressed ready for service stay dressed I think it says in some of the other translations they're to be up they're to be clothed they're to be alert they're not to be snoozing with their dressing gown and their slippers on halfway through the day the King James Version says they're to have their loins girded about which meant that the long flowing cloaks that they wore they had to be kind of hiked up so that when the men had to move when they heard the knock on the door they wouldn't move slowly but they would be alert in order to be ready they needed to have their lamps firm and these lamps were not solar powered they weren't electric powered they were oil lamps so the wicks had to be trimmed they needed to be sufficient oil in the lamp for the light to keep on going they weren't to be caught in the dark they were to have their lamps burning and they needed to be listening alert not snoozing not sleeping not distracted with devices in their hands and and and airpods in their ears they needed to be listening for the knock of the master at the door ready to let him in they needed to be ready that's the emphatic message that Jesus presses upon the crowds as he as he preaches here and then Jesus says in verse 37 it will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes so keep the picture in your minds we have the men waiting for the master to return they're to be alert they're to have light they're to be ready to respond to this knock on the door and then Jesus says it will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes now if we were to hit pause here if we hadn't read the rest of this passage what would we expect to come next what would we expect the men to have to do on their master's return well I think we would expect the men the servants to have to do things for him maybe take his bags from him you know have a meal prepared so that he can sit down and be refreshed and eat and and settle back in

I think we would expect these men to have to wait on their master because that's what you do for your master you wait on him but what does this master do for these servants who are alert and waiting for him what Jesus tells us in verse 37 I tell you the truth he the master will dress himself to serve he will have them recline at the table and he will come and wait on them that's not what we expected it's not what the crowds would have expected to hear the master the one who we would expect to be waited upon says I'm going to wait upon my men I'm going to serve them it will be good verse 38 for those servants whose master finds them ready even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night because he'll serve them he'll be good to them and what we have here in this story is it's a picture of the goodness of God we have a picture here of the grace of God we have a picture of the God whom we worship

Jesus is Lord that's the truth he is king we'll think more about that this evening but he's the servant king he's the one who came to use his own words not to be served but he came to serve and lay down his life as a ransom for many Jesus is the one who stands at the door of our lives and he knocks and if we open the door for him if we let him in he is good to us he forgives us our sin as we confess it no matter how dark and lurid it may have been his promise is he will forgive us his grace is sufficient to take it away to deal with it he shares with us that richness of his love and his grace he blesses us he fellowships with us when we open the door for him as he knocks and then Jesus says in verse 39 but understand this if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming he would not have let his house be broken into you also must be ready because the son of man that Jesus spoke of himself the son of man will come at an hour when you do not expect it

I think it was Dale Ralph Davis in his commentary who told this story about a man who was travelling through Switzerland a walker and as he travelled cross country he came across this beautiful garden this estate which was just on the side of this tranquil lake and he saw the door the gate that kind of led into this estate and so decided he would just knock the door see if perhaps he could get in so he knocked at the door of this gate and almost immediately it opened and he was met by the caretaker of the estate the caretaker was delighted to see him he didn't see many people so he invited him in and they had a conversation they shared a bit of time together and in conversation the traveller learned that the caretaker had cared for this estate this property these gardens for 24 years and he asked the question how many times has the owner visited this beautiful estate that you're caring for in these 24 years and the caretaker answered four times when did he last visit asked the traveller 12 years ago the traveller was taken aback when he heard that because he saw how pristine the place was and the traveller said

I can't believe this it's been so long since the owner has visited this property and you have it in perfect order it's almost as if you were expecting your master to come tomorrow and the caretaker said no sir I don't have things prepared in such a way as to be ready for him tomorrow I have things prepared for him to be ready to visit today and that's the idea here Jesus is teaching that we are to live in such a way as to be prepared to meet Jesus today I wonder are we if Jesus was to come back today or if Jesus was to call us from this world from time into eternity today if all of a sudden we find ourselves standing before the great master of our souls the

[50 : 43] Lord Jesus and it can happen in a split second if all of a sudden we found ourselves standing before Christ would his coming would it feel like a break-in would it feel like a thief have just broken into our experience and disturbed us arrested us would we be dismayed or would it feel like a blessing because we're ready for those who are not watching for Jesus for those who are not clothed for those who are not alert for those who are not walking in the light for those who are not eager to open the door to Jesus as he knocks the thought of Jesus suddenly standing before us I think it strikes fear as it should do but for those who are prepared for those who are trusting him for those who are living in such a way as to seek to serve him we long for his coming we long for the moment when he calls us from this broken world to stand before him in a place where there's no sin remember Paul for those who go to the prayer meetings we've been in 2 Timothy 4 for a wee while and Paul in 2 Timothy it's his last letter to

Timothy and he knows he's soon going to be leaving this world he's on death row and Paul who was once a great Pharisee with great reputation and riches he's lost everything his reputation is in tatters he's in poverty he's in prison but he's he's trusted Jesus he's he's saved by grace he's he's served Jesus faithfully his life has been well spent and as he came towards the end of it he was ready to meet Jesus and he says this to young Timothy to Timothy 4 verse 6 he says the time for my departure is near I have fought the good fight I have finished the race I have kept the faith now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the

Lord the righteous judge will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing are we longing for the appearing of Jesus are we ready to meet him we're to be ready that's the first point and more briefly we come to the second point Jesus teaches us to be responsible as we think about our lives and how we spend our time our talents our money we're to be responsible Peter who always was ready with a question asked in verse 41 Lord are you telling this parable to us or to everyone it's a bit like the student who is in a division class and he puts his hand up and says is this question coming up in the exam is this something

I need to know is this for me or can I switch off for the next five minutes and Jesus says to Peter in response in not so many words he says well yes this is for you through the parable he tells he says yes this is for you Peter and yes this is for everyone and so first of all Jesus gives a word of instruction to Peter and to all the disciples of Jesus so if you're a disciple of Jesus if you're a Christian this is for you and I Jesus answered verse 42 Who then who is the faithful and who is the good thing who is the afternoon and so the master finds doing when he returns I tell you the truth he will put him in charge of all his possessions now it's possible that Peter assumed that because he was the disciple he was okay possible that Peter thought well this thing that Jesus is saying just now that's for other people but I've got a disciple badge on and so I'm safe

I'm one of the faithful I'm going to get a pass simply because I'm part of the ministry team that Jesus has chosen but being a minister being in full time Christian work is not enough to guarantee faithfulness reading a book just now by Rico Tice called Faithful Leaders and he writes this he says the metric of success and failure is not what your relatives write on your gravestone but what God says to you on the day you die for to some he will say you fool just as he did to the man in Jesus' parable who had lived as though his own self-advancement and self-gratification mattered most that's Luke 12 verse 20 and I don't think says Tice that being a church member or pastor it insulates us from hearing that verdict the fire of God's judgment will test the quality of each person's work in ministry so this is for me it's for you how can disciples be faithful how can we live responsibly how can we be responsible how can we live wisely and not unwisely how can we live in such a way as to expect a reward in heaven well the answer actually seems in some ways quite straightforward we're called to a simple life and what we're taught to do here as those who are faithful disciples is we're taught first of all to look after each other to care for each other and we're taught to share the food allowance of God's word with the people around us that's the crux of how we're called to live if we're disciples of Jesus we're not to live for self we're to look around us we're to care for the people that God puts around us and we're not to take the word of of scripture and believe it and and rest in it and rejoice in it and then hoard it but we're to share the food of God's word with the people that God puts around us that's how we're to live we put self to death day by day we care for the people around us and we share the gospel we can do that in our workplace we can do that in our homes we can do that at school we can do that at university some of you are preparing to go back to university we live not for self but we care for the people around us and we're not to be secret believers we're to have the courage to share the gospel message with the people

[59 : 11] God puts around us there are children who come to the holiday club they don't know about Jesus in hearts there are people all around us in this community they don't know about Jesus they don't understand the power of the cross they don't know the danger they're in they don't understand sin they don't see the reality of heaven and hell whose job is it to tell them every disciple so Jesus he gives that word of instruction to Peter and all the disciples of Jesus and then secondly Jesus gives a word of warning for everyone and these are sobering words verse 45 Jesus says but suppose the servant says to himself my master is taking a long time in coming and then he begins to beat the men servants and maid servants and to eat and drink and get drunk so Jesus paints this picture now of a of the life of an unbeliever he shows what it looks like to be someone who has dismissed the fact that there is a master whom we will give an account to but he zooms on on somebody he says

I'm going to live for myself I'll do what I want to do I'll do it my way it's an actress he gives us this picture in verse 45 of a life that's lived for self not for the master a life where I get what I want no matter who gets beaten no matter who gets hurt a life where I get what I want even if it's to excess and indulgence and I don't care who goes without so Jesus says there's a picture of the life of the person who does not believe that they will stand before the great master and then Jesus gives a picture in verse 46 of the afterlife of the unbeliever he says in verse 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of and he will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers now what's

Jesus teaching here what is loving Jesus meek and mild teaching here he's teaching hell he is warning everyone that there is a place assigned for unbelievers there is a place assigned for those who take no thought of Jesus as master and it's a place of suffering it's a place where those who would not ask Jesus to take their sin away will have to pay for their own sin in Isaiah 53 verse 5 we come to that familiar passage and it says that on the cross Jesus was pierced for the transgressions of those who believed in him and yet we see here by contrast in verse 46 that those who do not believe in him will be cut to pieces on account of their sin you know all sin has to be paid for the question is who pays for it all sin causes wound but the question is who will be wounded will it be Christ in my place or will it be us who are cut to pieces

Jesus is the one who pays for the sin of those who come to him for forgiveness Jesus is the one who takes our sin upon himself on the cross if we come to him but those who refuse to come to Jesus will suffer for their own sin and Jesus teaches here that the degree to which we suffer will depend on how much we knew and how many opportunities that we had to come to Jesus and yet refuse them verse 47 Jesus says that servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows but the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows from everyone who has been given much much will be demanded and from the one who has been entrusted with much much more will be asked you know there's that line in

Superman in Spider-Man is the film and when he realizes the power he's been given there's that line that comes to him with great power comes great responsibility and for us we've sung already about the great power that there is in the cross of Jesus we've sung about the amazing power that there is for those who have an interest in the blood of Jesus but if having heard we refuse to let the power of the blood of Jesus wash away our sin and if having heard we refuse to come to the cross and seek forgiveness the severity of the judgment we will face as those who heard will be greater the pains of hell that we sang of in Psalm 116 will be so for those who heard and did not respond you know it will be far worse eternally for those who sat week by week in church and did nothing than it will be for those who never darkened the door of a church and knew next to nothing about

[66 : 21] Jesus that's what Jesus is teaching it's a serious word and it's a word that should cause us to say what must I do to avoid the pains of hell and the answer is we're to be reconciled with God and the last section from verse 49 to verse 59 my time is gone so I'm not going to go there but we see a whole lot of conflict in it Jesus sees the conflict of the cross the baptism he's going to have to undergo to pay the price for our sin Jesus warns his disciples about the conflict that would come to them if they were faithful to him and

Jesus he warns the crowds in verse 44 to verse 54 to verse 59 about the eternal conflict that was coming to all who rejected him but he makes clear in verse 58 that the way to avoid this eternal conflict the way to avoid hell the way to avoid having to pay for our sin the way to avoid the wrath of God the way to be saved is to be reconciled to him so let me just say to finish the words of 2 Corinthians 5 20 and 21 be reconciled to God God made him Jesus who had no sin to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of

God let's pray Lord Jesus we thank you for your coming into this world we thank you that you came to seek and to save those who were lost we thank you Lord Jesus for your perfect sinless life a life lived on our behalf as our substitute we thank you for your willing death on the cross where you paid the price for the sin of all those who believed in you and we thank you for the call of the gospel a call that we hear to come to Jesus to come in faith confessing sin looking for grace seeking reconciliation with

God and so we pray that each of us would hear that call and would respond by coming whilst there is still time we know that there will come a day when we least expect it when we find ourselves standing before Jesus as judge and king we know that that's a day that will be too late to seek salvation but today we thank you that if we hear your voice and do not harden our hearts salvation is promised to all who believe so give to us Lord the faith that we may come and that we may know the security eternally that is found in no place but Jesus and we pray these things in his name and for his sake amen we'll sing to conclude a response really to the message that we have in this chapter 683 in the red hymn book the words on the screen

I hear thy welcome voice that calls me Lord to thee for cleansing in thy precious blood that flowed in Calvary I am coming Lord coming now to thee may that be our prayer as we conclude I hear thy welcome voice that calls me Lord to thee for cleansing in thy precious blood that flowed on Calvary.

[71 : 39] I am coming, Lord, coming now to thee. Wash me, cleanse me in the blood that flowed on Calvary.

If Jesus calls me on to perfect faith and love, to perfect hope and peace and trust for earth and heaven above.

I am coming, Lord, coming now to thee. Wash me, cleanse me in the blood that flowed on Calvary.

T'is Jesus who confirms the blessed work within by adding grace to welcome grace wherein the power of sin.

I am coming, Lord, coming now to thee. Wash me, cleanse me in the blood that flowed on Calvary.

[73 : 12] All hail, atoning blood. All hail, redeeming grace. All hail, the gift of Christ, our Lord, our strength and righteousness.

I am coming, Lord, I am coming, Lord, coming now to thee. Wash me, cleanse me in the blood that flowed on Calvary.

And now 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.