

24.3.24 am

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Date: 24 March 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0:00] Good morning everyone. A warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see a few visitors with us as well and you're especially welcome. The intimations have been on the screen. I'll just take a moment to go through a few of them before we begin.

The first is to say tea and coffee are served after the service, so everyone's welcome, especially those who are visiting. If you're able to stay behind, please do stay behind. It would be good to get a chance to meet and enjoy fellowship together.

Evening service tonight at 6, 6-7 as we continue through Ecclesiastes and the YF will meet from half past 7, half past 8 as usual.

Tomorrow there is a community lunch. The monthly community lunch is from 12 till 2. That's tomorrow, so please note that. And then in the course of the week as usual, Ladies' Fellowship, Little Fishers, Road to Recovery and the prayer meeting, normal times and the normal places. You'll see from the information that I'm due to be on holiday from the 29th of March. That's this coming Friday through till the 8th of April, so that will be two Sundays.

[1:12] And in the course of that time, if you're looking for any pastoral support, please speak to one of the elders in the first instance. And Ian McCritchie, who we know well, is on the end of the phone and not far away if anybody needs a minister during that time.

The services next Sunday will be taken in the morning by Stuart. And Stuart will take the morning service. He'll also lead the fellowship at half past 7, the monthly fellowship.

And the Gaelic service will be at 6. And that will be taken by the Reverend Donald McDonald. One correction, actually. It says there on Friday there are clubs for young people.

I don't think there'll be Jam or Connect. There is Jam and Connect. Jam and Connect are on this Friday, so please note that. But Rooted, there is one correction at least. Rooted is not on this Friday.

Rooted is breaking now until later in the year. The exam season is upon us and the football season is upon us, so we tend to find there are not so many of the teenagers who are around on Friday evenings.

[2:27] So Rooted will finish just now and it will resume later in the year. YF, however, will continue right through, so please note that. The other things to note, two more things.

We're still looking for accommodation for Scott and Fiona and family. They are looking into a few possibilities just now. But please, if you're aware of a property or have a property that might be of interest, please come and speak to me and I'll pass your details on to Scott.

And the final thing, we looked at this on Wednesday evening. Nigel Kenny, the Christian Institute, is asking that we consider responding to the Scottish Government's public consultation on the conversion practices ban.

So if you want more information on that, please speak to me at the end of the service and I can give you the link and the information. These, I think, are all the notices.

So let's begin this time of worship and we'll sing to God's praise. We'll sing from the hymn. It's a paraphrase of one of the Psalms, Psalm 104, I think. And it's the hymn that's not in the book, but it's on the screen.

[3:39] Bless the Lord, O my soul. And we'll stand to sing in just a moment. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O my soul. Worship this holy name. Sing like never before.

O my soul. I'll worship your holy name. The sun comes up with the new day dawning.

It's time to sing your song again. Whatever it was and whatever lies before me.

And we'll be singing when the evening comes. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

[4 : 48] O my soul. Worship this holy name. Sing like never before. O my soul.

I'll worship your holy name. You rich in love and you're slow to anger.

Your name is great and your heart is kind. For all your goodness. For all your goodness I will keep on singing.

Ten thousand reasons for my heart is kind. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Oh, my soul. Worship this holy name. Sing like never before.

[5 : 44] Oh, my soul. I'll worship your holy name. And on that day when my strength is fading.

The end draws near and my time has come. Still, my soul. I'll sing your praise. I'll sing your praise unending.

And on that day when my strength is fading. Ten thousand years and then forevermore. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Oh, my soul. Worship this holy name. Sing like never before.

Oh, my soul. I'll worship your holy name. I'll worship your holy name.

[6 : 40] I'll worship your holy name. Let's unite our hearts in prayer.

Let's pray. Our heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day.

And we thank you for the fact that you have called us to this place to worship your holy name. And we acknowledge, Lord, with thanksgiving that you are the God who is worthy of our worship.

You are the God who is holy, the God who is pure. You are the God who is our creator, who sustains us day by day. And you are the God who has saved us from the curse of sin that came in to this world through Adam.

We look back to the Garden of Eden and we see how everything broke down as Adam and Eve turned away from you. As they ceased to trust you and looked to the enemy of our souls, the destroyer.

[8 : 03] And, Lord, we know that ever since then, ever since sin first came in, we have followed in Adam's footsteps. And we have failed in the things often that we have tried to do, which are good.

And we have struggled, Lord, with every part of righteous living. We will come today to read the Beatitudes.

And as we read the Beatitudes, we see how far short we fall of your standard. Your standard, Lord, is sinlessness.

And as we look in the mirror of your word and as we see ourselves, we know that we fall short in so many ways. But we thank you that you have not left us in that hopeless state.

We thank you that another Adam came, the last Adam came. Jesus, to do everything that the first Adam could not do. We thank you that Jesus lived that perfect, righteous life.

[9 : 09] We thank you that he did not yield to temptation. We thank you that he did not listen to the enemy of our souls, but he went to war with the enemy of our souls.

He came to undo, to destroy the works of the devil. We thank you for the cross that we must never drift from, but that we focus on in a special way over this Easter week.

And we thank you that on the cross, Jesus went to die to pay the punishment for our sin. We thank you that he took the curse of our sin from us into his body on the tree.

And we thank you that as we believe in him, his righteousness, his perfection is given to us by grace. And this is where our hope is.

We do not come in our own name today, but we come in the name of Jesus. We don't come asking that you will accept us on the basis of the things that we do and don't do.

[10 : 12] But we come asking that you will accept us on the basis of all that Jesus has already done for us. The Savior died and rose again, triumphant over the grave and pleads our cause at God's right hand, omnipotent to save.

We ask, Lord, that every one of us would look in faith to Jesus, the Savior. That we would receive that salvation and that we would know the hope of the eternal life that Jesus promises to all who believe in him.

We thank you for this, this large day. The day that we remember that the tomb was empty. The day that we remember that the work of salvation was finished.

And we thank you that as we believe, as we come to Jesus, we have that salvation of soul. We have that sure and certain hope.

We have forgiveness of sin. We have hope for today. We have hope for tomorrow. We have hope for eternity. So help us, we pray, not to neglect such great salvation.

[11 : 18] Not to come near to Jesus, as the crowds did, but then turn away. But we ask, Lord, that we would believe, that we would be saved, that we would be disciples of Jesus.

And that we would know the blessing that comes from being in Christ. We pray, Lord, that you would be with all those who are struggling today.

We thank you for the hope of eternal life. And we thank you that that hope brings us such comfort, especially when we are in the face of death so often. And as we think of those who are grieving, we bring them to you, Lord, and we ask that you would comfort them.

And we thank you for the comfort that there is in Jesus. And so for those who grieve, Lord, we ask that you would draw near to them. We pray for Janangus in the home in Leverborough as he grieves for the passing of Helen.

We thank you for her faith in Jesus. And we pray for Janangus that you would comfort him, that you would uphold him, that you would strengthen him. And we pray that your blessing would be upon him and all who are in the home there in Leverborough.

[12 : 27] And also those who are in the home here in Tarbird. We pray for Harris House. And we thank you, Lord, for these places. For the care that's administered in these places. And for the gospel witness that there still is so brightly in both these homes.

Bless them, Lord, we pray. We pray for others who are grieving. We pray for Mags and for her mum, Angusina, as they mourn for a brother who has passed now from time into eternity.

And we ask, Lord, that your comfort would be given to them, that they would know your presence and your peace. And for all others, Lord, who mourn. We know that as death comes, there is that initial sting, but there is pain for years to come.

And we thank you, Lord, that you are the God who binds up the brokenhearted. And so we ask, Lord, that you would be working in the lives of those that we bring to you. We pray on for those who are ill.

Those who would desire to be with us. And those who are with us, in a sense, as they watch in their homes. Bless them where they are. But we pray for strength for those who are recovering.

[13 : 39] We think of Angus Alec. We think of Neil Cameron. And we think of others like them, who come into our mind's eye. And we ask, Lord, that you would bless them and that you would minister to them in their homes.

And that you would increase their strength. That they may be able to be amongst us again soon. We pray for all who are struggling today. Whether it's bugs. Whether it's colds. Whether it's recovering from procedures in hospital.

And we ask that you would be close to them where they are. And, Lord, that they would be back with us again soon. We thank you for the encouragement that we receive from coming into your presence.

And also the encouragement that we receive from being with each other as we join together in worship. We pray for those in hospital and those who are not likely to come out of hospital.

Those who may be struggling with illness and have no prospect of physical recovery at this time. We can think of some, Lord, in our minds.

[14 : 40] And we bring them to you in prayer. And ask that you would be working in their hearts to give peace. And to give grace. And we pray for families who struggle through difficult times in hospital wards.

And we ask, Lord, that you would uphold them also at this time. Pray for those who wait for results. We think of Mary Latham as she continues to get treatment.

As she gets injections. And as she meets with consultants about hearing. We ask that if it's your will, Lord, that you would open her ears. That you would give her her hearing back.

And we pray, Lord, that you would continue to increase her strength. We thank you that her physical strength is increasing. And we ask that you would keep her bright.

And looking to you. And we pray for those not only in our community. And those connected with us by family links. Pray for those who are distant from us.

[15 : 36] We think of Princess Kate. You have called us, Lord, to remember. And to pray for all those in authority over us. And we pray for her as she struggles with the treatment that she's having at this time.

And as the media focus is intensely there so often. We ask that she would look to you. And that she would know your hand upon her at this time.

We thank you for the Queen. Who, in her lifetime, took many opportunities to point people to Jesus. And, Lord, we ask that Kate and all those in authority.

Whether in government, national, international. Even local here. Our counsellors, Lord, that they would be looking to you. And that they would be pointing others to you. Using the positions that you've allowed them to have.

To bring people to Jesus. And to give us the peace to be able to worship. So hear our prayers. Continue with us in this time. Help us to worship you in spirit and in truth.

[16:42] Be working in our hearts, we pray. Opening our eyes. That we would see Jesus. Unblocking our ears. That we would hear the voice of Jesus. And touching our hearts.

That our hearts would burn within us. Even as we hear the words of Jesus in scripture. And we ask all these things together. With the forgiveness of all our sins. In Jesus' name.

And for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come out, please? Come on, Aweba.

It gets, it's interesting as time goes on. When you see boys and girls come forward. I can see boys and girls who used to come forward and they don't come forward anymore because as the years go on and as you go up from P7 and S1 and all these kind of things, you start to think, will I go forward?

Will I not go forward? I'm not sure if I'll go forward. I think I'll stay in my chair. But you guys have come forward and that's good. It's nice to see others who are sitting in their chairs.

[18:06] But sometimes when you stay sitting in your chair, you miss out. Who knows what these are?

Finley? Chocolate eggs. Do you know what kind of eggs they are especially? Michael? They're cream eggs. And I'm giving you, well, I'm giving you these but these are not actually from me. Somebody else bought these and they wanted to give them to you as a gift. Because it's Easter time, isn't it? And at Easter time, we do tend to have eggs, we get eggs, we give eggs. And normally when we have Easter eggs, they're the big ones. What's inside them? Big eggs. Michael? Nothing. So you get these big eggs. They look huge. And you think, this is going to be amazing, this big egg.

[19:15] But once you smash it, it doesn't take long for the big egg to disappear, doesn't it? But there's a lesson in the big egg that's got nothing inside it. Because what does it remind us of?

For those of you that rooted on Friday night, Joyce was doing the wee message there. And she was telling us that, well, think about the eggs.

Big eggs. Inside them, there's nothing. Can you think about Easter? And can you think about something that had nothing inside it? Think about Easter Sunday morning.

Remember the ladies, they went down to see if they could see Jesus' body. They went to the tomb. And what did they find inside the tomb? Did they find Jesus?

No. So the tomb was empty, wasn't it? So when you get your big eggs at Easter time, you smash them open, and you look inside, and there's nothing.

[20:24] That reminds you of the fact that inside the tomb, Callum, was Jesus there? No, it was empty. So when you're enjoying the shell of the eggs, and you're seeing the fresh air, the nothing that's inside them, you can maybe say a wee prayer and give thanks for the fact that the tomb was empty.

That on the third day, Jesus, he rose from the dead just as he promised. Remember, Jesus went to the cross. Why did he go to the cross? Michael?

To take away our sins. To take away our sins. So when we... Put your hand up, you're a sinner. We all sin, don't we?

And when we sin, we feel bad about it, and we can feel that weight of sin. And if we want to have our sins forgiven, because Jesus went to the cross, how do we have our sins forgiven?

We just pray. So we can come in here this morning and have a guilty conscience and be thinking about all kinds of things that we did and that we didn't do. It feels like a weight on us.

[21:40] And all we have to do is pray from our hearts and say, Lord Jesus, thank you that you are the Savior. Thank you that you went to the cross.

Thank you that you went to pay the punishment for my sin. Please take away my sin. And if we pray that, and we mean that, all our sins, all the weight is taken away.

So we can come in the door feeling heavy and feeling sad because of sin. We can walk out the door or we can be sitting in a chair still. And after we've prayed, the weight's gone.

Our sins are gone. And we can be happy. So, the big eggs, they've got nothing inside them and it reminds us of the fact that Jesus, he wasn't inside the tomb.

And that's good news. As Joyce was telling you on Friday night, some of you. These little eggs. Is there anything inside them?

[22 : 49] What's inside them? Finley. It's like cream. Is it just like cream from a milk bottle? What kind of cream is it? Super, Michael?

I think it might have a wee bit of sugar in it. Yeah? Yeah? Yeah? Definitely has some sugar in it. I don't know what's in it. I'm too frightened to read the ingredients. But what I do know is that it's delicious, amazing, beautiful, tasty cream.

So, inside this egg, there's something amazing. And, I'm going to give you this egg in just a second. You're going to take them away with you. All you guys who came down to the front, look at these big children sitting in the chairs, so big and so grown up and so hungry. What's the lesson from this?

Inside this, delicious cream, amazing stuff when you're eating the inside of this. And, you know, actually, the tomb that the ladies came to try and find Jesus' body in, it was empty of the body.

[24 : 00] but it was actually full of something else. And do you know what it was full of? This is an interesting question.

I'm wondering what answer you're going to give, Michael. It's full of forgiveness, yes. So, actually, the word I was thinking about is it was full of hope because Jesus said, because I live, you too will live.

And because Jesus not only died to take our sin away, but he rose from the dead, he promised that everybody who believes in him, they will have life that lasts forever.

And so, even this week, some of us, we've we've been here, we've been in other churches, we've had funeral services, and it's always sad when we lose somebody that we loved.

But when that person believes in Jesus, there's hope that lasts forever. Because there's life that lasts forever in him.

[25 : 16] So, think about that tomb. Empty of Jesus' body, but full of hope. So, when you're eating your cream eggs, that's another prayer you can thank God for.

Thank him for the amazing, everlasting life and hope that we have if we believe in Jesus. And the main thing this morning, boys and girls, is to make sure that you believe in Jesus.

So, we'll pray. Lord God, we thank you for this day. We thank you that it's Sunday, it's the Lord's day, and it's the day that we remember that Jesus not only died, but he rose from the dead.

And we thank you for the everlasting hope, the everlasting life that we have if we're believing in him.

So, we pray that the boys and girls here and those who are older as well, that all of us would believe in Jesus so that we would know that we have hope every day in this world.

And when we come to the end of our time in this world, we pray that because we believe in Jesus, we would not perish, but have everlasting life.

[26 : 32] So, we pray all these things in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, do you want to come and get your eggs? Come on, guys.

One left there. And look, there's another whole box of them over here. Farrakhan, you're not allowed to sit down on the floor. I'm sure we can pass them on.

We're going to sing again to God's praise. We'll sing the words on the screen. What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer? What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer?

There is no more for heaven now to give. He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom, my steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus, for my life is only bound to end.

[28 : 09] Oh, how strange and divine I can sing, all is mine, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

Night is dark, but I am not forsaken, for by my side, for by my side, the Savior, he will stay.

I labor on in weakness and rejoicing, for in my need, his power is displayed.

To this I hold, my shepherd will defend me, through the deepest body he will lead.

Oh, the night has begun, but I shall overcome, yet not I, but the Christ in me.

[29 : 09] Oh, the night has begun, I know I am forgiven, the future sure, the price it has been paid.

For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon, and he was raised to overthrow him in.

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated, defeated. Jesus, now, and ever is like me.

Oh, the chains are released, I am saying, I am free, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[30 : 09] With every breath I long to follow Jesus, for he has said that he will bring me home.

And day by day I know he will renew me, until I stand with joy before the throne.

To this I hold my own misery, Jesus, all the glory evermore to him.

When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

[31 : 14] Okay boys and girls, have you had your songs? And remember to pray for them as they go.

And let's turn in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 5, please. Matthew chapter 5, we'll read verses 1 to verse 12.

This is God's word. Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

[32 : 45] Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Amen.

And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again to God's praise. The first two stanzas, the first two verses of Psalm 1. That man hath perfect blessedness, that walketh not the stray, in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinners' way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night.

These two stanzas of Psalm 1. We sing in Gaelic, and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic. Thank you.

We sing in Gaelic.

[34 : 43] We sing in Gaelic.

We sing in Gaelic. CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS to the passage that we read in Matthew chapter 5.

Let's pray as we go there again. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you that we have the opportunity and the freedom and hopefully the desire to meditate upon your word in the time that we have before us just now.

We pray, Lord, that you would meet with us and that you would speak to us, that you would comfort us, challenge us, guide us, direct us, convict, Lord, convert, sanctify us under the truth, the instruction of your word, we pray.

[37 : 42] Be at work, Lord, in this place and be at work in our hearts, be at work. We ask, Lord, in the congregations around us as well the different denominations, wherever Christ crucified is preached, we ask, Lord, that you would be moving in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And we ask, Lord, that you would be working in the lives of the young ones as well, that as they grow up, that they would not walk astray, but that they would know the blessing of having Jesus as their Lord and as their Savior.

So we pray for these wee ones in the creche, those in the church as well here, and those in Sunday school. And those who are not in any church as well, but who come to jam and connect and rooted and little fishes, we thank you that there is that contact.

And we ask that these ones too would grow up knowing that Jesus loves them and that Jesus calls them and calls us to come to him for that blessing that we can find in no other place.

So hear our prayers. Help us, Lord, as we bow before you. And we ask all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Over the last few weeks, we've enjoyed good preaching, mainly because I've not been preaching that much.

[39 : 05] We've had a good variety of preaching. We've heard Ronnie Morrison from Uist. We heard Kenny I over the communion weekend as well. We heard Ian McCritchie last Sunday night.

And it's good to hear sermons from different people. It's refreshing to hear the same truth, the same gospel message coming from different people.

And as we move in Matthew's gospel into chapter 5, what we have here in the early part of chapter 5, well, through chapter 5 into chapter 6 as well, is we have a record of a sermon of Jesus, which is an amazing thing to think about.

We should pause just to think about that. We have here on record, we have here in print, a sermon of Jesus.

I mean, I like to read sermons of Spurgeon and Martin Lloyd-Jones and Robert Murray McShane and various people from from hundreds of years ago.

[40 : 22] And it's precious to have these sermons documented from people who preached centuries ago and yet the truth remains unchanged. But how amazing is it to have this sermon of Jesus documented and in our hands before us this morning.

Think about the fact that God the Son climbed the pulpit steps which he himself had formed, that being the mountain that he spoke into being.

And he began to preach a sermon. And note here, as we did last Sunday morning, Jesus, he preaches to his disciples and they're the ones who come to him.

And that's one indication that God is working within us. He's calling us to be a disciple. Or it's an indication that we are disciples in good health.

We listen to the words of Jesus. When the Bible is opened, when people stand up to preach, we don't just go to sleep. We don't start to plan out the next week in the office or out on the sea or whatever it is we are.

[41 : 47] There's a sense of expectation. We come. And as Jesus sat down, verse 1, his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth and he taught them, verse 2.

So how does this sermon begin? Well, this sermon begins with a call to happiness. The first point here and the first point in the sermon, the recurring point in this sermon that Jesus preaches is he's calling his disciples to happiness, to blessing.

blessing. The word that jumps off the page if we're scanning down through the first part of Matthew 5 is the word blessed.

Between verse 3 and verse 11, the word blessed is repeated nine times. So what does blessed mean?

Well, the Greek word is the word makarai, which means, I'm no Greek scholar, but the Greek scholars tell me that it means to be, it means to be happy.

[43 : 06] In the strong literal concordance, the translation that gives to the word blessed is to be happy or to be envied, to have something that other people see that they want.

blessed. One commentator, Green, says, blessed means made happy by God. And the scholars will rightly argue that the word means more than that.

There's more packed into this word than just happiness. But it certainly doesn't mean less than that. Disciples of Jesus are called to be happy.

Warren Weerspey, the commentator, says, Imagine how the crowd's attention was riveted on Jesus when he uttered his first word, blessed.

Happy. Blessed, says Weerspey, implied an inner satisfaction and sufficiency that did not depend on outward circumstances for happiness.

[44 : 17] happiness. This is what the Lord offers to those who trust him. So let's note that from the outset.

Jesus came into this world to offer deep otherworldly happiness to those who, because of the curse of sin had lost happiness.

If we were to rewind to the end of the Old Testament, remember there's a huge space of time, hundreds of years between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. So we were to rewind back to the end of Malachi and if I was to ask you the question, what's the last word in the Old Testament? Do you know what the last word is? It's the word curse.

Malachi chapter 4 verse 6, the last word in the Old Testament is curse. Sin had brought a curse into this world but now Jesus, the saviour of sinners, had come.

[45 : 37] Matthew's recording the coming of Jesus into this world and what was Jesus offering to those who believed in him? He was offering blessing. So this was a call to happiness.

Now if we were to head out with a microphone and a little recorder to do one of these surveys that the news broadcasters do, you know, the man in the street, what do they think about this and that and the next thing?

If we were to go out onto the streets of Glasgow or London or Edinburgh or even Tarbert and ask the question, what are Christians like? Describe what Christians are like.

Give us some words that give us a good picture of what Christians are actually like. I wonder what the top answer would be. I'm not sure the top answer in the description of Christians would be happy.

remember the Reverend I Am Jolly? He would pop up in the TV shows at New Year time and yes, he was a caricature.

[46 : 52] He was an exaggerated version of the man with the dog collar but every caricature has a seed of truth in it. The Reverend I Am Jolly was only funny because he connected with what we knew to be real.

And that's not the way Christians should be. Jesus called his disciples to a blessed happy life. And true heart happiness is only found in knowing Jesus.

it's only found in trusting Jesus. It's only found in following Jesus. This world will not make us happy in any lasting way.

That's the truth. Yes, there are flashes of happy. Friday night photographs. They look happy in the snapshot.

Saturday morning, not so much. The devil's lie is don't follow Jesus yet because following Jesus will cause you to miss out on years of being happy.

[48 : 19] But the truth is we can't be happy. We can't be truly heart happy without Jesus.

And he calls us to come to him. So the first thing in this sermon, the first and recurring point in the sermon is that there is a call to happiness.

There's a call to blessing. The second point in the structure that we're thinking this morning is there's a combination to happiness.

There's a call to happiness and secondly there's a combination, there's a code you could say to happiness. Jesus he calls his disciples to a happy blessed life as they follow him.

But what does happiness actually look like? What does that kind of happy life look like? Are we getting into the realms of prosperity teaching, of health, wealth, happiness?

[49 : 18] happiness? Well, we don't have to read too far down in the text to realize that happiness is not always what this world would perceive to be happiness.

happiness? If we were to ask the question generally, what does a happy life look like? People would probably say, well, you know, a life where I and the people that I love are healthy all the time. that would make me happy. A happy life is a life where I'm safe and there's security and there's no violence, there's no threat of attack, that would make me happy.

A happy life is a life where I've got enough money to trade in the little Volkswagen up and get a brand new Golf GTI, that would make me happy. happy life is a life where we can afford to sort of shoot off to the sun for two or three weeks at a time and have a nice house and have enough money to pay all the bills.

That makes me happy, that's the perception of happiness in this world's thinking. But is that the kind of life that Jesus promises? Or to put it another way, what is the combination, what is the secret code to happiness?

[50 : 44] Well, as we step through the Beatitudes, we can see that it's not what we might expect. So what I'd like to do in the next few minutes is just step through the verses of the Beatitudes.

We'll fly over the Beatitudes at 30,000 feet. So let's just step through them at verse 3. Jesus says, blessed, happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke in his parallel account in Luke chapter 6, he actually sharpens the contrast even more. He says, blessed are you who are poor. Now back then, and still today, there is the perception that happiness is found in being rich.

rich. But it isn't. So Jesus says to them, and Jesus says to us, stop chasing riches.

Happiness is not about being rich. Rather, happiness is actually about being poor. Poor in spirit. So what does it mean to be poor in spirit?

[52 : 05] Well, it means that we know that we are sinners. It means that we know that we miss the mark. The poor in spirit will very readily sing the line of that hymn, Rock of Ages, nothing in my hands I bring.

I've got nothing to offer. nothing to offer. nothing to offer. nothing to thy cross I claim. So blessing, happiness begins when we realize that we are sinners who need Jesus to be our savior. savior. And there is no one in the kingdom of heaven and no one who will ever get into the kingdom of heaven who denies that. But there's no one who will be locked out of the kingdom of heaven who believes that.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who know they're sinners. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Do you know that you're a sinner? Do you confess that you're a sinner?

Do you come to Jesus to ask him to be your savior? Verse 4, the second beatitude, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

[53 : 41] And again, this just sounds wrong. How can we be happy if we're sad? Well, Jesus says there's actually, you can't be happy unless you first become sad.

See, when we realize that we are sinners, when we realize that we are poor in spirit, it does make us sad. And so we mourn for our sin.

The sin that grieves God the Holy Spirit. sin that caused the Father to send the Son into this world, to suffer and to die for us.

The sin that made it necessary for Jesus to go to the cross because there was no other way to save us. When we realize that we are sinners and when we see the effect of our sin, we mourn and we repent.

we confess that sin. And when we confess that sin, there is promised comfort. So we are poor in spirit and we mourn.

[55 : 00] We confess our sin. And if we do that, if we repent, there's comfort. David the psalmist in Psalm 32, he speaks very graphically about that.

David, he was one of God's people, but he had fallen into sin. And for a year, he's hanging on to sin.

He refuses to confess his sin. He refuses to repent and misery overtakes him. And then he confesses his sin.

he repents. And he speaks about the blessing, the happiness that floods his soul. Can I ask this morning, is there anybody here today who is refusing to repent?

Is there anybody here today who is refusing to confess sin? Whether it's the first time or whether we're years down the line as Christians and we've got stuck?

[56 : 13] You know, it's a sad place to be in. And it's a dangerous place to be in when we refuse to mourn for our sin, when we refuse to confess our sin, when we refuse to repent.

repent. You know, we can either mourn for our sin today and receive comfort today as we come to Jesus, or we can refuse to mourn today, we can refuse to confess, we can refuse to repent, and there will be no end to our mourning in the life to come.

There'll be no comfort forever. We will mourn over sin. The question is, when will we mourn over our sin?

If we mourn today, if we confess today, if we repent today, there is blessing, there is forgiveness, there is happiness. Verse 5, third beatitude, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. What does it mean to be meek? J.C. Ryle helps us out and says, Jesus means those who are of a patient and contented spirit. They are willing to put up with little honour here below.

[57 : 42] They can bear injuries without resentment. They are not ready to take offence. That's meekness. happiness. And this is so different to what this world would call happiness.

To wait patiently for what we don't yet have is happiness, says Jesus. To be content with what we have today, to not need others to continually honour us and affirm us, that's happiness, says Jesus. happiness. To not spend our lives being continually offended over things that are trivial. To be ready sometimes to take a hit for Jesus, say, that's meekness.

It's not weakness, it's meekness. And Jesus says there's blessing for those who will be meek. there's happiness for those who will live that way.

And to be meek is to be like Jesus. There's very few times where Jesus describes himself, but the notable time where Jesus describes himself is Matthew chapter 11 and at verse 29 and he says in that verse, I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest for your souls.

[59 : 19] And that's if we come to him. So Jesus says, blessed happier the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. The meek might actually not get very much in the world today, but the meek, will not be short changed in the new heavens and the new earth.

Psalms 37 and verse 11 says, the meek will inherit the land. That's the future hope. And until then, the meek get happiness, bless them, as they follow Jesus.

Verse 6, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. The old cliched refrain from the Rolling Stones song speaks into the hunger and thirst of this world.

I've often quoted it. Jagger sings probably in his most famous song, I Can't Get No Satisfaction.

He's got money, he's got fame, he's got anybody he wants.

He's got the adulation of this world, and he sings this song from his heart, I Can't Get No Satisfaction, and I try, and I try, and I try. Jesus says there is satisfaction, there is blessing, there is happiness, there is joy, when we hunger and thirst for righteousness.

[61 : 06] When we have an appetite to live a holy life, the holy life, the life that we sang of in Psalm 1, the life where we don't walk astray from the Lord.

It's not a miserable life, it's a happy life. And of course, we'll never be in this world what we want to be.

Very often with Paul in Romans 7, we'll be lamenting what we're not, we'll be confessing our failures, our lack of holiness. But when we're striving to be like Jesus, there's joy in that, there's happiness in that, there's blessing in that.

And we have the promise that when we go from this world, although we are not what we want to be in this world, when we go from this world, we will be like Jesus.

And there will be everlasting satisfaction then. 1 John 3, 2 says when he appears, Jesus appears, we shall be like him. Because we shall see him.

[62 : 16] as he is. Take that word as a word of encouragement this morning when we feel what we are not, when we are so conscious of how different we are to how Jesus is.

Battle on through Romans 7 territory, knowing that in the end, the work that God has begun, he will complete, we will be like Christ.

Verse! 7, blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Here's another part of the code, the combination to happiness, we're to be merciful.

Now, in every place, at every time, there are people who have been wronged, who have been offended, who have been hurt by someone, and because of the hurt they feel, they will not show mercy, and they will not offer forgiveness.

And that often leads to a life that becomes increasingly sad and bitter. Now, for the Christian, and Jesus, remember, he's speaking to disciples here, he's speaking to his people, for those who are Christians, when we think about our lives, we have committed numerous offenses against God.

[63 : 48] You and I have grieved the Holy Spirit repeatedly, and yet in Christ, as we come to him, as we confess our sin, what does he do?

He shows us mercy. There's not a day that I don't need mercy. mercy. There's not a day that I don't receive mercy as I come to Jesus and receive forgiveness.

And so Jesus says to me, and he says to every Christian, you need to show mercy. You need to forgive. And there's happiness that is blessing in doing so.

It's not an easy life, this. But it is a happy life. And I can imagine some will rage against this teaching and remain sad.

But Jesus offers happiness to those who will take him at his word and seek to live this life showing mercy, showing forgiveness, showing grace, as he helps us to.

[65 : 14] Verse eight, we're getting there, we're almost there. Blessed are the pure in heart, says Jesus, for they shall see God. Now remember, as Jesus preached, the crowds began to draw in.

And part of that crowd were the religious leaders. They were becoming increasingly alarmed by the attention that Jesus was getting. The religious leaders, they were pure externally.

They had a form of religion that was very marked and was very noticeable, but their hearts were far from pure. And when God the Son stood before them and preached to them, they couldn't see him.

They couldn't hear him. Because of their hearts. You know, it's only those who trust in Jesus, it's only those who ask for Jesus to purify their hearts, who can see God, and who can know blessing.

Verse nine, blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. It's very easy to be a troublemaker, isn't it? Especially in a wee village, especially in a small church community, it's very

easy to stir the pot, it's very easy to pass on a juicy bit of gossip that will bring no end of trouble, and no end of sadness.

[66 : 50] But if we want to bring blessing, if we want to bring a no happiness, if we want to be like Jesus, our calling is to be peacemakers, not troublemakers.

So can I ask, is there someone you can make peace with today? Is there a situation where there's trouble, and you're aware of it, and you know that there's something that you can do to bring peace, even if it's costly, even if it involves meekness, and showing mercy?

Is there something, is there someone that you can go to in order to bring peace? Do it, says Jesus. There's blessing in being a peacemaker.

The last beatitude, verses 10 to 12, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. So as I read these last three verses, my mind went from here, far away to a part of India, Kerala, that I was visiting 10 years ago, probably now plus.

[68 : 29] And the place I went to, we went to see a little class of guys who were studying for the ministry. They were guys in their late teens and they had come from the north of India to the south of India, to a wee seminary it was called, I mean it was just a cave.

They shared one computer, a few pens and bits of paper, they had no money, their accommodation was non-existent. Forty guys just shared a clothes bank, it was literally a case of first up but best dressed.

And all of them had come from the north to the south to study theology because it wasn't safe to study in the north.

You weren't allowed to be a Christian in the north. And after they'd done their three years, all these guys that I spoke to, they intended to go back from the south to the north.

And they were going to tell their friends and they were going to tell their families about Jesus. they were going to share the gospel and they knew that in going back to the north, they would be outcasts, they would be persecuted and in all likelihood, they would be killed.

[69 : 53] And yet they were still going to go. And these guys who had nothing were probably the happiest bunch of guys that I ever met.

Because they knew the reality of the blessing that Jesus spoke of in this sermon. They'd heard the call to happiness, to blessing.

They had come to Jesus. They were living out the reality of this life. They had the combination, the code to happiness, which is so counter to everything this world teaches.

And yet, they were listening to Jesus and they knew the reality intensely of the happiness and the blessing that those who will take him seriously will receive.

So there's the call to happiness, there's the combination to happiness. And the final thing, and I'm just going to give you the heading, not the point. The final heading is come to Jesus.

[70 : 58] Jesus. Because that's what Jesus was preaching. Come to me, he says. Follow me.

And although you might not be healthy and wealthy or popular, although you may very well be persecuted, Jesus says you will know blessing. You will know happiness of heart.

You will know happiness that comes from God. That you taste in this world. And that you'll know endlessly, in full measure, in the world to come.

But you have to come to Jesus. I'll finish with this. There was a rich young man that Mark speaks about in Mark chapter 10.

And he had money, plenty of it, a portfolio of property in all likelihood. He had a reputation that was second to none.

[72 : 14] He had everything that this world could offer. But he knew that he didn't have eternal life. life. And so he came to Jesus.

And Jesus said to him, you need to follow me. But in order to follow me, you have to leave behind everything that you're holding so tightly. And the rich young man, he thought about it.

And he listened to Jesus. but the riches of this world had such a grip on him that he couldn't drop them. And so the thing that we read about the rich young man is that as he walked away from Jesus, he walked away sad.

