

17.3.24 am

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Date: 17 March 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning everyone. A warm welcome to the service today and a special welcome to those who are visiting with us. I see we've got a couple of visitors with us and it's good to have you. We have tea and coffee at the end of the service so if you're able to stay behind at the end please do so. It would be good to get the chance to meet and to enjoy a fellowship together. The intimations have been on the screen before the service began and I'll just take a moment to go through a few of them, not all of them.

So the evening service tonight will be taken by the Reverend Ian McCritchie. I was away in Edinburgh for three days this week so Ian was off duty tonight and he kindly agreed to step in and take the service.

So please be encouraged to come along to that. Tonight it's not on the intimations but I just heard at the door there that there's a Gaelic psalm singing after church meeting in Scalpy in the Free Church.

I think it starts at half past seven so please be encouraged to go to that if you're able to do so.

Course of the week, ladies fellowship as usual, Little Fishers as usual, Road to Recovery as usual, prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven in person and on Zoom.

[1 : 17] And I'll take that myself, God willing. The Gaelic Mother and Toddlers group on Thursday at ten and the Children's Clubs Jam Connect rooted on Friday as usual.

The service is next Sunday, God willing, will be taken by myself. And two more things. One is just a repeat intimation to say that we're hoping to have the minister in training, Scott McLeod, with us on placement here in the congregation from September 2024 until June 2026, I think it is, not 2025. It's just shy of two years. So he was actually supposed to be going to Dundee but for various reasons it was decided that it would be best for him to be on the island as a family over the period. But they were to move to different congregations so we're very happy to have them. They were moving into the community and so they're looking for accommodation and if you're able to help with that please speak to me and I can pass on his phone number and you can deal directly with them if there's a possibility of property.

And the last thing is to say that Nigel Kenny, you've got the intimation there, the officer for the Christian Institute, is making a heartfelt plea for us individually and collectively to respond to the Scottish Government's public consultation on a conversion practices ban.

[2 : 50] So there's the opportunity to respond and there's a link here to the Scottish Government website and you have got a closing date of the 2nd of April 2024.

I'll maybe, if it's possible, play the video at the prayer meeting on Wednesday evening but you're able to look it up yourself and I can pass it on to you if you've not been able to see it.

These, I think, are all the intimations so let's begin this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise and we'll sing by singing from Psalm 84 verses 1 to verse 10.

The words are on the screen. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me. We'll stand to sing to God's praise. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me.

The tabernacles of thy place, how pleasant born they be.

[4 : 07] My mercy soul longs me with thee, yea, faint thy course to see.

My very heart unfleshed cryeth, O living God for thee.

Behold, the spot, O findeth thou thine house waiting to rest.

The spot, O also for herself, hath purchased her thine nest.

In thine own altars where she saith, her young ones forth may reign.

[5 : 06] O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Blessed are they in thy house that dwell, they ever give thee grace.

Blessed is the man who strength the world, in whose heart are thy ways.
Who passing thorough, bideth thou thine, their aim to dig up wells.
Or so the rain that falleth down, the foes with water fills.
[6 : 07] So they from strength and weary go, still forward unto strength.

Until in Zion they appear, before the Lord I lend.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer here, O Jacob's God give ear.

See God our shield, look on the face of thine anointed years.

Let's unite our hearts together in prayer. Let's pray. Let's pray.

[7 : 42] We are made righteous, not because of the things that we do and don't do, but because of all that he has done on our behalf. We thank you for the life of Jesus, the perfect, sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

And we thank you for the death of Jesus that we remembered last weekend, especially as we gathered around the table. And as we took the bread and remembered the body of Jesus given for us.

As we took the wine and remembered the blood of Jesus shed for us. And we thank you that it's because of that blood, because of that sacrifice that we have salvation.

We thank you that it's not of us. It's nothing in our hands we bring. But simply to thy cross we cling.

Naked come to thee for dress and helpless come to thee for grace.

Foul we to the fountain fly. Without prayer, wash me, Savior, or I die. We thank you, Lord, that we are able to ask even this morning that you would wash us in our hearts.

[8 : 50] We confess that we are sinners. We can think back even over the last week. And we confess, Lord, there have been times that we have fallen, that we have failed.

We have said things that we shouldn't have said. We have felt in ways that we shouldn't have felt. We have looked with glances that we shouldn't have looked with.

In the things that we do. In the things that we think. In the things that we say. In the things that we leave unsaid. We sin. But we thank you that we have the encouragement in your word.

Come, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins may be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow. And we thank you that that happens as we come to the cross.

And as we remember and put our faith in the death of Jesus for us. So cleanse us from sin, we pray. Wash us in our hearts. Take away every iniquity.

[9 : 51] And make us righteous in Christ. And Lord, we thank you for the resurrection. For the life. For the death. And for the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus. He promised.

As he ministered in this world. That he was the resurrection. And the life. And the one who believes in him. Though they die, yet shall they live.

And the one who lives and believes in him. Shall never die. And we thank you that that. That word that he spoke. Was demonstrated. On the third day.

When he rose from the dead. When the tomb was empty. And when he appeared to the disciples and to Peter. To tell them that he was alive.

And that their faith was not in vain. But that their faith was sure and certain. Because it was focused in on Christ. And so we thank you Lord for the promises of resurrection.

[10 : 47] We thank you that when we die. If we die in Christ. There is resurrection. We thank you for the comfort. Even as we think back on those. Whom we have loved and spent our lives with.

Who have gone now from time. Into eternity. Some in recent days. Some in past years. We thank you that you haven't left us ignorant. We don't have to wonder.

Where they are if they are in Christ. You have told us Lord. Clearly. That the souls go to be with the Lord in heaven. And there is coming a day.

When Jesus will return. And all will rise. And those who are in Christ. Will go to everlasting life. And Lord also those who are not in Christ.

Will go to everlasting death. And Lord we pray that you would. Help us to see. Things clearly. As we live in this world.

[11 : 42] Help us to see. The wonder of the grace. That's offered to us in Christ. Christ. And also the danger. And the awfulness. Of refusing that grace.

Of neglecting such great salvation. So we pray for any here today. Who may be still outside of Christ. Who may never have prayed that prayer. Lord have mercy on me.

A sinner. And we ask that even. In these moments of this service. That that prayer may go up. And it may be heard. That prayer that brings justification. That brings salvation.

That brings life. To any who truly cry out from their hearts. So Lord we ask for conversions. For salvation. We pray that you would sanctify us also.

Those who are in Christ. We often Lord. Confess as we have done this morning. That we are not like Jesus. And we pray that you would forgive us for that.

[12 : 39] We pray that you would sanctify us. By the truth of your word. And by the power of the Holy Spirit. That we may be made more like Jesus. So hear our prayers.

And help us Lord. In our hearts. Help us to know you. To trust you. To become like you. In the time that you have given us in this world. We pray for those who are struggling today.

We think of places far away from here. We think of what we see in our news broadcasts. The injustice. Man's inhumanity to man. We think especially of the Middle East.

That place where Jesus. The Prince of Peace walked. And yet we see such carnage. And such evil. And such destruction. And Lord we pray.

That you would intervene. We pray that you would bring peace. We pray that you would remove politicians. That are determined to give their energies to war.

[13 : 36] And we ask Lord that you would bring peace. And that you would open the eyes of all nations. And especially those in that place. That they would see Jesus. That he is the saviour.

That he is the redeemer. That he is the one who calls them. And us to come to him. And know life. We pray for our nation. A nation that has wandered far from you.

Even as we hear of the Christian Institute. And the work that they have to do. To try to bring us back to your word. We pray that you would help them Lord. And that you would help us as well.

As we seek to contend for the faith. As we seek to be faithful. To be salt and light. In a nation that has gone dark. And a nation that would seek to remove the salt.

Of your word. And so be at work Lord in our nation we pray. And be at work in our community. We ask Lord that you would be with all those in need.

[14 : 34] We are conscious of those who are grieving once more. And we ask Lord that you would comfort them. We pray for John Angus. Especially in the home in Lieberborough. As he tries to understand.

And as he mourns for the passing of his wife Helen. We thank you for her faith in Jesus. We thank you Lord for the life that there was in her heart. As we went to visit her.

We experienced that Lord. And we pray that you would comfort those who will miss her. We pray for her brother as well. Unlikely to be able to come up. And yet missing her.

And we commit that family to you. And ask that you would help. And we pray for those in the Roman Catholic community as well. Especially as they mourn for the passing of Father Roddy. Who spent time here. And we ask Lord that you would comfort them. And that you would draw near to them on this day. And we ask that you would be with those who are struggling with illness.

[15 : 33] Some who watch on screens today in their homes or at hospital. Minister to them we pray. Others who are too ill. And who are not able to concentrate.

Who don't have the energy to come. Even in the private place to worship. And yet we thank you that. Even when we're at our weakest. You're able to minister. In the power of the Holy Spirit. In ways that we cannot.

And so we have people in our mind's eye. And we bring them to you in prayer. And ask that you would help them. That you would meet them at the point of their need. We pray on for Mary Latham especially.

Mary Morrison. And we ask Lord that as she continues with tests. And as they look into possibilities of implants. We pray that you would help her.

That you would be with Connor. And all of the family. And we ask Lord that if it's your will. That you would bring back her hearing. That you would bring her back to full health. And strength.

[16 : 32] We pray for those who have addictions. Some who battle with drinks. Some who battle with drugs. Some who battle with other addictions. That may be hidden from everybody.

And we ask Lord that you would help them. And that you would help each one of us. We recognize that in every one of our hearts. The root of all addiction. The root of all idolatry.

Is sin. And all of us are sinners. So all of us are in need of your grace. So grant to us that grace we pray. That saves. That sustains. And help us now we pray.

To worship you. In spirit and in truth. We pray all this in Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen. Amen. Boys and girls. Would you like to come out please?

We are in danger today. The clock says 20 to 6. How are you all today? Good.

[17:33] Good. Good. Something to show you today. Tell me. Tell me. Do you recognize this? Yeah?

Finley. Do you know what this is? It's a sign. Exactly right. It is a sign. And do you know what it's a sign? What kind of a sign it is? What it tells us.

Go on Fraser. A learner driver. A learner driver. So where would you stick this? Would a learner driver. When they're learning to drive.

Would they stick it on their head like that? No. No. Cal. On the front of the car. Just the front. On the front.

Yeah. Definitely on the front. And probably also Fraser. On the back as well. So if you're driving along. And you see a car coming towards you.

[18:33] That's got L on the front. You know it's a learner driver. That's coming in your direction. And if you are going along. And there's a car in front of you.

That might be going a bit slower. Than usual. And it's got an L on it. You know that it's somebody who's learning. To drive. And so. You'd be a bit more patient with them. Wouldn't you?

Wouldn't you? Yeah. So. How long do you have to. Put L plates. On your car? How long do you have to leave them on for?

None of you are 17 quite yet. But when you're 17. And you start to learn to drive. You stick it on your car. So everybody knows. That you're a learner driver.

And then do you. If you're driving until you're 70. Or 80 or 90. Do you have to leave this on the car. Forever? No?

[19:34] So when does it come off? Finley? After that day. After that day. That's exactly right. And that day.

Is what day? Mackenzie tell us. What day is it? After your driving test. Do you know that. For the last few.

A couple of years. You've been here. Is it? Mackenzie. She can drive a car. But in America. They don't drive cars with sticks. So much. As they call it. They call it sticks.

For the gears. So. To drive a car. Over here. You have to do a special test. So that you can drive the car. With a stick. Because you know which gears to go into.

So Mackenzie. Had to do a test. And so for. For two years. She's driving around. With this. On her. Her car.

[20:31] And then. This week. What happened? Tell them what happened. You went. You weren't here. Are you working last? I went to Benbecula. She went to Benbecula.

Because that's one of the. The most built up places. In the country. And it helps you to. Navigate traffic lights. Round the boats. And filter lanes.

On motorways. So you went to Benbecula. And you did your test. It's actually a hard place to pass. Because you're doing more real driving. You're not just sitting about. So there's Mackenzie.

And she passed her test. Thank you. So now. You don't have to put.

L plates on your car. Anymore. Do you? So Mackenzie can drive the. The car. And. She doesn't need to have. These L plates on. Anymore. Now. Here's another question.

[21:29] Does that mean. Because the L plates. Have gone away. That Mackenzie knows. Everything about driving. And she's the best driver. In the whole world. Don't shake your head.

So bad Alistair. No. Do you think. She's still got things to learn. Yeah. Yeah. So even though. The L plates come off.

Then there's still. Things to learn. She's a good driver. I know she is. But there'll still be things to learn. Now. Listen to this.

Jesus. One day. Was speaking to some people. And. His disciples were there. And there was crowds there. And.

Jesus. He said. This. To the people. Who were around him. You listening. He said. Come to me.

[22:25] All. Who. Labor. And are heavy laden. That means basically. All who are tired. And who are a bit weary. And he said. I will give you rest.

Then he said. Take my yoke upon you. And that was a thing. That you. You use. A yoke was something. That you use. To. To teach horses. How to work properly. So he was using a picture.

Take my yoke upon you. He says. And listen to this. And learn. From me. For I am gentle. And lowly in heart.

And you will find rest. For your souls. Disciples of Jesus. Disciples of Jesus.

Those who. Have come to Jesus. Those who are. Trusting Jesus. Do you know what we are? We're learners. Because.

[23 : 22] Jesus. Says to us. And he said to them. Back then. Learn from me. So as we come to Jesus. As we listen to what he says to us.

In the Bible. And as we pray. And speak to Jesus. Then he says. He'll teach us. And we will learn. From him. So if you became a Christian. When you were. Eight. Or nine. Or ten. I was ten. When I became a Christian.

You could say. At that point. The L plates go on. And how long. Do you think. For disciples. The L plates.

Need to stay on. How long. How long. Will we be learning. From Jesus. Praise him. Forever. All through.

[24 : 17] Our lives. In this world. Jesus. Says to us. Learn from me. And he teaches us. About. Who he is. And how amazing he is.

And he teaches us. About. Who we are. And some of the things. That we get wrong. He teaches us. How to. To fix them. Some of the things. That we sometimes forget. Sometimes.

You know. The world. Sometimes. In our schools. Or with our friends. Or in our heads. We'll think things like. Oh nobody cares about me. I'm not special.

Nobody cares about me. And sometimes. We feel down. How we feel back up. We pick up our Bible. We listen to Jesus. And he teaches us.

How precious we are to him. And sometimes. We make a real mess of things. And our hearts feel really dark. And we feel tired. And weary. Because. We've tried to be good.

[25 : 12] And we've gone and done something bad again. And the devil comes along. And he says. You're finished. Your heart's so black. You're finished. We pick up our Bibles.

And we listen to Jesus. And he says to us. If you just ask for forgiveness. I'll make your heart. As white as snow. And sometimes.

We'll think. You know. If I come forward. At communion. If I. If I become a Christian. I'll never be able. To keep on going. The devil will say to us. You're right.

You won't. You'll make a big mess of it. And Jesus says. Don't worry about that. When I start a work in you. I'll always help you finish. You might go off for a while.

You might make a mess of things. We all do. But he teaches us. That he'll be with us. And he'll never leave us. He'll never forsake us. So all through this world.

[26 : 12] The L plates are on. And Jesus. He teaches us. As we spend time. With him. And then when we get to heaven. The L plates.

I think. I think at that point. They can come off. Because we're told. In the Bible. That when we get to heaven. We'll be like. Jesus. Perfectly. And that's an amazing thing.

So let's pray. Lord Jesus. We thank you. That you love us. And we thank you. That you call us. To come to you. And we thank you. That as we come to you.

You forgive our sins. You give us life. And you teach us. And we can learn. We can learn. To be more like you.

We can learn more about you. And we can learn amazing things. As we stay close to you. So help us to do that. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing now.

[27 : 08] And we're going to sing. The hymn on the screen. Speak oh Lord. As we come to you. And there's a line in that hymn. That says. That says. Yeah.

Take your truth. Plant it deep in us. Shape and fashion us. Make us. Like you. Shape and fashion us. In your likeness. So we'll stand. And we'll sing in just a moment. Sing oh Lord.

As we come to you. To receive the fruit. Of your holy word.

Take your truth. Take your truth. Plant it deep in us. Shape and fashion us. In your likeness.

And the light of Christ. Might be seen today. In our acts of love. And our deeds of faith.

[28 : 26] Speak oh Lord. And fulfill in us. For your purposes. For your glory.

Teach us. Lord. Full obedience. For your reverence. True humility.

Test our thoughts. And our attitudes. In the radiance.

Of your purity. For our faith. To rise. For our eyes. To see. Your majestic love.

saviour and we ask Lord that you would enable us in this time to indeed come to Jesus we thank you for what's above us and above the the platform on the on the screen the fact that we would we would desire to see Jesus we want to see Jesus we want to to hear Jesus and we ask Lord that the Holy Spirit himself would help us that all distractions that all that would distort our vision that would that would block us would be removed that we would indeed be able to come in faith to Christ we pray for the children Lord we thank you for them and we thank you for those in the creche and for those in the the Sunday school we thank you for those who come to to little fishes in the week for those who come through the the children's clubs on Fridays many of whom don't go to any church and we ask Lord that you would take hold of them that they would grow up knowing that you care for them that you love them and that you're calling them to to come to you and we pray that you would help us as we remember the disciples who were rebuked by Jesus being told don't don't hinder them from coming we pray that there would be nothing in our lives that would stop the children from coming to Jesus so we pray for them in Sunday school we ask that those who speak to them would be able to speak simply and clearly and with the help of your spirit and that these young ones would come we pray for every age though as well the middle-aged people with so many distractions so many pressures so many things that would cause them to to fail to prioritize seeking first your kingdom we pray that you would be working in in these lives also and for those who are getting tired for those who are struggling towards perhaps the end of life we ask Lord that you would be ministering to them that they would know your presence and your peace we pray for every denomination like us who opens your word who preaches Christ crucified and we ask Lord that you would be adding your blessing to your word that it would go forth in power and that many people here across the nation and across all nations today would be drawn to Jesus as he is lifted up so be at work Lord we pray help us to speak and to listen and to respond in a way that glorifies you and we ask all us in Jesus name Amen if you've got your Bibles open in front of you please you'll find that helpful I want to to begin today by by highlighting

one word that comes up I think four times in the first in these few verses that we read and it's the word follow it's the word follow so we can see in verse 19 Jesus said to Simon and Andrew follow me I will make you fishers of men immediately they left their nets and they followed him and then we fast forward to verse 22 and we see Zebedee not Zebedee's sons James and John and they've left their boats they've left their their nets and they're following Jesus and then fast forward a little more to verse 25 and there are great crowds and these great crowds followed Jesus from Galilee and the Decapolis as he did amazing things and so today I want to think about this this word follow and it's a word that's very familiar to us it's a word that we don't really need much help to try to grasp and understand there are some words that we we find in the Bible there are some words that we would use in in in Christian talk that have kind of dropped out of everyday vocabulary we see the word in verse 17 repent within church I think we would understand what it means to repent but if we go out into to just normal life and if we were to speak in a way that uses the word repent the majority of people I think would be clueless as to what that what that actually means it's not a word that we use in normal vocabulary but the word follow is a word that's familiar it's a word that's that's well used there are people who follow football teams I was coming back on Thursday through Glasgow and there was a whole lot of people who had blue football strips on and big smiles on their faces that was the early part of the day not so much in the in the later part of the day but they were followers of a particular team and people follow teams they follow the results they they follow their team to to different places all across the country even across the world to to give support and to to track progress or you can pick up a phone and um whether it's Instagram that you use or Twitter or X as it's called now or or Facebook uh there are all these people that are organizations uh there are groups and you can follow the group or you can follow the person you can follow the the profile and uh when they post something when they give an update uh on what it is they want you to see uh you're given a notification so that you won't miss it you're a follower the thing with with football teams and the thing with social media personalities and organizations is it's very impersonal and we follow but we follow at a distance we follow on our terms and if the people we follow were to pass us on the street we might see them we might recognize them they wouldn't have a clue who we are so there's different ways to follow and uh Matthew as he uh takes us here to the beginning of Jesus ministry and uh takes us into the introduction to the sermon on the mind uh he's teaching us what it means to follow Jesus so that's the that's the the theme for

[44 : 27] today what what does it mean to to follow Jesus and there's three points what does it mean to follow Jesus point number one is that that following Jesus means leaving there are things

there may be people there may be relationships there may be pursuits there are certainly sins and idols that we have to leave behind so following Jesus means leaving that's the first point uh the second point uh is following Jesus means more than just liking the way that we like something on social media we see a big crowd that like Jesus but following Jesus as disciples as those who are saved it means more than just liking and the last thing uh that we've touched on with the children this morning is following Jesus means learning learning from him takes us into that relationship uh with with him so first of all then uh following Jesus means leaving so verse 17 we'll just step through these few verses from that time says Matthew

Jesus began to preach saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand so just to recap just to go back over uh simple but important truths what does it mean to repent well to repent uh means to turn around it means to change your thinking it means to reconsider to repent uh means to change direction to repent means that uh we are to leave behind what it is that we were following in the past before we met Jesus we turn away from that we turn away from the the sin the idols the things that that had a grip on us as we turn in faith to Jesus it's a change in direction think about the apostle Paul on the Damascus road his life is consumed with actually opposing Jesus and hunting down to try to destroy the followers of Jesus and Jesus meets him

Jesus confronts him he's convicted of his sin and he repents so his whole life his whole life changes direction he about turns he does a 180 the rest of his life is a is a completely different direction but when I was a wee boy I was thinking back to a sermon that I heard a sermon that I heard um a man called Kaldi Dara preaching and that name will be familiar to to a lot of you who've been in faith mission conventions over the years Kaldi Dara was a was a small charismatic and personality sense an Irish man he was a little man but he had huge charisma he had huge personality and huge passion and I can see him still in Broadford Hall and I can hear him as he was preaching and he kept on repeating the words of of Jesus in Luke chapter 17 and verse 32 and it was just these three words remember Lot's wife remember Lot's wife remember Lot's wife remember Lot's wife that was Jesus sermon point remember Lot's wife and some of us will know the story it goes back to Genesis 19 Lot is a man who's in Sodom and that place was an evil place and that place was was going to be destroyed and so God sent angels to Lot to tell him and his family to leave that sinful place to turn away from it to repent and Lot did but his wife didn't want to leave she didn't want to change direction and because of that she was lost and so Jesus preached that sermon to those who were heading on the road for lostness and he says remember Lot's wife repent change direction from death to life from judgment to salvation and that's a picture of our salvation we're not in Sodom in that sense but we are we are born into this world and this world is sinful and we are told in Romans chapter 3 that we're all sinners none of us are righteous and God calls us to leave behind our sin to repent of our sin to confess it to ask Jesus to take our way and it's not until we determine in our wills to do that that we can begin to follow

Jesus we can't stay in our sin and determine that we will follow Jesus we have to leave that sin at the cross we have to come to Calvary we have to confess our sin we have to ask Jesus to take our way we have to repent there are things that we have to leave behind if we are going to follow Jesus so let me just hit pause there for a moment and ask have you repented and it's a question for all of us because repentance is all of life so for the person who professed faith 30, 40, 50 years ago have you repented this morning have you repented this week have I repented of the things that I know that I should have done that I haven't done the things that I shouldn't have done that I have done it's possible that there could be someone here who has never repented and who's still in sin and who's on a road to destruction whose destiny is hell if they were to die tonight because they have never confessed their sin they've never repented and the call of Jesus to you is remember

[51 : 35] Lot's wife repent the kingdom of heaven the kingdom of God is at hand the saviour is here repent following Jesus means leaving our sin he's confessing our sin and coming to him now as we look at Simon and Andrew and James and John we see them in verse 20 and they're leaving their nets and they're leaving their boats and they're following Jesus now we said before in all likelihood Simon and Andrew and James and John they probably already were trusting Jesus already they were repentant but Jesus comes to them and he calls them to follow him in a new way especially in a close way and the boats and the nets they were symbolic of an old life these men they spent their time with their boats they spent their time with their nets that was their lives and

Jesus was calling them to a new life a life with him and they heard the call and they left behind their boats they left behind their nets and they followed Jesus following Jesus for them in a particular

way it meant leaving leaving all these things that essentially were their lives like does that mean that we all have to hand in our notice and quit our jobs if we're going to be Christians if we're going to be proper disciples well no it doesn't for some of us we can be called to do that but most people are not called to leave behind their jobs to become ministers or missionaries but there may be things that we do there may be things that suck up all our time and use all our energy that we have to leave behind or at least cut back on if we are to be serious about following

Jesus are you and I serious about following Jesus like I said I met people on the streets of Glasgow on Thursday serious about following a team wearing the colours overflowing with excitement thinking about the prospect of this amazing event that was coming that evening it was very clear to see before you ever spoke to them that they were followers that they were serious in their following are you and I serious about following Jesus are we following him closely or are we just an hour on a Sunday you know 11 o'clock they'll hopefully quarter past 12 surely he's not going to get to 20 past is that is that the equation of our following

Jesus Sunday morning five minutes before we leave the house in the morning let's get this done in the rest of the week's hours what are we going to do on the Lord's day in the morning service maybe a third will be back what do we do with the day are we following Jesus what is it that stops me what is it that stops you from following Jesus is it over work is it just laziness is it a sinful habit is it an unhealthy relationship where we allow one person to be the focus of our whole world is it a love of money is it a fear of people is it an idol what is it that keeps me that keeps you at a distance from

Jesus what is it that we are failing to leave behind or at least cut back on in order that we can follow Jesus closely remember Jesus said to those who were considering following him count the cost it was costly for these disciples they left their boats they left their nets they left their business they left their father but that's what they had to do if they were going to follow Jesus following Jesus means leaving and only you and the Lord will know what he is calling you and I to leave if we are struggling with these things second point is following Jesus means more than liking again if we think about liking our minds tend to go in the first instance to social media don't they somebody writes an article that we agree with or if somebody composes a piece of music that moves us if somebody shares a picture or a video and it makes us laugh we like it we give it a thumbs up it doesn't cost us anything we just add our thumbs up to everybody else's thumbs up and if the piece gets enough likes if the music or the video gets enough approval online the person who posts it becomes famous goes viral and that's what was happening with Jesus he's verse 23 proclaiming the gospel the gospel the word gospel as you know it means good news so Jesus he's proclaiming he's speaking out he's heralding the good news and that was a contrast that was a new thing

[58 : 34] John the Baptist was a powerful preacher but John preached repentance John preached judgment but Jesus is preaching more than that he's preaching about salvation he's preaching about good news and the people they like the sound of that they like the way Jesus preached they like the things that he said they like that so there was crowds drawn whenever Jesus preached and verse 23 tells us that Jesus he was he was healing every disease and every affliction among the people and who wouldn't like that imagine we could come to someone and every disease every affliction every struggle would be healed with his touch who wouldn't like that and so there was crowds verse 24 his fame spread throughout all Syria and they brought him all the sick those afflicted with various diseases and pains those oppressed with demons epileptics paralytics and he healed them so the cries they liked

Jesus they liked his preacher they liked how powerful he was they liked that he could heal the sick they liked that he could bring peace of mind and freedom of heart to those who were afflicted and who were who were tormented so very quickly Jesus his teaching and his works they went viral great crowds verse 25 followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis and from Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan so here's the question were these crowds disciples Jesus is preaching it's gone from the wee gathering to vast crowds tens of thousands whole regions were there to listen to Jesus were they disciples and for the majority of the crowds the answer was no they weren't disciples and that will become increasingly clear as the gospel goes on because the same crowds that follow

Jesus at this point they would soon turn on him the same crowds that liked him would soon hate him and they would unite their voices and they would cry out crucify him get rid of him we don't want him and so the lesson for us in application here is that following Jesus means more than just liking

Jesus there are some people and they like to hear the gospel preached it's less of a thing now than it used to be but there are still some people and they like to come to church they like to hear the gospel preached they even have their favorite preachers and they'll say if it's such and such going to be preaching today I've come out for that one I really like him but they don't believe the message and they don't respond in faith which means that they're not saved not disciples and there are people still today similar to the crowds back in that day who have experienced the powerful loving healing touch of Jesus in an unmistakable way there are people who have seen a friend who have seen a family member healed miraculously and they recognize that

Jesus has heard and he's answered their prayers and they like that they like what Jesus did and yet they still don't believe they're still not saved they're still not disciples you know there's such a thing as a foxhole faith it's called you know the foxhole was the place that you would you would take cover for when the bullets were flying and there are some people when the bullets are flying when there's a crisis they come to Jesus for help and for rescue and for strength and for healing and for comfort and they get it because he's gracious but when the crisis is over and the bullets are no longer flying they're gone

I remember in the scene my old minister telling me about the birds in a storm when a storm is coming the birds will they'll go into the trees they sense it they know it they go into the trees and vast flocks of birds take refuge in these trees and the branches of the trees and they're there until the winds have ease and the storm has passed but once the storm has passed they're gone and that was the crowds they liked Jesus at least for now they did but they didn't believe in him they didn't come to him for healing of their hearts they didn't want him to be the saviour and the lord of their lives they didn't want him as king and Matthew is teaching us not to be one of the crowd following

[65:10] Jesus means more than liking him as part of a crowd so following Jesus means leaving we leave behind our sin we confess it we leave our idols we repent continually following Jesus means more than liking and the last thing is following Jesus means learning he said with the children it's pretty easy to spot a learner driver on the road because they've got the sign they have to tell us that they're learner drivers but what does it look like to be a learner disciple?

let's just finish by thinking for a moment or two about what it looks like to be a disciple what it looks like to be a learner disciple and we can crisscross the four gospels to get a high definition picture very simple picture but a clear picture on what it means to be a follower of Jesus Mark chapter 3 verse 14 I think it's a classic definition of what it means to be a disciple Jesus says in Mark 3 14 Jesus appointed 12 whom he also named apostles so that they might be with him so what's a disciple a disciple is someone who is with Jesus and not just from 11 till 12 on Sunday morning someone who is with Jesus continually the disciples can't learn from Jesus if they're not continually with Jesus so on day one Jesus calls Simon and Andrew and James and John to be with him and then as we see them in verses 18 to 22 they're still with him they're following him

Jesus says come they come they follow and so initially we see just Jesus and them there's four guys but now it's not just them and Jesus Jesus fame has spread in verse 24 there are great crowds chapter 5 verse 1 so how can we spot the disciples in these great crowds well look at verse 1 it says seeing the crowds Jesus went up on the mountain and Jesus sat down back in that context just as a small piece of information when a rabbi when a teacher began to preach he didn't stand up he sat down might work well actually if I sat down and everybody stood up there would be far less people sleeping especially in this heat so Jesus he sits down that was the sign that he's about to start teaching so what happened next once he sits down does everyone in the crowd go silent and does the whole crowd gravitate towards Jesus well no that's not what happened verse 1 seeing the crowds he went up on the mountain and when he sat down you see what it says his disciples came to him and it's a picture of John chapter 10 and verse 27 where Jesus says my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me so amongst the crowd of all these thousands we can spot the disciples because they want to be with Jesus their eyes are on

Jesus and they follow him up on the mountain and they hear his voice and they listen to him and the next thing that we see is that the disciples they have a desire to learn from Jesus he sits down to teach they want to be taught and it ties in with what we read in Matthew chapter 11 Jesus says come to me all who labor are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me so as Jesus sits down they come to him they listen to him and they want to learn from him and verse 2 says he opened his mouth and he taught them saying again and we are going to hit

pause there because we will get to the teaching next week and over the following weeks so to close what does a disciple look like what are the disciplines that you and I are to develop if we are to be disciples of Jesus well there's just two to finish I'll only take a minute number one come to Jesus and keep coming to Jesus that's how the Christian life begins we come to Jesus with our sin asking him to take it away we come to Jesus for life that's where it all begins maybe for somebody here today it needs to begin but it's also where it continues because we need to keep on coming to Jesus because we need his strength we need his grace the last question that those who come forward for communion have asked is this question do you promise depending on the grace of God to confess

[71 : 44] Christ to serve him and to walk in his ways all the days of your life how can you and I walk in the ways of Jesus all the days of our life the only way we can do it is if we are daily depending on the grace of God and we only get the grace of God as we come to Jesus daily so come to Jesus and learn from Jesus and for us that doesn't happen on a mountain as we hear the audible voice of Christ that happens in the Bible happens as we open the word of God it happens as we get on our knees and we speak to the son of God it happens as we come into church and we meet with the son of God as we come to and we come to him as we come to him as we learn from him there is rest for our souls

I heard the voice of Jesus say come unto me and rest are you hearing his voice and will you come and find rest in him we'll sing to conclude 275 mission praise the words are on the screen I heard the voice of Jesus say come unto me and rest lay down the weary heart lay down thy head upon my rest

I gave to Jesus as I was within a born and stand I found in him our resting place and he must make me glad I heard the voice of Jesus say behold thy faith he gave the living water thirsty one stood down and drank and there I gave to Jesus and I can for one I give in stream my thirst was crushed my soul revived and now

I live in him! I heard the voice of Jesus say I am this God world's light look round to me thy morn shall rise and all thy days be bright I look to Jesus and thy flower in him my star I slough and in the light of life I walk till traveling caves I cross and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen