

8.10.23 pm

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: 08 October 2023

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening. Good to see all of you, good to see some visitors with us as well and you're especially welcome. We're going to start this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise. We'll sing from Psalm 51. The first couple of things in the service for those who are visiting will be Gaelic. So we'll sing two verses of Psalm 51 in Gaelic and then afterwards we'll have a short Gaelic prayer. E and A will lead us in the short Gaelic prayer tonight if that's okay. So we'll sing Psalm 51, first two verses and I'll read them in English before we sing in Gaelic. After thy loving kindness, Lord, have mercy upon me for thy compassion is great. Blot out all mine iniquity. Me cleanse from sin and thoroughly wash from mine iniquity.

From my transgressions I confess my sin I ever see. These two verses of Psalm 51 we'll sing to God's praise. We remain seated to sing in Galilee. Thank you.

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

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[1 : 34] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 18] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[5 : 25] Growth for coming in.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[7 : 52] Thank you. Thank you.

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

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

Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen.

Amen. We're going to sing again now to God's praise. We'll sing Mission Praise 275. The words are on the screen. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest.

[10 : 22] I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest.

Lay down the way upon me, Lay down thy head upon my breast.

I came to Jesus as thy voice, Beed me unborn and sad.

I found in him a resting place, And he has made me proud.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I feel he give.

[11 : 33] The living water, thirsty one, Stood down and drink and live.

I came to Jesus as thy God, For that life in me.

My mercy for's quenched, My soul divine, That God, I live in him.

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

Will come unto me, Thy morn shall rise, And all thy days be bright.

[12 : 30] I look to Jesus as thy light. In him my star I shine, And in the light of life I walk, Till travelling days are done.

I want to just take a minute or two, And speak to the boys and girls, Ask you a few questions. And the question is, What do you think different things are made for? So what do you think, What's this made for?

What's? Telling the time. Some people would wish I would check it more often. What about this? Is this made for, What's this designed for?

To write, yeah. It's got a particular function. What about, Yeah, what about these? What are these made for?

[13 : 49] To see. To see, said somebody there. We want to, We can't see very clearly, Then you put glasses on, And they're designed to help us see. What about, What about these?

I noticed there was a nice, Nice Volkswagen car that was in the locality. Much nicer than the one I have, So I might not give them back. What are these made for? What do you think?

Car keys, What are they designed for? What are they made for? Yeah, Marion? To open the car, Yeah. And to drive the car. So, all these things, They have a purpose.

They have a reason that they've been made. Now, the question next is, What were you made for? What was I made for? And the book that we've been looking at in the evenings, Is a book called Ecclesiastes.

And the man who's writing the book, The man, I think his name is Solomon. And, He's trying to figure out that question. The answer to that question.

[15 : 01] What, What are we made for? And I'm going to read just a few verses from Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes chapter 2, And verse 1.

And so he's, He's doing an experiment, And he's trying to, He's trying to figure out, What's life for? What am I made for? And he says, As God leads him, This is the Bible, I thought in my heart, Says Solomon, Come now, I will test you with pleasure, To find out what is good.

But that proved to be meaningless. Laughter, I said, Is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish? I tried cheering myself with wine, And embracing folly, My mind still guiding me with wisdom.

I wanted to see what was worthwhile, For men to do under heaven, During the few days of their lives. So he tries all kinds of things, That people would say are fun.

But he's not getting the answers, That he's looking for. And then he turns to work, And he says, I undertook great projects, I built houses for myself, And planted vineyards, I made gardens and parks, And planted all kinds of fruit, Trees in them.

[16 : 11] I made reservoirs, To water groves of flourishing, Trees. I bought male and female slaves, And had other slaves, Who were born in my house. He had lots of people working for him. I owned more herds and flocks, Than anyone in Jerusalem before me.

I amassed silver and gold for myself. He's got lots of animals, Lots of sheep, cattle. He's got lots of money in the bank. I amassed silver and gold for myself, And the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, And I had him as well, The delights of the heart of man. I became greater by far, Than anyone in Jerusalem before me. He was powerful.

He was the biggest celebrity in the place. In all this, My wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired. I refused my heart, No pleasure.

My heart took delight in all my work, And this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done, And what I had toiled to achieve, Everything was meaningless.

[17 : 13] A chasing after the wind. Nothing was gained under the sun. So at the end of that reading, Solomon, He's scratching his head, And he's trying to understand, What was I made for?

He worked hard, But it wasn't work. He had more money in the bank than any of us. That wasn't enough. And he had all the pleasures that you could ever imagine, But he's not satisfied.

And he's still asking the question, What's the meaning of life? What am I made for? So boys and girls, Can you tell Solomon, What was he made for?

What are we all made for? God. Said Michael. And that's the answer. That's the answer that, The book of Ecclesiastes is building towards.

We were made by God. We were made for God. And we find our purpose, Our meaning. We find joy.

[18 : 29] We find peace. We find life. In knowing him. And the good news of the Bible, Is that we can know God.

We are sinners, And that's what blocks us from God. But Jesus came to be the saviour. To take that sin away, So that if we trust him, We can know God.

And when we know God, We have the meaning of life. Our hearts rejoice, Because we're doing what we were designed for.

And if we go looking for meaning, In all these other things, Whether it's, Whether it's working super hard, Or whether it's, Just trying to be the best at, At football, Or golf, Or, Or having, As much money as we can in the bank, Or, Or just, Having all the, The material things in this world, That we might want, If we think these things are going to satisfy us, Our souls will always be thirsty.

Because our souls were, Were made, To know God. Now does that mean that, All these things in the world are bad things? Does it mean it's bad to work? Does it mean it's bad to play football?

[19 : 49] Does it mean it's bad to, To drive a car, Or, Or, Or, Or do various things that we do week by week? No, None of these things are bad. They're just not enough.

And what is enough, Is God. So boys and girls, And those that are a bit older as well, The message, For tonight, And the message that comes to the book of, Ecclesiastes, Is that we're to trust God, Is that we're to trust God, We can know God, And when we know him, We can actually enjoy everything, All the good gifts that God has given us in this world, Much more than we ever could, If we don't trust God first.

Because we recognize, Because we recognize, There are things that God has given us, And there are things that we can glorify him through. The first catechism, This is for the older ones, What does it say?

Man's chief end, Is to, Glorify God, And, And enjoy him forever. We were made to glorify God, And when we are putting him first, When we're trusting him, Whether we're on a football pitch, Playing football, Whether we're working, In the jobs that we have, Whether we're in our homes, And we're amongst our family, Whether we're playing out with our friends, We can really enjoy the things that God has given us to do, And we can do them, In such a way, As to glorify him.

And Don's going to, Actually come in just a second, And he's going to speak to us, About, How he's trusting God, And how God is with him, In all the different parts of his life, And especially, God is with him, When he's playing football, When he's playing, Shinty, So, After we sing, Don's going to come up, And, He's going to speak to us, But we'll pray before, We do that, So let's pray.

[22 : 02] Lord God, We thank you that you love us, We thank you that you made us, We thank you that you made us for yourself, And we find peace, And we find joy, And we find meaning, When we trust you.

Lord, We confess that we are sinners, And we know that our sin holds us back, It separates us from you, But we thank you, Father, That you sent Jesus into this world, Your son, To be our saviour, We thank you that when we ask for our sins to be taken away, Our sins are taken away, And you come into our lives, Lord Jesus, We thank you that when you come into our lives, You bring joy and peace and purpose, So we thank you for Jesus, We thank you for all the good gifts that you give us in this world, The jobs that we do, The things that we have, Even the sports that we can play, We thank you that you are with us, In all these different things, When we are trusting you, And we thank you that we can even glorify you, We can do things in such a way as to please you, When we put you first, So whether we're very young, Or whether we're a bit older, We pray that you would help us, Lord, To trust you, And to know that you are with us,

And to glorify you, In all the different parts of our lives, And we ask that you would be with Donald, In just a second, As he comes to speak to us, And we pray that you would be with Mark as well, As he speaks to us about the work that you've called him to do, Working with lots of football players, And shinty players across Scotland, And we ask, Lord, That you would be with both of these men, That you would bless them, And that you would be close to them, And that you would use them, In such a way as to point many other people to Jesus, And in such a way as to show people that Jesus cares, And even that they would feel the compassion of Jesus, The love of Jesus for them, Through your people, And we ask all these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

We're going to sing now, We're going to sing from Psalm 51, Verses 7 to 13, And this Psalm is like a prayer, Where David the Psalmist, He knows he has sin in his heart, And he wants his sin to be forgiven, He wants to know that God is close to him again, And so he writes this song, And he makes this prayer, And we're going to sing this song, That we can pray as well, As we ask God to

take our sin away, To make our hearts white as snow, And to come close to us.

So we're going to sing Psalm 51, Verses 7 to 13, And we'll stand now to sing. Psalm 51, Psalm 51, Psalm 51, Do there with this song's finger be, I shall be glanced as poor, Be whiter than the snow, Of gladness and of joyfulness, Make me to hear the voice, That so these very words wish thou [25 : 46] Has broken may rejoice, All mine iniquities brought out, Thy face hide from my sin, Create a clean heart, Lord, renew, Arise, let me with it, Cast me not from thy sight, Carting thy holy sweat away, Restore me in thy salvation's joy,

With thy face let me stay, Then will I teach thy grace unto Those that transgresses thee, And those that simmers shall then Be turned unto thee, Okay, now Dahl's going to come up He's going to share us just a few words of testimony, Maybe just five minutes, And then after Dahl has spoken a little about being a Christian, And especially being a Christian in the world of sport, Mark's going to come up, And he's going to share with us a little about the calling that God has in his life, And just how he works with various people, Across the nation of Scotland, In different kinds of sports, And how we can be interested in that, And how we can pray for him, And all that he does there, So Dahl, And then Mark, And I'll sit down, You can relax, When you saw me coming through, With three glasses of water, You maybe thought you were in for the whole night, But, One for Dahl, One for Mark, And I'll take this one away, Hello, I was pretty chilled about doing this until about 26, And then I was pretty, My heart was being out of my chest when I sat down there, So, We'll give it a go, Yeah, David's quite sly, He's been trying to get me up here since I moved, About a year and a half ago, And then last week, Me and my mum and dad actually came to church on time, So, David had a chance to speak to us before, And when David's speaking to you before church, He's probably got something to ask for, So, Yeah, It was about sports, So, I thought, If there's one thing I talk about every day, It's sports, So, And I met Mark in 2016, Just when I finished school, We went to Rwanda together, To do a wee sports aid trip, And, Yeah, There's loads of football, And it was a great time, So, Yeah, I couldn't say no, But, Yeah, Where are we?

Yeah, Sport for me is, Yeah, It's everything, I grew up in Fort William, Which is, Known as the outdoor capital of the UK, So, I played, Played lots of sport, Football, Was before that, But then, When you move to Fort William, You also play a sport called shinty, Which, Up here is a bit strange to most, Um, But that probably explains why the football team is so rubbish, And there's three shinty teams, With youth teams, And so on, But there's also skiing, And mountain biking, So, Yeah, I did it all, And any time I wasn't out playing sport, Growing up, I was probably inside playing FIFA, So, Yeah, It was everything, Uh, And then, I was finishing school, Didn't know, Didn't know what to do, Uh, Didn't know what job to do, Um, So, The teacher told me, Go to uni, And I was like, What are you interested in?

[30 : 06] So I said, I'm interested in sport, So, Uh, I did sports science as a degree, To just go away with everything else, But yeah, In preparing for this, I thought I'd pick up a, Another book, Which is, Something I picked up in August, And, I opened up where I last left it, And I think I got about ten pages in, Uh, So that shows how much I read books, Uh, When I'm out playing sport, Um, But yeah, What is said, I landed on, The chapter that said, The Bible on sport, Uh, And it said, Uh, The Bible mentions a few things, Around sport, But it doesn't really, Obviously, Uh, Mention it, I think, I played for, A shinty team, And when I was in Aberdeen, That was founded in 1861, Which is, Quite a few, Years before, My teams, Uh, Started, And a few, Other teams as well, Uh, But yeah, That was about 1800, Years too late, For the Bible starting, Um, But it mentions the running of the race, Training, And then winning a prize, So, Last night when I was doing some,

Last minute prep, I thought I would do a wee bit digging myself, I picked up my phone, Uh, And, Did some search, And it says, Run, The phrase run, 97 times, Uh, It says jump, Only once, According to my, My Bible app, Um, So I did a bit more digging, Maybe if I go into the shinty terms, It says swing, Four times, But it was mainly just about swinging an axe, And what not, Yeah, Pretty much, Um, It says the phrase, Just ball, Only once, And then if you look into that, It's a, Pretty, Uh, Graphic description, It's nothing to do with shinty either, Um, But then, Yeah, It went to, This verse, I think it's up in the air, On the screen, Um, So yeah, Just three verses there, That kind of summed up all three of, Um, Running the race, Training, And winning a prize, Um, So yeah, I'll probably read it, And it says, Do you not know that in a race, All the runners run, But only one gets the prize?

Run is such a way as to get the prize, Everyone who competes in the game, Goes into strict training, They do it to a crown, That will not last, But we do it to get a crown, That will last forever, Therefore, I do not know, Run like someone running aimlessly, I do not fight like a boxer, Beating

the air, No, I strike a blow to my body, And make it my slave, So that after I have preached to others, I myself, Will not be disqualified for the prize, Um, So yeah, From reading that, I'll probably go back to it, So, If it can stay up, That'd be good, Um, Another thing, I actually should have said, Is it, There's an ESV version, It might help me as well, Because that's what I've got written down here, Um, But yeah, When it said prize, Again, I thought I would think about that a wee bit more, Especially growing up, I think I've got a shoebox full, Of medals and little trophies, Under my bed somewhere, Um, By then I realised, I've not actually been putting any medals, Or trophies in there, Uh, Recently, So, I think, John, Oh, Did you not get a trophy, Not so long ago? I'm not saying it's going to be your last one, But, Make me some of them, Because it's good, And if you, Maybe don't follow your dad's, Uh, Footsteps, I'm not passing the ball as much, You might do a bit better, But I'm pretty gately of that myself, So I can't say anything, Um, But yeah, One of the most recent medals I did get, And I said to Ruthie, That I would, Uh, Mention her at least once, Um, Was after her sister Rebecca's, Um, Go-karting, Trip to Aviemore, So, Um, The McLeods like to go all out, There was about 15 of us, We did a Grand Prix, Um, I was happy to say, I think I got the easy group, But I went through, In the qualifiers, Um, There was a bit of controversy, Because our cousin Daniel didn't quite make it through, Uh, Ruthie and, And their qualifying luck, Decided to, I think the word is T-bone, And I seen Ruthie's legs come out of the go-kart, As she destroyed Daniel's go-kart, And put him out of the race, Uh, So he wasn't in it, But, Uh, Gordon started behind me as well as Ruthie, And her, Um, Uncle Colin was beside me, And, Uh, The prospect of, Um, Yeah, Humiliating her, Uh, Father and uncle was quite daunting, Uh, But thankfully, Thankfully Colin didn't, Didn't start, Uh, Very well, He had Ruthie's go-kart, Which she had destroyed from the race before, So I went on to win my, My first prize, But, Yeah, That's the last medal I've won, So, Hope there's a couple more, Um, But yeah, Think about, Just now, I'm now with, Uh, Louis Kamenacht, And, Uh, Haddish Football Club, So, Um, It didn't happen, Uh, It didn't happen this year, Um, But yeah, My Christian work has been, Uh, Pretty similar in the terms of, Sport has been pretty, Um, Heavily involved, Um, Thinking about my testimony, If you go back to, Um, Me leaving home, And going away to study, Uh, I probably walked away a wee bit, Um, And probably had the life that, Just any young person, [35 : 08] With a bit of freedom probably had, Um, Probably seemed as, I had everything I needed, I had a, A house, Um, Loads of friends, Played loads of sports, And had a good laugh, And what not, Um, Still didn't know what to do, So, Um, I made plans to go travelling, And continue that, Um, Lifestyle, And just have a bit of fun, Um, I got a visa for New Zealand, In March 2020, And then two weeks later, Um, That lockdown thing happened, So, Uh, Yeah, That changed things, Um, But yeah, The lifestyle didn't really change, I just started, Um, Started in the landscape, And kind of getting into a bit of a, What they'd call maybe a trade-y, Lifestyle of just, Working hard, And having a bit of fun afterwards, Um, But yeah, Like most stories of this, It didn't last very long, Um, I, Uh, Went down to Newcastle, With my mates, To try and, Just as lockdown was starting to, Ease a wee bit, Uh, Had a bit of a, A weekend if you will,

Um, And then, A couple of days later, Back playing football, Um, Probably a wee bit worse for wear, But, Uh, Had a, Bit of a nasty collision, Ended up my, My first trip to a hospital, Uh, For a while, But it was a couple more after that, Um, Yeah, And after that, I kind of, Had a wee bit of, I was off work after a, A nasty shoulder injury, I was recovering from a, Heavy concussion, I had a bit, A bit of time to myself, Which, Probably was, It was a good thing, And a bad thing, Um, But it all got a wee bit, Too much for me, And then, Roughly around, Uh, Two years ago, Uh, This month, I had, Uh, A mental breakdown, And, Uh, Yeah, That changed things a little bit, Um, I still tried to, After the first one, I tried to, I brushed myself up, Thought I was fine, And, Moved, Moved back up to Aberdeen, To try and carry on, Um, And, Yeah, It didn't work, Went back down a wee bit, Uh, And, Yeah, Had another mental breakdown,

Um, This time, A bit more serious, So, Uh, Doctors, Gave me a bit more of a, If you say a, A second yellow card, And said, No, You need to, Sort yourself out a wee bit, So yeah, I had a bit of time to myself, Uh, Thankfully with my, Uh, Mum and Dad, I was surrounded with, Uh, Christian, And a bit of Christian love again, Started going back to church, And, Uh, I was, Uh, Yeah, It was probably quite a strong, Spiritual connection, I was, Drawn to the word, And, The bible, There was books all around me, And, Small scriptures that probably helped, Um, When I was a bit low, Uh, Where was I, But yeah, It was just, A good, A good time to be honest, Of, A bit of a break that I probably needed, Um, And this time, Or time before, Even before when I was, Having my, My fun time if you

will, I was probably quite, Jealous of, Christians, Having, Been around them growing up, And then also, Having time away from them a wee bit, I was jealous of how they could, Um, Still kind of, Have that, Happy, Happiness that I, Probably was looking for, Um, Probably searching for, I think David mentioned, A couple weeks ago, About, Trying to find satisfaction, Uh, In life, And, Not really being able to find it, So yeah, That was probably, Something I was feeling before, But yeah, I was forced to stop, But I was, Told to, Write some notes down, So, This book I picked up again, It's got full of notes, And encouragements, Uh, A couple of them being, Proverbs 3, When it says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart, Do not depend on your own understanding, Seek his way in all you do, And he will show you the path to take, And then another one being, Um, Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, For tomorrow will be anxious for itself, Sufficient as the day of its own trouble, Um, So that, Along with going back to church, And then also, The Chosen series, Which I don't know, If anyone knows about, But it was a, A real encouragement for me, Someone who doesn't, Like sitting down and reading books, I can watch TV all day, So, That was a real encouragement for me,

To even just get back into, Uh, Researching the Bible, And learning about the disciples, And getting me back into the, Swing of things, Um, And then yeah, In April last, Last year, I decided to, Uh, Get away a wee bit, Move to Harris, Try it, Try it out for a summer, Something I always wanted to do, Coming up here, Throughout my whole childhood, And that kind of, Leads me to where I am now, When, Having this church here, Was a, A real help for me at the time, And it, It also gave me the opportunity, To, Continue what I'd always done, In playing sport, So I quickly, Through known friends before, Joined the, The Shinty team, Uh, And then the football team as well, Um, Which, Uh, Was still a great help, Um, In terms of getting my, Healthiness back, And mental health as well, Um, And then, Obviously, Still, Being stuck in a wee bit of the, The lifestyle, Probably is a wee bit of a challenge to me, To, Uh, Join a Shinty team that, Travels the most,

[40 : 12] Goes on the most ferry trips, The most, Uh, Bus journeys back, With, Um, Yeah, Everything that comes with it, Um, Harris that year, Actually, Was probably, The only thing they were known for, Is their, Lack of disciplines, That was maybe challenging us, Uh, As well, And what came with that, Thankfully, Stevie's came and, Sorted it out, Um, But yeah, That kind of goes back to, The importance that, Uh, What Mark, And probably will go on about, Uh, The importance of sports chaplaincy, And, Uh, Yeah, I don't know what, Would have happened if, I had a chaplain at the time, Where, Um, Even though I was playing for, A football team and a Shinty team, And, Looked like an active, Healthy boy, I don't know what support, That would have done for me, But yeah, It's something that, I definitely feel, Uh, Passionate about, Um, I was just before, We came here, I looked back at, Um, A wee interview that Gary Innes did, Uh, From years ago, When he, Uh, He mentioned the fact that, He'd lost, Six of his teammates, Um, From taking their own lives,

Which was, Pretty drastic to say, That I probably, Played with one of them, If I knew myself, Um, But yeah, It's important, So, I'll say that much, But, Um, Then looking back, I thought about, What David's been preaching about, The past couple of weeks, Have been, The phrase, Meaningless, And whether, I looked back at, The season we had, With Lewis Kamenhoff, And I probably spent, 500 pounds, Towards Cal Mac, On, Ferry tickets, And, Breakfast, And dinners, 22 games, 11 away trips, All the car miles, Time and effort, Energy, To then, Lose the league, By one point, You could probably, Describe that as, Being meaningless, But, Then it probably goes back, To these verses here, When it says, You think about the, The real prize, Um, Yeah, In my description, It says, The imperishable reef, Um, As, Yeah, That kind of, Stuck out to me,

First of all, I thought of perishable, As just being my mum, And my mum doing a shopping list, But, The thought of being imperishable, To me, A couple years ago, Would have been, Pretty terrifying, And it probably was, And probably was, What brought me closer to God, Um, And yeah, An imperishable reef, Is probably what we should all aim for, Um, And another, Just last verse, That came to me, And on a prize of saying, Well done, Good and faithful servant, Yeah, That's about it. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. That's been all you, Donald, Really honest, Eh, I think everybody really appreciates that, Kind of, Vulnerability, Eh, Bless you for that.

So yeah, It's been a, A real blessing to be with you today, Folks, Em, I'm from the west of Scotland, But, Much further south, Obviously, Eh, So, Most people would see me as a bit of a Ouija, Because I've spent much of my life there, So that'll hopefully excuse a lot of the things I'm going to say tonight, Because, When David said, You know, What's that?

[43 : 19] My first thought was, In Glasgow, We'd say that was a weapon. You know what I mean? As soon as it flicked up, But anyway, Em, So a little, A little bit of history, We've got, Uh, Some PowerPoint in there, That Mary hopefully put up, And, Eh, I just want you to put up the words, If, You know, The history, Because, If there's any, Ah, There's one or two folk in here, I can usually sound out the Celtic fans, Who, Yes, Aye, I like that song, And the Rangers fans today, Will completely switch off from everything I'm going to say tonight, If, You know the history, I want to explain a little bit about, Em, The church's relationship, With sport, And particularly, Football, Both north and south of the border, And I'm going to start down south, Because, That's really, A completely different story to up north, Back in the, Em, Victorian era, The 1850s, 60s, 70s, When, It was also the Industrial Revolution, And a lot of people, Were moving, Out of rural areas, Back into, The cities, The church was beginning to realise, We're beginning to lose connection,

With people, And, They were moving into these, Large, Urbanised, Cities, And, And the church was realising, We just don't have a connection, And so a number of churches, Hit on the idea, Why don't we start, A football club, In some cases, A cricket club, Or a rugby club, But in most cases, They recognised, That the sport, That was really developing in England, And was grabbing people's attention, And interest, Was football, And so if I tell you that, Football clubs like, Aston Villa, Tottenham Hotspur, Southampton, Queen's Park Rangers, Fulham, Everton, Barnsley, Were all started, By a church, And the reason for doing it, Was they wanted to connect, With young men, And create a bridge, From their church, Into their local community, That it would become, Too late traffic, My favourite story, Is of this vicar's daughter, So she moved into, A really rough part, Of a city, I'll not tell you the city, But she moved into this, Really tough part of the city, Really rough, And, She noticed, It was a bunch of lads, That would hang about, On a Friday night, Getting up to, No good, Probably drinking, The equivalent of, Buckfast, Or Bucky, As we call it in Glasgow, Getting up, To all sorts of nonsense, Getting into trouble, With the police, And she thought, I need to try and, Help these lads, Find something more purposeful, To do, So she thought, I'll start a football club, So she found this, Bit of waste ground, And they probably just, Used jerseys for posts, Like we used to do, In the old days, And basically started to coach, And train them, Show them how to play football, And it turned out, They weren't too bad, Today they're called, Manchester City, It's quite incredible, When you think about it, Hey, Probably the best team, In the world right now, Was started by, A vicar's daughter, And what's really interesting, In England is that, If you go to the, FA Cup final, For example, They will sing, The hymn, Abide with me, At the beginning of it, As a nod, To the connection, And the roots, Within the church, And I find that, Really interesting, Because, It couldn't be, More different, North of the border, The irony, The irony actually is, By the way, That the English football league, The first organised football league, In the world, Was started, By a Scottish Christian, A guy called, William McGregor, Who was the chairman, Of Aston Villa, The first, Chairman, Or the president, Of the English football association, Was also a Christian, So there was a real strong connection, Come north of the border, It's a different story altogether, If I tell you, That only two football clubs, In Scotland, Were started by, A church, One was Glasgow Celtic, And the other one, Was Edinburgh's Hibernian, You don't have to be, A church historian, To know it wasn't the proddies, Right, It wasn't, It wasn't the Protestant, Evangelical church, Because, What was happening was, Is they saw, These people playing football, They were like, Well this is clearly, A spiritual distraction, This is clearly, Sinful, Because they're enjoying it, And that would have been, Very much, The kind of ethos, Right across the church, In Scotland, And I'm quite sure, Very much up here as well,

That you can't possibly, Do something that you enjoy, Because it must be sinful, It's therefore, A spiritual distraction, And so the church, Really had this chasm, This massive distance, Between them, And the world of organised sport, And that, Really, When you add into the mix, The fact that the only, Influence of religion, On Scottish football, Came from two, Clubs in Glasgow, Who will not be mentioned, But one very Protestant, One very Catholic, In terms of the support, And all the sectarianism, And the bigotry, And the fighting, Then you can understand, Why most of Scottish football, Would look on, At anything perceived, To be religious, As something to stay, Well away from, And you wouldn't really, Blame them, So how on earth, Did it happen, That today in Scotland, There are now, 140, Football clubs, With chaplains, Just about every, Senior team in Scotland, How on earth, Did that happen, Well, If you know the history, It actually starts, At the biggest, And best, [48 : 25] And greatest, Football club in Glasgow, Here we go, Just press that button, There we go, There is only one team, In Glasgow for me, And I got shouted down, For that this morning, But

there you go, When I was four year old, I remember standing, In my, My gran and papa's, Eh, Tinnamen flat, In Maryhill, And I said to my grandpa, He says, Papa, What team do you support, He says, Son, There's only one team, In Glasgow, And they just play up the road there, They're called, Partick Thistle, Is that right papa, That's my team then, And so he brainwashed me, And, And I've believed ever since, There's only one team in Glasgow, And that was my team, I loved Partick Thistle, But in 1998, They were in a lot of trouble, And they were facing, Oblivion, Because of financial problems, There was a group called, The Save the Jags campaign, That got together some money, And basically kept them afloat, Kept them alive, But the morale around the place, Was really, Really poor, And I remember meeting, One of the directors, Who I knew, Because I'd known him for years, And we were chatting away, About the club,

And I said, How are things going, He says, Well, We're alive, But we're sick, He says, The morale's so low, The manager keeps complaining to us, That he just wants to focus, On trying to get three points, On Saturday, He can't be doing, With all the problems, The players have got, And he said to us, Can you not get somebody else, In to deal with the problems, So that I can deal, With the football, And I said to him, In a throw away comment, You ever thought of having, Someone at the club, That could be like, A listening ear, A sounding board, A shoulder to cry on, A confidant, Just somebody that would be a friend, That could really take the heat off, The manager, And deal with all of that stuff, You could call him a chaplain, And to cut a long story short, The club asked how much it would cost, He said nothing, Because it was me, And I was a Thistle fan, And so, Next picture, There you go, 1998, I became the chaplain, At Partick Thistle, You'll see there, I've got my own kit, And on the front they had Rev, But we had a couple of jokers, As kit men, So on the back of the kit, They put God's wee mate, As my name, And that was how it was snowing,

And it was great, Because when I started at Partick Thistle, Very very new in Scottish football, We're talking 1998, 25 years ago, But something incredible happened, After I started, We were unbeaten in seven games, We won six and drew one, And one of the directors, Come up to me this day, And he says, Mark, He says, I've got to tell you, Before you came, I was an atheist, But I'm telling you, I believe, He says, Because the only explanation, I've got for this run of form, Is that God is on our side, Because we've got a chaplain, There he is, He says, That's it, I believe, And I says, Listen Tom, I appreciate the kind sentiment, But I have to be honest with you, And say it's got nothing to do with me, I says, It's really down to the gaffer, It's down to the players, I can't take any credit, So glad that I said that, Because we get beat six out, The next eight games, And the manager gets sacked, And I'd have been out the door with them, So I was very careful to say, Right from the offset, We're there not for enhancing performance, We're there for really looking after the players, You know,

As people, So we look past the player, And we get to know the person, So at that time, The manager thought it would be a great idea, To get me training with the players, So I trained with Thistle for about nine seasons, And I wasn't the worst, I was a bit gutted, I never got a game, But it was really a great way, Of just building relationship with them, So they got to know me, And like me, And trust me, And you know, When we go in as chaplains, And I'll explain more of this later, We don't go into Bible thump, We don't go into initiate, Spiritual conversations, We just value them as human beings, We basically treat them, The way God has treated us, And that's kind of different, To the way the world works, Because the way the world works, I'll treat you, The way you treat me, But what we do as chaplains, Is we just treat people, The way God has treated us, We bring in something, Of his value system, So come, Win, Lose or draw, We just love them, Just the same, We serve them, We look after them, We just look out for them, Just as Donald was saying there, You know, When they're going through a tough time,

And they're on the periphery of club life, And nobody's really interested, We are, That's what we're there for, And so that's really what I did, But to be honest with you, I didn't have a clue what I was doing, I had no formal training, Didn't really know anyone else, That was a chaplain, And then I discovered, There was a few other clubs in Scotland, Had somebody called a chaplain, So if Mary presses that button, About five times I think, Motherwell had one, Clyde had one, Wraith Rovers, Neil Macmillan, You might know Neil Macmillan, You certainly know his dad, Dunfermline Athletics, Sterling Albion, And Rangers, So all of these clubs, Had somebody, They called a chaplain, Now, They weren't necessarily, All doing the same, Things as I was doing, Certainly Neil was at Wraith Rovers, Another fellow, Dave Barry, At Sterling Albion, But, It was, There was nothing formalised, About what we did, And so we thought, We need to really, Kind of learn the ropes, How to do this

thing properly, So I discovered that Manchester United, Had a chaplain, That when Sir Alex had started, At United, They brought somebody in, And next slide, Here he is here,
[53 : 30] The fellow on the right, John Boyers, And Sir Alex was a tremendous, Supporter of chaplaincy, Always has been, Our patron actually, Of sports chaplaincy Scotland, Was Craig Brown, Up until he passed away there, A tremendous help to us, And so we brought John up to Scotland, And we said, John, Show us what you, Tell us what you do as a chaplain, We want to do it the Man United way, And he basically told us, But then when we shared, Our practice, He says, Guys, You're doing exactly the same thing as I am, You just put a kilt on it, He said, It's just, You're the same thing, So he then began to encourage me, To speak to other clubs, About what I did at Thistle, And so what happened was, Next slide, Kilmarnock, Got in touch with me, Because, We had a player, Who finished his last season, At Partick Thistle, As a player, Raymond Gummery, He moved back to, Work behind the scenes, At Kilmarnock, And he got in touch, And he says, Look, We could really do with somebody, At our club,

That does what you do, Can you get to somebody, So I put in a friend of mine, Neil, Done a tremendous job, And then after that, As things began to really grow, The Scottish Football Association, They began to hear about it, And I got invited down to, To LARGS, To the UA for a licence, Coaching course, Next slide, And, Next, Just keep pressing, Mary, And so, Yeah, Stop at that, And so, I went along to the course, And they asked me to do a seminar, So I called it, More than two legs on a Saturday, And I basically just, Said to the coaches, And managers, Said, Guys, If all you do, Is treat your players, Like physical commodities, That's what you'll get, But if you recognise, They've got mental, Emotional and spiritual needs, And you've got someone, At your club, Who looks after them, In these areas, You'll actually get, A better player out of that, And you wouldn't believe, The amount of, Guys that would come up to me afterwards, I'm talking about, Top international players, People that I would, I could mention, But I wouldn't, But, Who really are, Big names in Scottish football, And I remember, One player, Coming up to me, Or a former player, And he was, Had tears in his eyes, And he said, Mark, See what you've described, He says, I wish to goodness, I'd have had a chaplain, When I was a player, He says, I went through, Absolute, Terrible times, And I, He says, I just felt, All I was good for, Was getting a result, On a Saturday, I didn't feel that anybody, Really valued me, For who I was as a human being, It was just what they could, Get out of me, He says, Can I get one of your chaplains, And that was repeated, Time and again, And so, By 2009, We had 22, SPFL club, Now, One more press, We've got 40, Out of the 42, And then after that, You know, The SFA just kept inviting me back, Year after year, And eventually asked me, To give up, To give up, My role at Parthick Thistle, And go full time, As the SFA chaplain, And they gave me a remit, To give clubs all over Scotland, The opportunity, To have one, And so the next thing that happened, Was really key,

The next one, I had never really been aware, Of women's football, Up until 2013, 10 years ago, I'm ashamed to say, And the manager of Habernian women, Come up to me, At the course, And he says, Mark, What about women's football teams, Now, The females are going to hate me, For a second here, But I'll just be for a second, I promise, Because, I thought to myself, No mate, You're not getting this, This is for people, That play football seriously, Not recreationally, But what I said to him was, I said, I wouldn't know how to train someone, For a women's team, I said, Because I don't know, What the pastoral issues are, And he says, Why don't you come along, And become our chaplain, And pilot it, So I did, I went along, Next photo, And I'll tell you something, I was absolutely blown away, By the technical ability, And professional attitude, Of these players, I was totally convicted, Of my ignorance, Of women's football, And became really passionate, The girl standing beside me there, To my right,

Is Claire Emsley, Who's probably one of the best players, In Scotland now, And plays for the national team, That was her 10 years ago, As a Hibby, Or a Hybie, And now, You might recognise, The women beside me, Who took over from me, At Hibs, And that was, Katrina Lament, Derek Lament's wife, So Katrina, Is the chaplain, To the women's team, At Hibs, And Derek, Is chaplain, To the men's team, So what a tremendous, Paying they make, And so, I really got passionate, About providing women, With the same value, And resources, As the men had, And so, Now, In the SWPL, Just keep pressing it a few times, And again, And again, And one more, There you go, I know that'll please some of you, Have a wee Rangers badge in there, So just about every SWPL team, Now has a chaplain, And what happened, This was interesting, Because, Stuart Regan, Who was the chief exec, Of the SFA, Asked me to meet, Anna Signore, Who was the national team

manager, And offer my services, So I went to see her, And she says, I'm an atheist,
[58 : 35] And it was almost as if to say, I'm an atheist, Get out of my office, So I said to her, Well that's alright, I says, We both believe different things, Pretty much the opposite, I says, But one thing we do have in common, Is we're really passionate, About female footballers, Getting the same value, And resources as the men, She says, Well that we are, And after one conversation, In her office, She appointed me, As the national team chaplain, And then I became chaplain, To the men's team as well, And it was an amazing journey, Going to the Euros, The World Cup, They did absolutely fantastic, But then something happened, That really changed the direction, That I was going, I got a phone call this day, Of a friend, Who was the manager, Of at that time, Wraith Rovers, I'm able to tell you this story, Very openly, Because the people in the story, Have subsequently, Very openly spoke to the BBC, About it, And so it's been on the TV, And on their website, So Grant Murray, His name was, Phoned me up this day, And he says, Mark, He says, I need your help, One of my players, Has tried to kill himself,

This morning, He's tried to drown himself, In the River Forth, And he says, The police and paramedics, Have left him, And they've said he's recovered, But I'll tell you something, He might have recovered physically, But mentally, The boys all over the place, And I'm really worried about him, Would you go and see him?

Now as it happened, Thankfully that day, I was just, I was in at Hibs, Visiting their manager, And this lad, Lived in Dulgate Bay, Just over the bridge, So I drove straight to his house, But I'll tell you what, I was so nervous, Because I thought to myself, What if I say the wrong thing?

What if I do the wrong thing? What if I make things worse? I'm not skilled, This is above my pay grade, This is out of my comfort zone, But I thought, I'll go and I'll trust God, It'll just give me the right things to say, And not to say, Now thankfully the issues, That precipitated this player's attempt at suicide, Were ones that I had, Quite a lot of life experience in, And so the one thing I was able to do that day, Was just sit and listen to the lad, I didn't give him solutions, I didn't sort all these problems out, I just listened, And I just tried to empathise, And show him compassion, And at the end of, Spending a few hours with him, I felt he'd managed to talk himself out of it, And he was able to see things a bit more objectively, And I left, And I got a phone call the next morning, Friday morning, Off the manager, Saying to me, How did you get on man?

I says, You know what, I think I got on okay, With the right support, I think the lad will be okay, He says, Brilliant, Listen, I need your advice, We've got a massive game tomorrow, We're away at Hibs at Easter Road, And I really need the big man, What do you do?

[61 : 08] I don't want to tick him over the edge, But I don't want to feel he's useless now, And what I said to him was, You know what, This lad's been honest with you, He's took a big risk, I said, If you still are prepared to believe in him, And put him in your team, I think he'll run through a brick wall, I think he'll play out his skin, I think he'll give you everything, Play him, And I was sitting thinking, What if I've given the wrong advice, And he has an absolute mare, But I actually scored an equalising goal, And I'll win each draw, But that day, That really shook me, I came away from that suicide intervention, Realising, I need to really be upskilled in this, And so what happened was, I went to NHS, And I got trained up in mental health, And I ended up working for NHS, Training up staff nurses, Biomedical research scientists, And others, In mental health awareness, And I began to realise, That we need to really know about this in football, So what I did was, I wrote a course, For Scottish football, Got it CPD certified, And I now work for the SPFL,

Delivering it to football clubs all over the country, And I've now trained about a thousand people, Working in Scottish football, So that they can spot the early signs, Of poor mental health, And step in, And also get people to look after their mental health, And that's two of my roles now, So I've got two roles, SFA chaplain, And SPFL mental health trainer, And I love the two things combined, It's been brilliant, And as a result now, What happens is, Every single chaplain, Also gets trained up in a two day course, In mental health awareness, So that they're able to watch out, For when things are not going well, And that's probably the golden key, That's opened up all the doors, And if you look now, At this next slide, You'll see now that throughout Scotland, Just keep pressing Mary, Within the Women's Premier League, Next one, Highland Football League, Lowland League, East of Scotland League, West of Scotland League, The Midlands League, We've now got about 140 chaplains, In Scotland, But maybe you hate football, And you think, Well what, It's not just football in Scotland, Well you're right,

So let's keep pressing, And let's see what else we've got, So we've got also chaplains now in, Thanks Mary, We've got one in cricket, You might not even thought, We played cricket in Scotland, We've got one in, He's the same guy by the way, He is the same guy, So Ben is the Stirling County chaplain, And he is also working with the SRU now, To try and develop chaplains, So there, What else have we got, This is Brandon, Who's the chaplain at Caledonia Gladiators, The only professional basketball team in Scotland, And then finally, Yes, See sometimes if I'm in the central belt, I'll say to people, Anyone know what sport this is?

And see when they say hockey, I say to them, Well it's a bit like hockey, We nae rules, And twice as dangerous, And that's just to watch it, And it's amazing, Because just as, You know Donald was saying there, In the Fort William area, There was so many suicides, That the Kamenacht Association linked up with me, And said we could really do with chaplains, Throughout the Kamenacht Association, And so they began to really promote it, And now we've got about a dozen at least, And their main role is just looking out for people, And that's really what we do, We look out for people, And it might sound to some of you, Well that's not ministry, You know, What's it all about then?

It's a bit kind of mamby-pamby, But let me give you the biblical basis, For what we do, And illustrate it, Let's turn to the scriptures now, You can put up the next slide, And it's Matthew 5 and 13, I'd say this is the biblical premise, It says, You are the salt of the earth, But if the salt loses its saltiness, How can it be made salty again?

[64 : 48] It's no longer good for anything, Except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot, See, Where I come from, If somebody says, Oh, See the wee man, Salt of the earth, It's a real compliment, It means he's down to earth, It means he's humble, He's unpretentious, He's easy going, But when Jesus said, You were the salt of the earth, It wasn't a compliment, It was a commission, It was a command, It was a challenge, Because, Back then, Salt was viewed very differently, To how it is today, I mean, Salt is just, It's ten a penny, It's cheap, Easily accessible, And, You know, We don't really give much thought to it, Back in Jesus' day, Salt was a lifesaver, It saved lives, It was absolutely essential, Why?

Because of course, In those days, They didn't have electricity, Therefore, They didn't have refrigeration, Or freezing, Possibilities, And so, To preserve, Food, Like meat and fish, From putrefying, From not going off, What they would do, Is soak it in a salt solution, And they would keep it, Pure essentially, Because what would happen, Is the salt, Would basically, Draw the moisture, Out of the meat, And it would kill off the bacteria, And it would keep it, Healthy, So when Jesus said, You're the salt of the earth, I believe what he's saying to us, As the church is, Is that I need you, On this planet, Just to be a purifying influence, To be a good influence, To add value to people's life, By you being there, Their lives are better, Because as a Christian, Wherever you go, You bring something, Of God's presence with you, Now the thing about that is, That's all very well and good, But, For salt to be any good, It has to be out the salt shaker, I'm sure we've all got that wee, Salt shaker in our kitchen cupboard, At the back somewhere, That we forgot all about, And we discover it years later, We bring it out, And what's happened, It's drawn moisture out the air, It's become soggy, It's become tasteless, So what do we do, We chuck it out, No good to anybody now, And I believe, That there are churches, That are very like that, Where people have basically sat, On the church kitchen shelf, For years, Not having anything to do, With the world out there, In case they defile us, And what's happened, Is they've become soggy, Tasteless and useless, And I believe that Jesus, Is actually, Putting their lights out, As churches, I really do believe that, That mentality, I remember, When I first became a pastor, This was now 1988, I went to visit, A retired deacon of the church, And I was, Often glad he was retired, At the end of the visit, Because he did nothing, But moan, About everything, And he was moaning, About how worldly, The church had become,

He says, I'll tell you how bad things are, He says, See last Saturday, I saw a deacon, From the Baptist church, Coming out of Love Street, What do you think of that? I said, Aye right enough eh, St Mirren, Not a chance for me, You wouldn't catch me there, He says, Now wait now, He says, You don't go and watch, Football matches do you?

I said, Not exactly, I support Partick Thistle, It's not quite at that level, You know, But I says, Aye, I says, I love football, And he says, But, If you go to the football, What about all that bad language? I says, Well, I says, If I walk down Paisley High Street, I'll hear worse, And I says, Plus, I said, The good thing about Partick Thistle is, Where I sit, There's hardly anybody else around me, So you're

more likely to hear a dug bark, In Maryhill Road, Than you are hear any bad language, I says, No, I says, There's no issues there, He says, Well, Let me ask you this, Now if anyone's got a background, In the brethren, You'll get this, Maybe not many do, But, He says to me, How would you feel then, If you were sitting in that football ground, And at half time, Jesus was to return, And found you sitting there, How would you feel about that?

[68 : 45] I says, Well, See, To be honest with you, Thistle are that rank rotten just now, That if Jesus returned at half time, And got me out of there, He'd be saving me 45 minutes of purgatory, It would be fantastic, I thought that was quite funny, He didn't, But that pretty much, That pretty much epitomised, The attitude of, Of the church, I call that kind of church, And that kind of Christian, Covid, Christians, Because they isolate themselves, So they can't spread the gospel, And what I would say to you, Is that, The church is having to really take a right, Good look at itself in these days, Because we're beginning to realise, That there was a day, When we were very much front and centre, Of our communities, And sometimes ruling it, Didn't do a very good job of it, And now what's happened is, That we're now at the periphery, Of society, And we're now recognising, That we're far better at serving, Than we are at ruling, And that's really what God's calling us to do, Getting out the salt shaker, Adding value to people's lives, By whatever we go,

And whatever we do, Give them a taste, Of how God views them, Because this next week slide, Just, I love this scripture, Let your conversation be always full of grace, Seasoned with salt, So that you may know how to answer everyone, Not only does salt sustain, But it also savours, It flavours, And I believe that, What we do as chaplains, Is we go into, Very secular environments, And how we treat them, How we value them, How we love them, How we look after them, Gives them a taste, Of how God values them, We talked about that this morning, With the kids, When we talked about, The value, That is placed on footballers heads, And how it oscillates, According to performance and results, But actually God sees us quite differently, And he places the value, Of his son's life, On ours, We're worth dying for, That's how much he loves us, And that value doesn't diminish, When we mess up, It doesn't increase, When we do well, It's simply constant, Because of God's grace, Well basically what we do as chaplains, Is operate out of the overflow, Of our experience of God's grace, And treat them the way God's treated us, So win, Loser draw, We love them just the same, We serve them, We value them, We look out for them, And you know, I found, I found some very, Very interesting, Scenarios, That would show the value of this, I'll give you a couple of examples, So the first one was, One of the players come up to me this day, And he says, Rev, He says, Do you do wins?

Now what he meant by that was, Do you christen little ones? And I says, Well yeah, I do something called a blessing service, It says we are, What we would do is, We'd recognise that your little one, Is designed by God, And we would pray for God's protection, Over their lives, And trust that one day, They'll come to know him, And you as parents would as well, And that you know, They'll just discover the plan, God's got for their life, And so I explained all this, And really it was just, What an aiming ceremony, Let's be honest about that, And I said, So why don't you come along to my church?

And he says, Well I would, He says, But I live quite far away, And he says, I feel quite embarrassed, About being in your church, In front of all the people, That I don't know, And I probably wouldn't be back, So see if I did it in my house, With family, Would you do it there?

[71 : 55] I said, Absolutely, Get the salt, Out the salt shaker, Absolutely, But then he came to training the next week, He says, Rev, I've had a wee thought, He says, I want all the boys there as well, In the squad, And my house isn't big enough, So I've hired a function suite, In Tiger Tiger nightclub, In Glasgow, Are you alright doing it there?

And I said, Absolutely, What would Jesus do eh? Jesus was the friend of sinners, And the biggest criticism against him, Was he spent most of his time with them, And I said, Absolutely, I'm there, And he says, It's a Sunday night, Is that alright?

Oh, Now we have a problem, Because I've got to get this by, The leaders of my church, Because I'm supposed to have an evening service, But do you know what, When I shared with them, This opportunity, They said, Mark, Just go for it, He says, He's not going to come here, You go there, Just serve him, And so, I had a wee thought to myself, When I shared it with Jamie, The player, I says, Jamie, I says, We've got a worship band, There's a kind of Celtic, Celtic worship band, In our church, I says, How would you like us to come down, And give you a wee presentation, Of worship, Not everyone joining in, But we'll just present to you what we do, Aye, That sounds great, I says,

And I'll tell you what else as well, And you might think this is a wee bit, Out of the box, Right, But, I says, We've got a street dance team in the church, I says, My two daughters are in it, I says, And what they do is, They have Christian rap music, And they kind of, Do dance move to that, And I says, They're really good, I says, That could, You know, Maybe, Sort of, Interest people as well, He says, That sounds fantastic, I says, We've also got a puppet team, And we put on a kind of puppet show, Where we just share the gospel, Through, You know, The puppets, And I says, It's great fun, The kids will love it, He says, That's fantastic, So I basically brought about 30 people down from my church, To Tiger Tiger, Nightclub, In Glasgow, And we just took it over, It was brilliant, And that night after it, It was a super time, And I just shared with them, The gospel, How Jesus loved them, And everything, And at the end, I'm standing up at the bar, With one of the players, And he says, Rev, He says, That was brilliant the night, Mate, He says, You've really got me thinking about stuff, He says, See, Before tonight, I would never have been able to connect you, With church, Because like, You're alright, Right? What does that tell you? It tells you what people out there think of us, They think we're legalistic weirdos, By and large, And you know, Because of the years of distance between the church and the world, That we're responsible for, No one put us out, We cut ourselves off, Because of that, I think I might have a little bit of a challenge in my hands, In Lewis and Harris, As I try and, You know, Encourage clubs in the Lewis and Harris Football League, To embrace chaplaincy, We've got a wee bit of work to be doing, Building a bridge, Into that community, Whereby we can be liked, And trusted, And hopefully receive that opportunity, So over this next, Week, I'm hopefully going to be meeting with clubs, And sharing with them the story, Of what's happened in the mainland, And just asking for an opportunity, To come and serve, No agenda, No strings attached, We just want to come and serve, And you might say, Well is that all there is to it?

[75 : 01] Well, That's the only agenda that we have, But what you sometimes find is, Is that, That sometimes the spiritual questions, And the spiritual requests, And the spiritual needs, Flow from that, We don't have to instigate it anyway, I'll tell you one more story, Now again, You might think this is a bit bonkers, So forgive me, But I've actually told this story, At the UAF, At a licensed coaching course, To a bunch of secular coaches, And they loved it, So here goes, I get a phone call this, Thursday night, Quite late, About 11 o'clock, Of one of our players at Thistle, And he says, Rev, I need your help, He says, I think my house is spooked, He says, It's, He says, I'm trying to get to sleep at night, And he says, I feel I'm getting choked, And I says, Are you sure that's not your missus?

Because, He was quite a boy, You know, And I wouldn't have been surprised, He says, No, I'm being serious, I'm being serious, He says, I think my house is spooked, Would you come and sort it? And I says, Aye, I says, Well let's make an appointment, And he says, But I mean, Can you come now?

I says, It's half 11 now, I says, Can you live half an hour away? He says, Rev, I'm really petrified now, And I need you, And please will you come now? And I says, Right, Okay, So I drove half an hour down to his house, In East Co-Bride, I mean, That's enough to be spooked anyway, Just going to East Co-Bride, Right?

So I go down to East Co-Bride, And I go into his house, And I must admit, I sensed a presence of evil in the place, It was just very, Very unclean, Kind of spiritual environment, If you like, And his wife had been into all this kind of stuff, Into crystals, And all kinds of other stuff, And I think she'd kind of given the invitation, As it were, To these unclean spirits, And he says, Rev, He says, The problem is, He says, See our room, He says, The dog is going mental, Barking at this wall all the time, It's just one wall, And he goes, Daft barking at it, And he says, No matter how much we turn on the heating, The room's always cold and damp, And he says, And I haven't slept in three months, He says, I'm having these horrible nightmares, He says, Something's not right, I says, Well, Yeah, This is maybe the gateway to it, So I talked about stuff there, And then I says, Look, Tell you what, Do you want me to sort it?

I says, Because, Here's the deal, Right? I says, Jesus, Died on the cross, But rose again from the dead, And defeated Satan, Sin, And death, And everything, That's outwith God's kingdom, I says, So basically, He's the top spiritual man in the universe, And I says, The good news is, Because I'm connected with him, Then he's delegated some of that authority to me, So I can say something in his name, And something happens, So I don't know if he fully understood that, He just wanted his house in a place of peace, So I said, So do you want to stay in for this, Or do you want to wait

outside?

[77 : 41] He says, No, Can I stay in and see what happens? So I don't know what he was expecting, If he was expecting plates spinning around the place, Or whatever, He would have been disappointed, But I says, No, That's fine, Stay in. So all I did, Was I declared the authority of Jesus, In that room, And commanded every unclean spirit to leave, In the name of Jesus, And go to the place of God's appointing, Nothing more than that, No shouting, Nothing.

We stood there, And we felt this, Wind, Just, Go past us, It was tangible, And he said, Is that it? I said, Well let's just wait and see, Proof of the pudding will be, And what happens as a result, Do you know from that night, His dog never again so much as barked in that room, From that night, The room was absolutely toasting, It was warm, But of course, What about him?

Well I'd said to him, I said, Look by the way, I would keep this between me and you, I wouldn't tell the rest of the lads in the dressing room, Because they'll slaughter you, You know what a football dressing room is like, He says, Alright, Alright, The next morning, I'm sitting in the changing room, Already got my kit on, Ready to go out to train, If you arrive later than five to ten, You get a big fine, And you're in the manager's bad books, And there's no sign of this player, As it approaches that time, And I'm now quite concerned about him, Just before five to ten, The dressing room door flies open, And he comes in with a great big beam and smile, And he shouts in front of all the other players, And he says, Rev, Mate, Honest to goodness, Thanks for what you've done for me in my flat last night, That was incredible, And he says, That's the first decent night's sleep I've had in three months, Honestly, I sat there absolutely horrified, You've no idea how bad that sounds, In a dressing room full of footballers, And you just know what's going to come next, They're not going to just let that pass, So one of the boys said to them, What was the Rev doing in your house last night, And what did he do to give you a good night's sleep, He said, Ah boys, It was brilliant, He got rid of all these ghosts, And I thought, No, That's not how I would have described this, Well they all fell about laughing, And one of the boys disappeared into the cleaning cupboard, And he brought out Henry the Hoover, The cylindrical Hoover, And he starts off a chorus of, Who are you going to call ghost busters, And they all joined in, And this absolute, You know, Riot was happening in the dressing room, My manager walked in and said, What's going on here, And they said, Gaffa, You're going to love this, Did Rev get rid of all these ghosts out of Trigger's house, And he said, I don't believe that, He says, Even ghosts wouldn't be stupid enough to get into his house, And it was just banter, Banter, Banter, Laugh, Laugh, Laugh, Until the end of training, One of the players come up to me, And he says, Rev, Can I get a wee word, He says, I've got some stuff kicking off in my house, Can you come and sort me too, And it was a similar scenario, And as a result of that, He came along to an outreach, And gave his life to Jesus, Because he saw something of the power of God, In that situation, And, You know,

Yeah, I love it when that happens, But that's God's business, My business is just to love people, It's just to serve them, It's just to value them, Salvation belongs to God, That's his business, If he can open up that door, Brilliant, If the questions come, I'll answer them, If the needs are presented, I'll meet them, But that's his business, Our only agenda, Is just to be salt, Of the earth, Is to serve, And value, And love, And if folk want to respond to that, Great, If you live a life, That demands a supernatural explanation, Folk will ask you, And so the scripture that I close with, Is 1 Peter 3.15, It says, In your heart, Set apart Christ as Lord, And always be ready, To give an answer, For the reason, For the hope that's within you, With gentleness, And respect, And I believe, If we're prepared to get out, The salt shaker, Out into that world, That big bad world, If we're prepared to, Be part of building a bridge, Into sporting community hubs, Then that could well become, Two way traffic,

[81 : 34] But we need to be the ones, That take the initiative, And go out there, You can't be salt in here, This is the salt shaker, Every one of you, Are a chaplain, Somewhere, Wherever you do life, Every one of you, Is a representative, An ambassador of Jesus, Wherever you go, Every one of you, So don't cut yourself off, From that world, Be part of it, Be part of it, You know, You can be one of the boys, Without being one of the sheep, You know, Be part of it, Be part of what God's doing, In this world today, God bless, Yes, Okay, Father God, I want to thank you Lord, So much for your faithfulness, And your goodness, Lord, I thank you for the, Incredible growth, That we've seen, And the opportunities, That have been presented to us, Within the whole nation, And Lord, In a, In a scenario, In a culture, Where there was such a chasm, Between the church, And the context of sport, Thank you Lord, That you've given us grace,

To build a bridge, Where now we're able, To understand each other, A bit better, And, And they do see, That we add value, Into their lives, And Lord, We thank you, For the opportunities, That come as a result of that, To share Jesus, And what he can do, For them, But Lord, Thank you, That that's your business, And Lord, It doesn't depend on our ability, To be evangelists, It just depends on our availability, To be servants, So may each one of us, Lord, Be available, To be your servant, And the servant of anyone, You give us the opportunity, To serve, Help us to be that salt, To add value, Into people's lives, And into their worlds, In Jesus name, Amen, Thank you very much, Mark, And also to Dahl, Thank you for that, And you're hanging around, At the end, So if there's questions, And if people want to have a chat, And follow up, Please, Please do so, We're going to, Bring our service to a conclusion,

By singing to God's praise, We'll sing from Mission Praise 755, It's a hymn that, Takes us to the cross, Where we see, The work that Jesus did, To save us, And it's a hymn that finishes, With us, Responding by saying, When we see the cross, We give our whole lives, We want to give everything, To serving him, To thanking him, For all that he's done, So, We'll stand to sing to God's praise, When I serve in the wondrous cross, On which the Prince of glory died Thy riches paid, my gallant were lost

And more content on all my pride O living Lord, that I should boast Saving the death of Christ my Lord O how it fates my charming most I sacrifice them to His blood For all His head, His hands, His feet Sorrow and love, no pain go down It is the trouble and sorrow beat

For for so close, so it shall come Where the old world of nature mine That will an awful heart to store But so amazing, so divine Demands my soul, my life, my hope And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father The fellowship of God the Holy Spirit Be with us all, now and forevermore Amen