

Gordon Macleod 24.09.17am

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Preacher: Gordon MacLeod

[0 : 00] I now seek to worship God and we'll sing to God's praise in Psalm 119. Psalm 119 from verse 33, the fifth part of the psalm.

Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts to bring, and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline. Give understanding unto me, so keep thy law shall I, yet even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully.

And we'll sing down to the end of verse, Mark 40, to God's praise. We'll stand to sing. To the end I shall my heart incline.

Give understanding unto me, so keep thy law shall I, yet even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully.

And I must not make me to go, for I need I dare.

[1 : 54] My heart long to thy testories, and long to be in mind.

Turn thou away my sight and eyes, from you in man's sea.

And in thy good and holy way, be pleased to waken thee.

Confirm to me, thy gracious word, which I did gladly hear.

In thy servant, Lord, who is devoted to thy fear.

[3 : 17] Turn thou away my fear reproach. For good thy judgment's heed.

No, Lord, who is devoted to thy grace. For good thy grace. For good thy grace. I have longed. In thy truth quicken me.

Amen. Let us pray before God in fear.

Let us pray. Lord, as we come before you this morning, we would indeed pray that we would know what it is to walk in your ways.

that heavenly father that we would come before you this morning with hearts that are open to receive your teaching that heavenly father that we would indeed seek to walk in your precepts that we would seek to glorify you and enjoy you forever that heavenly father that as we come and worship that we would recognize that we come before a God that is holy and is just but a God that is full of love and full of compassion and that heavenly father as we come and as we bow our heads and our hearts before you that heavenly father that we would indeed know what it is to be still and know that thou art God and that heavenly father in coming before you that we would indeed trust in you and that we would know your blessing guide each one of us heavenly father as we come this morning you know the situations that we leave behind at home some of us heavenly father thinking of those that are ill and sick at home those heavenly father that need comfort at this time those heavenly father that moan and we pray heavenly father that your hand would be upon them that you would guide them that you would direct we pray in particular heavenly father as we have prayed already this week for the langian game that heavenly father that your hand would be upon them as individuals and as a palm and that heavenly father that they would indeed know you as their God of refuge and their God of strength their very present aid in times of trouble that while their earth and their world has been moved and shaken that heavenly father that they can come and trust in you and heavenly father that it is our prayer for each one this morning that needs comfort needs guidance needs uphold that they would indeed know you lord and all that you have to offer to we pray heavenly father that you would guide and direct us in our worship here that heavenly father that you would help us to lay aside anything that is within our hearts that clouds our walk with you that heavenly father that we would indeed be focused on you that the things of this world heavenly father that so often fill our thoughts that we would lay them aside and that heavenly father that we would seek to worship only you that heavenly father that we would indeed be guided by you directed by you and that heavenly father that we would bear fruit for you we pray for our young ones

through the back we thank you for them heavenly father and we thank you for the provision that has made and we pray heavenly father as the youngest members of our congregation that heavenly father as they grow within the church that most of all heavenly father that they would grow to know you that they would know where it is to be rooted and grounded in your life that heavenly father that they would be like that tree planted by you that in a season would yield its fruit oh heavenly father our hearts desire for each one of us is that they would know where it is to remember their creator in the days of their youth that heavenly father for when the days of evil come that they can say that they have no pleasure in them that their desire is to be with your people and to be worshipping you we pray for the Sunday school this morning for all that they will study together

[8 : 12] that heavenly father as they meet and as they sing your praise and as they focus upon your word that these young hearts heavenly father will be receptive to your word and that heavenly father again that they would grow in wisdom that they would grow in stature but indeed that they would grow in your faith and that heavenly father that they would indeed grow to be the men and women that you have designed for them you have promised us that you have a plan for each and every one that if they place their trust in you that you will prosper them and not have them and heavenly father we claim that promise for them this morning as we pray for them each week as they leave we commit them to you heavenly father this morning and heavenly father for those who will meet tonight for the fellowship those that may not normally come along to church heavenly father but feel welcome to come and comfortable to come and meet for an informal fellowship and heavenly father that they will receive a word that turns their heart heavenly father heavenly father our prayer for each one of us that gather here this morning is that we would indeed have our ears open to your word that all that we hear that heavenly father that we will not turn it to the person on our left or to our right that heavenly father that we would recognize that your word speaks to each one of us each one of us that I you have taken us here for a purpose this morning and we pray heavenly father that your purpose would indeed be fulfilled that your name would be glorified that in all things heavenly father that your will would be done guide us as we continue before you this morning bless our time together in Jesus precious name

Amen boys and girls would you like to come down to the front are you all well this morning yes did a good week okay I'll do something to show you here anybody know what it is have a microphone no it's not a book anybody know what this is TV no it's not a television anyone can hear what it is pardon no it's not a charger yes yes yes yes it's what a CD or a DVD goes into how much did you be able to watch a DVD the rest of this morning yes do you think so if you plug it into the computer if I plug it into the computer so by itself it's useless isn't it also be able to put pictures in there that's right you can put pictures in there and then you can see them in the big screen but I've got nothing to plug it into so by itself it's useless

I can't plug it in here there's nothing to plug it into I haven't taken my computer with me so this needs to be plugged into something for it to actually work and once it's working we can see the pictures or watch the film if it's there what do each one of you need to be plugged into no screen to show her on either that's right he sang the screen what it what it what do you need to be plugged into what each one of you need to be plugged into or who do you need to be plugged into Jesus Jesus you need to be plugged into Jesus because if you Because if you're plugged into Jesus, what are you going to be doing?

You're going to be a Christian. And is it important to be a Christian, John? Yeah. Why is it important to be a Christian, John? Because you'll go to heaven.

Because you'll go to heaven. And does Jesus want us all to go to heaven? Yeah. Yeah. So it's really, really important when you go off to Sunday school, and when you're at home, and you're reading your Bible, that you're tuned in to Jesus.

[12 : 21] Because if we're not tuned in to Jesus, we're a bit like this DVD player. We're not doing what God wants us to do. There's a verse in the Bible that I'm going to read to you. And you can see if you can remember it.

I won't ask you next week for it. But you can see if you can remember it during the week. And it's in John 15, verse 5. I am the vine, you are the branches.

If you remain in me, and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing. So if we stay close to Jesus, and we walk with Jesus, and as John said, if we are Christians, we will bear fruit for Jesus.

But if we're not with Jesus, we can do nothing. We're useless. So the important thing that each one of you need to remember, and that's why you come along here to church on Sunday, and why you go to Sunday school, so that you come to know Jesus better, and you stay close to Jesus.

Now later on in bigger Sunday school here, we are going to think more about that, about staying close to Jesus, and not wandering far away from him. Okay? I'll have a wee word of prayer.

[13:34] Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can come before you. And as the children sit here, Heavenly Father, and they see the importance of what it is to be a Christian, that Heavenly Father, in coming as a Christian before you, and acknowledging that you are Lord and Savior, that they are promised a place in heaven, and we pray that as they grow, that Heavenly Father, each one of them will stay rooted to you, that they will indeed be one of your branches, bearing fruit as they go out into the world.

That Heavenly Father, that they would not stray from your paths. That Heavenly Father, that they would indeed grow closer to you, each and every day, in Jesus' precious name.

Amen. You can turn with me in your Bibles, to Hebrews chapter 11. Hebrews chapter 11. And we'll read from the beginning of the chapter through into chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 11. And we'll read from verse 1. And we pray that God will add his blessing to the reading of his words. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.

This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that universe was formed at God's command, that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

[15:06] By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain. By faith he was commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith, Enoch was taken from life, so that he did not experience death. He could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

And without faith, it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

By faith, Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, did not, sorry, in holy fear, built an ark to save his family. By faith, he commended the world, and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

By faith, Abram, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith, he made his home in the promised land.

[16:20] Like a stranger in a foreign country, he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith, Abram, even though he was past age and Sarah herself was barren, was unable to become a father because he was considered faithful by him who had made the promise.

And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore, all these people were still living by faith when they died.

They did not receive the things promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And when they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth, people who any such thing, say such things, show they are looking for a country of their own.

If they had been thinking about the country they had left, they had the opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one.

[17:34] Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. By faith, Abram, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice.

He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.

Abram reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead. By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff. By faith, Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the

Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

By faith, Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born because they saw he was no ordinary child and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

[18 : 43] By faith, Moses, when he had grown, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose instead to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time.

He regarded this disgrace for the sake of Christ as a greater value than the treasure of Egypt because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith, he left Egypt.

not fearing the king's anger, he persevered because he saw him who was invisible. By faith, he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

By faith, the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land but even when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell after the people marched around them for seven days.

By faith, the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice and gained what was promised, who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames and escaped the edge of the sword, whose weaknesses were turned to strength and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.

[20 : 18] Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection.

Some faced fears and flogging while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned. They were sword in two. They were put to death by the sword.

They went about in sheepskin and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and in holes in the ground.

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together, with us, would they be perfect.

And then in the beginning of chapter 12, therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

[21 : 27] Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and protector of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such a position from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Amen. And may God add a blessing to the reading of his holy word.

I'm now going to ask us a dim sum to lead us in prayer. Shall we all pray? Almighty God and loving Father we bow before your holy throne in prayer and Lord there is not a light thing to come before thee.

We bow before the King of Kings the creator of all things that we have just been singing about Lord. The planets were formed by you. You are the almighty God, the God above all gods.

Neither is there salvation in any other. Lord, so I have my Father we bow before you and we thank you first of all this morning for your great love towards us.

[22 : 48] How can it be that this great God should give his own son to die for such as we are? We thank you this morning Lord for your great love shed upon us.

for the boundless mercy and grace that you pour out towards us. We thank you God for all that you have done for us and the ways that you have kept us and led us.

We thank you Lord for every blessing that we receive day by day and moment by moment. and we come before you Lord to intercede this morning on behalf of a sin sick world Lord.

Father, we confess that this world is broken. We look upon the news and we see wars, famine, earthquakes, hurricanes.

Lord, we pray for those this morning who have lost their homes, lost their lives, who have lost everything. We pray for those Lord in the South Americas where so much damage has been done.

[24 : 04] We remember those Lord in other places who suffer famine who this morning do not have the breakfast that they so desperately desire. We pray for your people Lord who have been

persecuted.

We have just been reading those who were shone asunder because of their love of Christ. But today Lord, many are persecuted because they would name you as their Saviour and Lord and seek to one of us.

We pray for our brothers and sisters this morning Lord who worship in hiding, who worship and seek in fear. And we ask you Lord that you would bless their witness and bring others to Christ. We pray for our nation this morning Lord and we have to confess that we have forgotten you Lord. We have to confess that as a nation we have gone after the things that ought not to be.

We think Lord of the children of Israel, how in the strange lands they built altars to Baal and to foreign gods. And despite the fact that they were ordered to tear them down Lord yet again and again you built them and we have built our own altars in this world Lord and this country to foreign gods, gods that are not gods.

[25 : 23] Father we think of the abominations that we hold up as freedom. We teach our children things that are against your word in the name of freedom. The womb is not a safe place any longer Lord and we cry out and are ashamed Father to forgive us for these things that we are doing minute by minute.

We ask your God to remember us in our nation in mercy and not in judgment. We pray for our leaders Lord. We ask that they will be men and women of integrity.

We ask that they will lead us in honesty desiring the best for the people. We pray Lord to remember us in these days.

Our nation needs revising Lord and only your word and only your Holy Spirit can bring us back to days of blessing and we pray that you will remember us Lord. We pray for the silent Lord.

We pray for the worship today. We pray for the preaching of your word. in the churches here in Tarbot Lord we pray that your word will go forth with power and authority.

[26 : 42] We pray that you'll bless God as he leads us Lord and that we might see Jesus high and lifted up. We pray Lord for David and you would honour his worship there.

Guide him in all his ways Lord here in the congregation as they build a new church and a new building. And we pray Lord that in the days ahead it will see days of blessing.

We pray Lord that most of all that people will come and find Christ in that place. Their broken hearts will be revived.

Their broken lives will be restored. Their children will be one for the saviour. We pray for our own children here Lord. Our children and our grandchildren.

And we ask you Lord teach them your word. Hide it in their hearts. In the very short time that they have on a Sunday Lord. Pour it into their hearts Father and teach them to love you.

[27 : 40] And grant that in the days that they see ahead might be days of honouring Christ as their saviour. Working for him and knowing him Lord. We thank you Lord for those who have passed days of worship.

For those who lead this congregation. And we thank you Lord for their service to you and we pray that you would guide them and let them see days of blessing in the new Lord in this town.

And Father as we come to your word we remember the words of the man in the New Testament who said Lord we would see Jesus. Lord we're here as individuals.

As God has already said we have come here for a purpose this morning. And grant Lord that in each heart that is bowed before you that we would see Jesus Lord.

That we would recognise him as the one who died for me. The one who died for my sins. The one who loved me so much that he went to Calvary's cross and took the shame and took all the dishonour and all the ridicule.

[28 : 56] And he did it because he loved each one of us. So far our teachers today we think of that old hymn Lord that says pass me not oh gentle saviour hear my humble cry while in others they were calling do not pass me by.

Lord if there's any in this meeting today who don't know you as saviour Lord. We are bound for a Christless eternity. We ask of God that they would make that their plea.

That he would not pass them by this day but that he would open their hearts to receive Christ as their own personal saviour. So Lord hear us.

Bless our worship as we continue and grant in the name of Jesus might be honoured and praised and help us Lord as we leave this place to know that we're walking with you and that our hearts are

burning with them.

These things we ask to be precious in your Jesus. Amen. Gaelic from Psalm 78 and verses 71 and 72 just read them in English and then sing in Gaelic and I understand it's from halfway through verse 71 from waiting on the youths of young he brought him forth to be Israel his inheritance his people Jacob's feet so after the integrity he of his heart them fed and by the good skill of his hands them wisely governed.

[30 : 47] Sing these verses in Gaelic to those priests. Amen. Gaelic Gaelic Gaelic Gaelic Gaelic Gaelic Gaelic Gaelic Aquisir et chants.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[33 : 55] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. And at verse 34.

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

[36 : 11] So he began teaching them many things.

And I've got some iPads and iPads and computers that you can put in a word and bring it up for you. And what I did was I wanted to say.

And when I was saying, Jim was praying, Jim prayed about the children of Israel and how they wandered in the desert.

And the Lord said, the Lord said, I will cause all my goodness to pass in the Lord said, I will come to you.

have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Now God spoke this word to Moses when Moses was up the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments. And at the same time as Moses was up the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments we were all aware that the children of Israel were down in the valley taking off their earrings, melting them down and crafting and forming the golden cap. And God seeing what was going on at the foot of the mountain spoke to Moses and we read here that when God first met with Moses at the burning bush back in chapter 3 his cry to Moses or his words to Moses at that time was I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt

[38 : 28] I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers and I am concerned about their suffering. And then in chapter 33 at the beginning God then says to Moses leave this place you and the people you brought up out of Egypt and go to the land I promised an oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob saying I will give it to your descendants I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites and Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites go up to the land flowing with milk and honey but I will not go with you because you are a stiff necked people and I might destroy you on the way.

But then Moses instead of accepting what God has said to them he pleads for the children of Israel before God and he reminds God you have been telling me you lead these people but you have not with me no whom you will send with me you have said I know you by name and you have found favour with me if you are pleased with me teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favour with you remember that this nation is your people the Lord replied my presence will go with you and I will give you rest then Moses said to him if your presence does not go with us do not send us up from here how will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us what else will disengage me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth and the Lord said to Moses

I will do the very thing you ask me because I am pleased with you and I know you by name then Moses said now show me your glory and then the words in the verse 19 that we read earlier on the Lord said I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you and I will proclaim my name the Lord in your presence I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion the children in Israel were lost they were like sheep without a shepherd in fact God was prepared to disown them they had sinned and strayed so far from them little did they know

that Moses was up the mountain getting the ten commandments the first one being that they should have no other gods and here they were at the bottom of the hill crafting and forming their own God to bow down and worship

Moses interceded on their behalf and God spared them and eventually as we read on their descendants reached the promised land just focusing on that and then thinking on the text that we have this morning Jesus hadn't come down off the mountain as Moses had but he landed on the shore and immediately he saw that the people were lost and in need of a shepherd to guide them and he was filled with compassion compassion that led him to act and he went on and he taught them many things he'd been with the people many days even many months they'd seen the miracles that he'd performed they'd heard the parables that he'd told them but still they were lost wondering and seeking something more let's just pause and ask ourselves a question is that our condition today we sat here or in other places and heard it all before but nothing has changed in our lives are you still asking the question there must be something more to life than this as we said the children of Israel were at the foot of the mountain they could see the cloud covering the place where God met with Moses yet they were far away from God have you been coming to church for many years you enjoy the singing you enjoy the fellowship you're challenged by the word but yet still in your heart you're far away from God if you're not giving your life to God what or who are you giving your life to?

are you sitting here thinking well I'm okay my wife my husband my mother my father my son my daughter are Christians so that's enough for my family can I just say it's not if you're not following the Lord Jesus as your shepherd you're following someone or something else and no matter how many members of your family are Christians that will not get you to heaven even the children know that this morning the importance of becoming a Christian to be able to enter into heaven and receive the promise that is there for us if that is your condition this morning the prayer of every Christian in here today both in private and in public is in the grace and the will of God that your ears will be opened to hear God's word which is for you and that your heart will be turned to God and that you may receive it it may be uncomfortable for you to sit and listen to her and to hear it but each and every one of us must make a decision ourselves it's not for somebody else to make the decision for us it's for each one of us to come and make that decision ourselves if you're still going through life without the guidance and protection of the true shepherd then be assured that even today as you sit here and as you listen the good shepherd has compassion for you and he's waiting for you and he's waiting to teach you many things the question might be is why do I need a shepherd what does a shepherd provide to his sheep well firstly he meets their basic need from when they're born he's there for them he makes sure that they're getting milk from their mother if not he'll feed them from a bottle or find them a new mother without food they'll not survive when the grass stops growing and we enter the winter he feeds them by hand he comes close to them and they come close to him and they accept the food from him because they feel safe around them in John chapter 10 verse 27 and 28 that well known verse my sheep listen to my voice

[46 : 04] I know them and they follow me I give them eternal life and they shall never perish no one shall snatch them out of my hand are you in need this morning of feeding come to the good shepherd and receive from him so that you will not perish but do you receive eternal life shepherd cares for them when they're sick or when they're hurt when the sheep is hurt the shepherd will go and take it to the barn or even to the home and there they'll tend to it he deals with the infection and gives it the necessary antibiotic to help it recover in Matthew chapter 11 and 28 Jesus says come to me all you who are weary and are burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light are you weak and weary done carrying your burdens on your own then come to Jesus the good shepherd who will lift that burden for you what else does the shepherd do he cleans them once a year the shepherd takes the sheep into the fold and shears them he takes off the wool that has grown for the past year and is now grey and matted weighing heavy on the sheep and if not taken off it will eventually start to follow and may be in danger of injuring the sheep as it wraps around its leg or stops the circulation the old coat is taken off and the new wool is revealed that it's white and it's clean in Luke 5

Jesus says for Jesus was in one of the towns a man came to him he was covered with leptos when he saw Jesus he fell with his face to the ground and begged him Lord if you are willing you can make me clean Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man I am willing he said be clean and

immediately the leprosy left him are you here this morning and you need to be clean and come to Jesus willing as he was to clean the man with leprosy he's willing to reach out and cleanse you today and finally before he lets the sheep out the pen after having sheared it he puts a marker on it before that sheep leaves the fold the shepherd will put his mark on it whether it's a marker paint on the back or a tag in the ear he will mark them to show them that they are his in order that no matter where they go others know who they are because they are the individual mark of the shepherd whose mark do you bear today

John 15 it says this is to my father's glory that you bear much fruit showing yourselves to be my disciples are you bearing the mark of Jesus we spoke with the young ones this morning that have been joined to Jesus being part of the vine so that we can go and bear fruit who are you bearing fruit for today what are you doing what are you saying how are you living your life does each and every one of these things tell something about you tell whether you're following Jesus or you're following the world so while the shepherd looks after him and each one of us is in need of a shepherd let's just think about the things that Jesus seeing these people as a sheep without a shepherd then went on to teach them as we spoke of earlier on he saw their meat and he met it beyond their expectation we can read how he fed the 5,000 and how he fed the 4,000 in Mark 6 and in Mark 8 but he didn't just feed them he fed them until they were satisfied and there was sufficient left over are you going to come and partake of what is left over because there is room and there is food for plenty more he taught them that he was dependable he was there to comfort them in times of trouble he walked he walked on the water to them the wind and the waves obeyed him is that the kind of shepherd that you want to follow that is there when you are in need before you even know it that even the wind and the waves obey he was patient with them despite all that they had seen and heard when they did not understand him he took the time to explain things once again he didn't get angry with them he just gently led them and explained to them over and over again as to why he had come and what he was there to teach them he was patient and he was kind many of us have experienced trying to get sheep into a pen we try and coax them and guide them but just as the last minute as we think the job is done one jumps and they all follow and we're back to doing the exact same thing again despite the frustration that we feel inside there's no point in us becoming angry because the angrier we become the more frightened the sheep become and the more difficult it is to try and coax them in we have to complete the task we have them there for a purpose so we go back and we start again and slowly we coax them and slowly we guide them and we take them back to that gate and just as they're there we pause and we wait and slowly we usher them waiting for the first one to go through so as the first one goes through the rest then follow on many of them have been to that gate many times before but still they hesitate and that might be where you are this morning you've come close to God you've stood at the threshold you know what you have to do but doubt sets in and you jump and you turn away as I said earlier on our prayer is this morning you don't turn away you never know when you'll get the chance again sheep are only taken to the shearing pen once a year but during that time the shepherd has on a number of occasions when he makes a decision to shed some of his flock some are sold some are put to slaughter some don't survive the winter and they're not back there the following year if you're standing at the gate this morning don't hesitate don't wait to see what others are going to do this is something that you have to do for yourself but not in your own strength

Moses in the passage he referred to he referred to in Exodus called on God and said if your presence does not go with us do not send us up from here are you prepared to leave this place this morning if the presence of God does not go with you when will you get a chance to come again we've heard it said so often not one of us is promised tomorrow if you're at the gate don't hesitate don't turn back go through the gate receive the blessing that's sitting there for you you might be sitting there thinking I've wandered too far from God he can't have any compassion left for me let me give you an illustration that I see most mornings when I'm going to work

[55 : 45] Ian McSween from Scowardale comes out to feed his sheep some haven't wandered far from the house some are all over the road up the hill forever but when they see him coming out they come to be fed he doesn't turn any of them away no matter how far they're strayed he feeds them all and Jesus the great shepherd has compassion for each and every one of us this morning no matter how far we've strayed from him he's there waiting to welcome to turn to turn away the father of the prodigal son stood and waited each and every day for his son to return God is waiting for each and every one of you that have not yet turned and given your life to him don't turn away not one of us knows what's promised us how much time we have to make decisions to get things right

every sheep is taken into the fold and sheared not just the good ones all of them and God calls on each and every one of you here to come to him we read in Hebrews chapter 12 therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us fixing our eyes on

Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith for the joy set before him endured the cross scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God consider him who endured such opposition from sinners so that you will not grow weary and lose heart Moses was aware of the sin that the children of Israel had committed he pleaded for them before God he reminded God that they were his people and he asked God that if you're not going with us we're not going on here Jesus is our good shepherd and as we read the earth he's been before us he's set the path before us he's endured all things for us and where is he now he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God and as

Moses interceded for the people of Israel God intercedes for each and every one of us before God are you going to leave the pen today with the mark of Jesus and go out and bear foot or are you going to refuse the gift that is an offer for you and say that you can do it on your own in your own strength and refuse to take the mark of Jesus I pray that that's not your choice this morning that you look to follow the shepherd the good shepherd that has compassion on each and every one of us no matter how far we have strayed from him let us pray dear heavenly father is to come before you and as we search your hearts this morning we do indeed pray heavenly father that as you have taken us here this morning you have taken us to this gate heavenly father that you would help us to lay aside any pride that we have any self seeking will that we have heavenly father that we would give ourselves to you that we would not worry about what other people say or what other people do but that we recognise heavenly father that this is a one to one relationship that you call for us to have you are the good shepherd you have compassion for each and every one but we must come and we must receive it give us that strength this morning heavenly father that we would know that your presence is with us and that we would go forward and go on in your presence and bear fruit and show the marks of your love in our lives in Jesus name amen we conclude our worship this morning as sung and sing psalm 23 the lord's my shepherd i am not one he makes me down to life in pastures green he leadeth me in the quiet waters by and you truly say that the lord is your shepherd and there is nothing that you want than more to know his presence and follow in his footsteps in Jesus name the son and sing the lord my shepherd

I not want he he makes me come to life and pastures dream he leadeth me the quiet waters by my soul for he hath restored again and he to walk and make within the paths of righteousness Keep For thou art with me at thy rock, and some have become for still.

[63 : 13] My table, thou hast furnished, in presence, O my foes, my hand of God.

With oil and light, and mind of cold her clothes.

Goodness and mercy of my life shall surely follow me.

And in God's house, forevermore, my wearing face shall be.

And now, in the grace of God, the love of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all now and forevermore. Amen.

[64 : 38] Amen.