

14.2.21 am

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Date: 14 February 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] and a warm welcome to this service this morning a welcome to those who are watching online and those who are tuning in on the telephone and a special welcome to those who are tuning in this morning on the lives with the live stream from Dingwall and Strathpeffer Free Church it's good to know that we are able to come together in this way and to worship God. One or two intimations just to say first of all that the service the evening service will come online at six o'clock tonight and again that will be live streamed that service I'll take myself God willing and we'll look at Psalm 143. There's no YF tonight would have been a holiday weekend but the prayer meeting will be on Zoom as usual at half past seven so be encouraged to attend that and next Sunday just to say that the morning service will be taken by myself as usual the evening service will have a testimony within that service. As I said last month we'll try maybe to have one evening of testimony per month going forward for as long as we're in this in this situation and next Sunday evening we hope to have

Alistair MacDonald from Ardazig sharing testimony so be encouraged to tune in to that and pray for Alistair as he prepares to share testimony next weekend. These I think are all the intimations so we'll begin and we'll sing to God's praise we'll sing from Mission Praise 296 you're able to sing in your own homes we're not able to sing in the building here but Adam will sing this hymn to God's praise I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean how marvelous how wonderful and my song shall ever be how marvelous how wonderful is my saviour's love for me and Adam will lead us in singing the whole of this hymn to God's praise I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me a sinner condemned unclean how marvelous how wonderful how wonderful and my song shall ever be how marvelous how wonderful is my saviour's love for me for me it was in the garden he prayed not my will but thine he prayed not my will but thine he had no tears for his own griefs but sweat draw bloods for mine how marvelous how wonderful and my song shall ever be how marvelous how wonderful how wonderful is my saviour's love for me in pity angels beheld him and came from the world of light to comfort him in the sorrows he bore for my soul that night how marvelous how marvelous how wonderful how wonderful how wonderful how wonderful and my song shall ever be how marvelous how wonderful is my saviour's love for me

He took my sins and my sorrows He made them his very own He bore the burden to Calvary And suffered and died alone How marvelous, how wonderful And my song shall ever be How marvelous, how wonderful Is my Saviour's love for me When with the ransomed in glory His face I at last shall see It will be my joy through the ages To sing of his love for me How marvelous, how wonderful And my song shall ever be How marvelous, how wonderful

Is my Saviour's love for me Well let's now unite our hearts in prayer Let's pray Our Heavenly Father we thank you for this your day And we thank you that as we stand in your house As we stand or sit many of us in our own homes We thank you that as we come together in the name of Jesus We have the assurance that you are the God who is with us And so with the hymn writer we can say we stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene

And we do wonder in many ways how you could love us when we see the unclean nature of our hearts As we come into your presence As we come into your presence As we come into your presence As we confess that we are sinners As we open your word day by day We look in the mirror of scripture And we see that our lives and our hearts are stained with sin And we know that you are the God who is holy And who cannot look upon sin And so the question the hymn writer brings is a question Which we grapple with How can you love us When we are who we are And we thank you Lord That we see the answer To that question in the gospel We thank you that we see That the one who was innocent

[7 : 01] Stood in the place of those who are guilty We thank you that Jesus Is the one who took our sins And our sorrows And made them his very own We see that cross at Calvary A cross that stands on a hill in history A place that was That was located in the history And the geography of this world And yet we know that This cross is not remote from us It's not something that's disconnected from our experience But this cross is the place Where our salvation was worked out We thank you that on that cross Jesus He took the curse of our sin In his body On that tree We thank you because of all That he has done We can know the assurance Of sins forgiven We thank you that when we are trusting

In Christ and his Finished work We have the assurance That we are accepted In him That our sins Are cleansed That our hearts Are made righteous In and through All that he has done And that we have a hope For this world A purpose for this world And we have a hope That is eternal We know As we have sung That when we go From this world We will go with the ransomed To glory We will see The face of Jesus We will know An eternal joy We will sing Endlessly Of his love For us When we are trusting In him And so we ask Lord That each one of us Would be trusting In Jesus this morning You know each of us As we bow before you You know our hearts You know where we stand Before you And we ask Lord

That if there are any Who are not yet In Christ If there are any Who are not yet Trusting in Jesus And who are still Holding on to that That deadening sin We pray that even today They would surrender To Christ That they would trust In Jesus That they would hear The voice of Jesus Say come unto me And rest And they would come And know the The assurance of this Salvation Not just as a concept But as something Which is theirs Their very own Gift of grace We pray for any Who may Be in Christ But who may be Drifting at this point We know that this Is a difficult season And as we are not able To enjoy fellowship With each other As we are in the habit Of And the scripture Commands us in We know that we can Become discouraged We know that some May feel that they are

Drifting And for any who Are drifting Who may be Wandering somewhat We pray that you Would draw Each one back That we may know A close walk With God We pray for those Who are struggling In different ways This morning Both here in the Community in Harris And those who Are in Dingwall Those who are in Strathpeffer Those who may be In different places As they listen In or tune In at different Times And we ask Lord that you Would meet Each one at the Point of our Need We pray on For those who Are grieving We are always Conscious Of those whose Hearts are sore We thank you That there is Comfort In the gospel We thank you That you are The God Who deals With us With such Great compassion And for those Who are grieving We pray that They would know Your comfort We thank you That when your People who are Trusting you

Step from this World They step into Eternity They sleep in Jesus as it is Written in Scripture And Lord we We thank you For the comfort That that brings As we meditate Upon gospel Truths So be with Those whose Hearts are sore Be with those Who are struggling With addictions We are always Aware of those Who are struggling And we know That this time Again has been A difficult time We pray that They would look To the one Who is able To break the Chains Of sin And addiction We pray for Those who are Struggling with Loneliness At this time Who are in Their homes And who have Not seen Friends and Family for Many months And in the Stillness of This day We pray that They would know That you are God and that You are with Them We thank you

[12:07] That when we Are in Christ Although we May be Alone We are never Really alone Because you are With us And we pray That those who Feel that sense Of isolation Would know The reality Of God With them This day And for those Who are sick Lord We pray that Where it be Your will You would lay Your hand Of healing Upon them And we pray That they may Know your grace Which is sufficient For each day That you Give them Even in A difficult time We pray for Those who Minister to The sick Those who Are in Hospitals Those who Are in The emergency Services Those who Seek to Provide care And we ask Lord that You would Bless them That you Would protect Them That you Would sustain Them through This season We pray for Those who Serve us In shops And Transport And in

These different Essential Platforms Of life Where we Come For Different Needs And we Ask Lord That Those who Who must Come and Do work Day by Day and Who put Themselves in A place Of risk In a time Of pandemic Lord we Ask that you Would bless Them and That you Would protect Them also We thank you That you are The sovereign God And we Thank you That although We may At times Struggle And feel Anxious And wonder What it is That we are Going through We thank you That you are Sovereign And that you Are in Control And that you Are always Working So be Working we Pray in Our lives Sanctify us That we May become More like Christ We pray We pray that you Would be Working in Our communities That you Would be Awakening Souls to Look to Jesus And reviving The hearts Of your People

We pray That you Would be Working In this Nation That has Wandered Far from You Draw us Back we Pray Be at work In the Hearts of Those that You have Allowed to Be in Authority For a Time such As this And be At work In all Nations We ask That many Today May know The saving Grace Of Jesus So hear Our prayers Take away Our sin And enable Us to fix Our eyes Upon Christ For we Pray these Things in Jesus name And for His sake Amen Well boys And girls Again I Can't see You but I believe That some Of you are Behind that Camera And are Watching This in Your own Home So I Hope You've Had a Good Week And if You were Here And if You were Able to Answer my Questions I would Say tell Me about Your week What kind Of things Have been Happening in The week

Is there Any news And I Don't think I'll be Waiting too Long for One of you To tell Me that The big News In Harris This week Past Has been Fires And I Know it's Not just Been in Harris We've Seen them In Sky We've Seen them In the Mainland As well There Was These Little Fires And they Grew big And so I'm going to Just stop Talking for A minute And rather Than me Try to Describe Them We've Got some Pictures Of these Fires That have Been going on In Harris Over the Last few Days So Stuart Will show Us these Pictures Just now Hopefully We've So

Boys and Girls I hope You were Able to See All These Pictures And if You were Able to See Them You could See These Were Big Fires They Might have Started Off Just as A wee Bit of Heather Catching Fire But they They grew And they Grew And they Spread And they Spread And what Maybe Started off As just Like a Wee Fire Like that It was Covering Whole Hills And it Actually Came very Close to Some of Our Houses And so It was a Bit scary To see These Fires And these Whole Hillsides Just All Orange With Flames So What Happened Well we Smelt the Smoke We looked Out We saw The fires We saw Them getting Bigger And bigger And then The people Who were Closest To them They Picked Up Their Phones And they Phoned 999 I think Or whatever The number Is now They got The fire Brigade And they Came out To all These Firemen And fire

[17 : 36] Women And they Used their Equipment They went Out onto The hill And using Their hoses And using These things That they Hit the Ground with They Pushed The fire Back Didn't They Some of Your Dads Are Fire Fighters So you You probably Got a Better story Than I Did They Pushed The fire Back So that We could Be safe So that's What was Happening In Harris Over These last Few days All these Fires That were Pushed Back By the Firefighters So that We could Be safe Now why Am I Telling you This Well I'm telling You this Because This Is A picture That we Can think Of Of what Jesus Did for Us We're In Danger Aren't We And if I Could ask You the Question What Causes Us To be In Danger I Know You Would Answer Me And you

Would Say It's Sin That Causes Us To be In Danger That's The Biggest Danger For Our Hearts And Our Lives It's Sin That Makes Us In A Dangerous Place And Because Sin Is In All Of Our Hearts We're All In Danger And If Our Sin Is Not Taken Away We Know That We're In Danger When We Go From This World When We Die Because Jesus Tells Us Lots And Lots Of Times And He Tells Us Because He Loves Us He Tells Us About Hell And He Uses The Picture Of A Fire To Warn Us About Hell So What Should We Do If We Want To Be Safe We Phone The Fire Brigade Well We Don't Phone The Fire Brigade We Don't Call The Fire Brigade Out To Deal With Our Hearts We Call Upon The Name Of Jesus That's What The Bible Teaches Us To Do We Call Upon The

Name Of The Lord Jesus And We Tell Him About Our Sin Which Is In My Heart And Your Hearts And We Tell Him That We Know That We're Sinners And We Ask Him Please Lord Jesus Will You Save Me From My Sin Will You Make Me Safe And He Promises That If We Do That He Will Save Us He Will Make Us Safe When We're Trusting In Him Where Did He Go To Make Us Safe Where Did Jesus Go To Take Our Sin Away Well He Went To The Cross Didn't He And We Are Saved We Are Kept Safe Forever If We Trust In Him And We Should Ask The Question As Well Boys And Girls Before We Finish Why Did Jesus Do This Why

Did Jesus Do This For Us And The Answer To That Question I'm Sure You Would Tell Me Is Because He Loved Us Because He Loved Us What Day Is It Today It's Valentine's Day Isn't It And On Valentine's Day I Don't Know If Any Of You Might Have Sent Cards And Chocolates And Flowers Better Not Mention Any Names Before Anyone Gets Embarrassed But On Valentine's Day Some People Will Send Flowers And Some People Will Send Chocolates Some People Will Send Cards To Really Say To The One That They Love Well I Love You And Here's A Gift To Show That I Love You What Did Jesus Do What Did God Do To Tell Us That He Loved Us Well God The Father Sent Not

A Card Not Chocolates Not Flowers But He Sent His Son Into This World Because He Loved Us So Much That He Didn't Want Us To Perish But He Want Us To Be Kept Safe Forever John 3 16 What Is It Let Me Hear It For God So Loved The World That He Gave His One And Only Son So That Whoever Believes In Him Shall Not Perish Shall Not Die But Shall Have Ever Lasting Life That's How Much God Loves Us And if He loves Us That Much And boys And girls Surely We will be Those who Will trust In Him So let's Pray Just now Lord God We thank You For This Day And we Thank You For Your Great Love Of Us We Thank You That You Love Us Enough To Tell Us The

[22 : 38] Truth About How Dangerous Sin Is We Thank You That You Don't Just Say Nothing About Sin But You Tell Us That Sin Puts Us In Great Danger And We Have To Be Saved From It But We Know That We Can't Save Ourselves Not By The Things That We Do Whether We Are Trying To Do Lots Of Good Things Or We Are Trying Not To Do Lots Of Bad Things We Know That What We Do Doesn't Save Us But We Thank You That Jesus Came Into This World And He Went To That Cross And He Died In Our Place So That We Can Be Saved Forever We Thank You That He Pushed Away Our Sin We Thank You That He Pushed Back That Fire Of Hell So That We Could Be Safe Forever And Know That When We Die When We're Trusting In Jesus We Go To A Place Of Perfect Peace That Place Called Heaven So

We Ask That All The Boys And Girls And All Of Us Who Are Older As Well Be Trusting In Jesus And That We Would Know That Salvation That Safety That Is Promised When We Are In Him We Pray All These Things In Jesus Name And For His Sake Amen Thank You Boys And Girls For Listening And I Think That Some Of You Might Want To Go Away And Have A Look At The Sunday School Video Just Now And We're Going To Turn In Our Bibles To Luke Chapter 5 Luke Chapter 5 And We've Just Got A Short Reading Today We're Reading From Verses 12 To Verse 16 We've Been Studying Over The Last Few Weeks Luke's Gospel And We Come Now To This Section Where We See Jesus Healing This

Man With Leprosy So Luke Chapter 5 I'm Reading From Verses 12 To Verse 16 I'm Reading From The NIV 1984 While Jesus Was In One Of The Towns A Man Came Along Who Was Covered With Leprosy 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 Then Jesus Ordered Him Don't Tell Anyone But Go Show Yourself To The Priest And Offer The Sacrifices That Moses Commanded For Your Cleansing As A Testimony To Them Yet The News About Him Spread All The More So That Crowds Of People Came To Hear Him

And To Be Healed Of Their Sicknesses But Jesus Often Withdrew To Lonely Places And Prayed Amen And May God Bless That Reading Of His Word To Us We'll Pray Again Just For A Moment As We Come Back To To This Passage Our Heavenly Father We Thank You For Your Word We Thank You That This Is The Inspired Word Of God We Thank You That It Speaks Into Our Hearts And Our Lives Just As We Read Of This Encounter With Jesus That We We Pray That We Would Each Have That Encounter With The Risen Christ Today We Pray Lord Jesus That You Would Be Speaking Into Our Lives That You Would Be Speaking Into Our Hearts We We Ask That The Holy Spirit May Open Our Ears Unblock

Our Ears And Take The Scales From Our Eyes That We Would See Christ That We Would Hear The Words Of Jesus And That We Would Respond In Faith To That Call Of The Gospel So Hear Our Prayers And Help Us As We Turn To Your Word And What We Pray For Our We Pray For All Others Who Do This Also We Pray For The Children As They Think Through The Lessons At Sunday School And Some Of The Young People Who Will Be Listening In Still We Pray For The Congregations That Surround Us Here As They Meet On Zoom And Different Platforms We Ask That Where The Gospel Is Preached That You Would Be Adding Your Blessing Lord And That You Would Be Building Your Church So Help Us Lord We Pray As We Ask That You Would Be Working Across The Land And Across All Lands And We Pray These Things In Jesus Name Amen Well

[27 : 40] If You Could Have Your Bibles Open At Luke Chapter 5 I Think You'll Find It Helpful To Have The Passage In Front Of You Now There Are Some Things In Life And The Approach That We Take Is All Important Seems Like A Long Time Since We've Been On A Plane But When We're On A Plane We Know That As We're Coming In For The Landing The Approach That The Pilot Takes To The Runway Is Key If He Or She Gets The Approach Wrong It Can Be Absolutely Disastrous Or If We're Fishing When We're On The Lock Side The Experienced Fisherman Knows There's A Certain Way To Approach The Fish You Don't Splash About On The Lock Side You Don't Roar With Laughter To The People Who Around You You Have To Be Careful You Have To Be Quiet Or The Fish Will Never Bite And

Seeing as We're On Valentine's Day When One Person Has Affections For Another They May Approach The One They Admire With A Card Or With Flowers Or With Chocolates And The Approach That One Takes To Another Can Sometimes Be Key To The Blossom Of Any Romance Or Sometimes It Can Be The End Of It So Our Approach Is Important In Different Spheres Of Life And What I Want To Begin With Today Is To Think Through How This Man That We See In This Short Section How He Approached Jesus And We'll Think About How We Can Learn Through His Approach As We Approach Jesus But Before We Get To The Question Of Approach We Should Ask One Or Two Introductory Questions About This

Man What Do We Know About Him What Do We Know About This Man That We Find In Verse Twelve And The Answer Is We Know Very Little We Covered In Leprosy And That Means That He Is One Who Had A Severe Case Of Leprosy There Were Various Degrees Of Attack On The Skin Through These Infections And This Man We're Told He Is Covered With Leprosy So What Did It Look Like For That Man In That Culture Well Dale Ralph Davis One Commentator He Gives Us A Good Insight Into What That Would Have Meant For This Man He Says This He Lived Something Like A Living Death As Leviticus 13 45 To 46 Required He Wore Torn Clothes Let His Hair Hang Loose And

Untended And Should Anyone Get Near He Was To Cover His Upper Lip And Shout Out Unclean Unclean He Could Not Live At Home He Must Live By Himself Or Maybe With Other Lepers No Coming To The Synagogue No Joining In Public Worship No Morning Coffee At The Local Cafe No Hugs From His Kids Or Wife And So Dale Ralph Davis Goes On But That Gives Us A Sufficient Insight Into What It Was Like For That Man In That Culture It Was A Living Death What Was His Name Well We're Not Told His Name And The Reality Is Few People Probably Knew His Name Because He Was Not So Much A Name A Person He Was Regarded In That Culture As A Statistic He

Was One Of These Poor People Who Lived Out In The Leprosy Ghettos Was One Of These Poor People That One Avoided At All Costs And That One Really Paid Very Little At Attention To Except Maybe Jesus I Think That's The Thought That Was Likely Going Through This Man's Mind When He Hears That Jesus Is In The Vicinity No One Else Will Help Me He Says But Maybe This Jesus That I'm Hearing About Maybe He'll Help Me So This Man He Makes His Approach To Jesus And That's Our First Point This Morning We Look At This Man's Approach To Jesus Verse 12 While Jesus Was In One Of The Towns A Man Came Along He Was Covered With Leprosy

[32 : 41] 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 So We Have His Approach In This Verse There's Two Things I Want Us To Know About This Approach To Jesus We Look First Of All At When He Approached Jesus And Secondly We'll See How He Approaches Jesus So First Of All When He Approached Jesus And We Read There In Verse 12 While Jesus Was In One Of The Towns The Man Came Along He Was Covered In Leprosy And This Is Almost So Obvious We'd Miss It But It Was While Jesus Was In One Of The Towns In Other Words While Jesus Was Near This Man Saw As Opportunity And He Approached Jesus And It's Such A Simple Point But

It's Such An Important One And It's One That We Must Learn From There Are Moments In Life Such As This Man With Leprosy Experienced Where Jesus Draws Near And These Are Moments Of Opportunity If We Look Back Over The History Of Revivals In Lewis And Harris And We Can Go On To The Mainland Too And See The Same Patterns But We Read About Revivals We Read About Times When It Seemed That God Drew Near He Visits Whole Towns And Villages In These Days Of Revival And In These Times There Was Great Opportunity To Meet With Jesus There Was Great Opportunity To Know The Saving And The And Yet For Most Of Us We Haven't Lived Through These Days And

For Most Of Us The More Normal Experience Is The Experience Of Jesus Drawing Near To Us In A Personal Way It Can Be In Church Sometimes There's 150 People In Church But Jesus Draws Near It Feels Like We're The Only Person There Or We Can Be Reading Our Bibles In Our Own Rooms And It's As If A Verse That Jumps Off The Page Into Our Lives And We Know That God Is Drawing Near Or We Can Be In Fellowship And There's That Sense With Other Believers That Jesus Is Drawing Near In A Special Way Or Indeed We Can Be In A State Of Rebellion And Suddenly And Unexpectedly Jesus Breaks In And Draws Near We Can Think About The Apostle Paul The Last Thing He Expected On The Damascus Road Was Jesus To Draw Near Reminded

Of A Minister Who Was In Snyder At The Apple Cross In Days Gone By I Knew Him In Loch Caron He Is Gone To Be With The Lord Some Years Back Now His Name Was Kenny Bann Very Godly Man And He Had A Remarkable Testimony Which He Loved To Share He Was One Evening In Church He Had Gone To Church But He Had Gone To Church With Bad Intentions He Had Gone To Church With A Half Bottle In His Inside Pocket He Had Gone To Church With The Intentions Of Heckling The Minister And Making A Bit Of Disturbance But During That Service Unexpectedly For Him Jesus Strew Near And Kenny Bann Was Saved But I Think The One Or One Of The Lessons That This Man With Leprosy Teaches Us

Is That We Are Not To Delay However It Is This Happens In Our Experience We Are Not To Delay We Are Near Is To Make If The Leans What To time. He says, the word is near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart. That is the message concerning faith that we proclaim. If you declare with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And so this man with leprosy, he saw the word of God. He saw Jesus.

[37 : 43] He saw that he was near. And he did not delay, but he approached him. He called upon his name.

And the question I want to ask in application is, have you, have we called upon the name of the Lord Jesus? And some might say in response to that, well, it's not easy for me. Because, you know, I'm a shy kind of a person. And I don't like people looking at me. I feel awkward about this kind of a step becoming a Christian. And, you know, the man with leprosy could have said all of that with much greater volume. It took great courage and faith for this man to approach Jesus. The NIV kind of blurs this. But the literal translation of verse 12, I think it's in the AV as it should stand.

But the literal translation of verse 12 is, behold, a man came along who was covered in leprosy. There's great power in the word behold. It's an arresting word. Behold underlined the fact that this man actually was not allowed to approach Jesus in that culture. He could, according to the law, have been stoned for approaching Jesus and coming into this crowd. So this would have been a very awkward situation to actually have been in the middle of. This would have been a huge disturbance.

If this kind of thing happened in our day, people would be out with their camera phones, taking videos of it, uploading it onto social media. This would have been a bit of a scene.

And this man knew all of that before he came to Jesus. But it didn't stop him coming.

[39 : 53] And for us, trusting in the Lord Jesus, becoming a Christian, coming to him, the reality is it can be very awkward. We're not living in a day and age where you'll get a round of applause for coming to Jesus. Jesus is a name that is cursed more than it's blessed in our culture.

And so it can be very awkward saying, I have become a Christian. It can be very difficult, especially for the introvert, to step forward in faith. It can bring us into dispute with some people. He'll say, what are you doing?

I imagine many people were saying to that leper on that day, get back to your quarantine. What are you doing in the middle of us here? Get back to where you're supposed to be, away from Jesus, away from us.

But this man, he and we, we shouldn't allow that kind of awkwardness. We shouldn't allow social obstacles. We shouldn't allow disapproving voices to keep us away from approaching Jesus and seeking the help, seeking the salvation that we need.

So there's a little about when he approached Jesus. He doesn't waste a minute. When Jesus is in one of the towns, when he's nearby, this man makes his approach.

[41 : 33] The second thing under this point is we see how he approached Jesus. Still in verse 12. 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.

So let's just look at the step by step of this approach here. First of all, he sees Jesus. And likely it's from a distance at first.

Because he wasn't allowed to be where the crowds were, so he would have wanted to minimize the time that he was in the middle of these crowds. He sees Jesus, likely at a distance at first.

But when he sees him, he decides to come forward. And come close to Jesus. Now what does he know about Jesus? The answer to that question is not a lot.

Not even the disciples knew very much about Jesus at this point. They're still fairly confused. There's a lot of mixed messages going around. So this man with leprosy who's on the fringe of that society, he will know a very limited amount about Jesus.

[42 : 51] He'll have heard that he was healing the sick. He will have heard these stories about how Jesus teaching is drawing in vast crowds. But he probably doesn't know much else about Jesus.

And yet he still approaches. He still comes looking for that help, for that healing. Sinclair Ferguson says this.

He, that's the man with leprosy, obviously didn't know much about Jesus. But he believed that Jesus could heal him and he came to him. Many people, says Sinclair Ferguson, as he applies this to our day, many people know a great deal about Jesus.

But never come to Jesus to ask him to heal them. And that may be true of some who are watching this morning. You may have grown up and gone through Sunday school and through YF and through many years of church.

You may know a lot about Jesus. You may have great Bible knowledge. But have you ever come to him and asked him to heal you? At your soul?

[44 : 08] This man, he's quick to ask for healing. But then the quickness of his approach is not presumptuous. It's not lacking in reverence.

He fell with his face to the ground and begged him, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. And in falling with his face to the ground, he's acknowledging his sin and his need.

He's in that posture of repentance and of worship. And he begs Jesus for healing. Which indicates to us that this man has great faith in the power of Jesus.

He believes that he can heal him. And yet he also has a sense of the sovereign will of Jesus. He doesn't assume that he will be healed.

He doesn't come with any sense of entitlement. He doesn't come asking Jesus for what he believes he deserves. Rather, he comes asking for mercy and for grace.

[45 : 19] If it be your will, Jesus, he says, please, will you heal me? And I think we can learn a lot through this man's approach to Jesus.

Sometimes we find ourselves physically sick. We find ourselves in a situation where we're in need of healing. And sometimes we may encounter faith healer types.

Who will come to us and say, you can be made well. You heard about my faith healing ministry? You can be made well. There's healing in the name of Jesus.

You just have to name it and claim it. I know even in this vicinity, there are people who have scars from past years of that kind of approach.

And yet we see nothing of that here. Yes, we can pray for healing. We're taught to do that. And yes, Jesus is able still to heal.

[46 : 27] But our approach in prayer is to be like this man's approach. We bow low before God. And we say, if you are willing, because God's will is a mysterious thing.

If you are willing, you can make me well. But Lord, your will be done. Malcolm McLean says this, the leper recognized the sovereignty of Jesus.

Prayer is never an instruction to God. It must always be a humble request. At the same time, we will recognize the ability of the Lord to give an answer to our prayers, even to the extent of being able to do far above all that we can ask or imagine.

As Paul reminds us in Ephesians 3.20. So we see this man's approach to Jesus. We see the reverence, the faith, the humility as he bows low before Jesus and says to Jesus, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

But of course, the bigger lesson for us here, I believe, is not to do with the healing of our skin problems. It's not to do with the healing of our physical ailments.

[47 : 57] It's the healing of our heart problem. Leprosy here is a picture. Leprosy is a condition which brought decay to the skin in that day and it destroyed life as they knew it.

And sin is a condition that affects all of us. It brings decay to our hearts. It destroys our soul. So where can we find healing?

Only in the name of Jesus. So we should approach him. That's the lesson. And we should approach him with the same humility and the same reverence as we see in the leper.

But I think we can approach Jesus when it comes to the healing of our hearts with greater confidence. Because we know, because the Bible tells us, that it's God's will when it comes to our hearts, that none should perish, but all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3, 9. So let us be encouraged to come to Jesus for that healing of our hearts, for that salvation from sin.

[49 : 28] So we see this man's approach to Jesus. And secondly here, we see Jesus' response to the man. Verse 13. Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

I am willing, he said. Be clean. Now I think we lose something of the tension, something of the drama of this, because we know the story we have done since Sunday school.

But try to imagine that moment when this was happening. The leper steps forward, likely when the crowds realise what's happening, they clear.

There's this big space that the leper and Jesus are in the centre of. The crowds disperse for fear of catching this leprosy. They're standing a safe distance back.

And we see Jesus and this man in the centre of this circle. What would Jesus do? Would he get out his metres stick and say, you need to be at least two metres back?

[50 : 38] Would he get his mask and his medical PPE out before he has any progress in this encounter with the man? Would he step back? Would he drive this man away with strong words of rebuke like so many others would have?

Well, he does none of that. We have a picture here of James chapter 4 verse 8 which says, draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

We have an illustration of what it says in John 6.37. Jesus says, whoever comes to me I will never drive away. So Jesus, he not only doesn't step back from this contagious man but he steps forward to meet the man.

And then he does the unthinkable. He touches the man. And the word that's used there in the Greek it isn't the word of a kind of glance and touch a reluctant brush of the man.

It means he took hold of him. He gripped him firmly. And Jesus verse 13 reached out his hand he touched the man he took hold of him.

[51 : 55] I am willing he said be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him. Now the question I'm interested in is why did he touch him?

Why did Jesus touch this man? Did he have to touch the man? Is it the case that he was so much covered in leprosy? He was such an extreme case that Jesus needed to grasp him firmly to effect proper healing?

Well I think we can answer that question confidently by saying no. Jesus could heal with a word only. He could raise the dead with a word only.

He can heal from a safe distance. He can heal from another region. So why does he shock everyone and touch the man?

I think there's various reasons. Let me give you three very briefly. First of all he touches the man to show his power.

[53 : 02] No one else would touch this man because they were terrified of becoming infected with this awful disease. disease. But what we see here is what we saw in the previous chapter also.

Disease has no power over Jesus. He isn't overcome by it. Rather he overcomes it. The disease doesn't drive Jesus back like it drove everyone else back.

Rather he with that word with that touch he drives the disease back. So he touches the man to show his power. He touches the man secondly so that the man can feel the compassion of God.

This man likely hadn't felt another human touch in a long time. And now he feels the touch of the most compassionate loving man ever to walk the face of this earth.

He feels the touch of the God man. And the compassion that would have traveled to that touch would have been immense. Calvin says the stretching out of his hand was therefore an expression and token of infinite grace and goodness.

[54 : 23] The grace, the goodness, the compassion of Jesus was felt in that touch. The third thing here is he touches the man I think to illustrate what he came to do.

Now people would have been watching from a distance and as they watched they would have been saying to Jesus as he comes closer, whatever you do don't touch him. You'll become unclean because contact with a leper made somebody unclean.

But then Jesus came to become unclean. That was why he came to this world. He came to take the leprosy of our hearts, our sin from us into himself.

That was the salvation plan. 2 Corinthians 5.21 I quote it so often. God made him who had no sin who was clean to be sin for us to become unclean for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Or we heard it, we heard it saying just a few moments ago, he took my sins and my sorrows. He made them his very own. Warren Weerspey says this is a beautiful picture of what Jesus has done for lost sinners.

[55 : 59] he became sin so that we might be made clean. 1 Peter 2.24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. And that's what we see immediately after. This touch, this word, this man immediately, the leprosy left him.

I'm reminded of a line in a song by the singer-songwriter or Stephen MacLeod. He was in a desperate place at one time in his life.

He was an alcoholic. He was living on the streets in Edinburgh and he came into contact with one who shared the gospel with him. He saw Jesus.

He heard the voice of Jesus. He felt the touch of Jesus. And in this song that he writes called When I Found Jesus, there's one line in the song which says one touch from the king of kings changed everything.

[57 : 15] That was Steph's testimony and it was this man's testimony. One touch, one word from the king of kings and everything changed. The leprosy immediately left him.

Can you imagine the joy that that man felt as he realised he had his life back. He was born again in a sense. And that's a joy that we share in even more so than him.

If Jesus has touched you and I, if we have come and made our approach in repentance and faith to him, we have received heart healing.

Immediately we come to Jesus. Immediately he touches us. we are made clean. We are saved. We are cleansed. We are purified. Our sins past, present, future, they're wiped clean.

And that should bring joy. The joy of his salvation to our hearts, to our souls. The approach to Jesus, Jesus' response to the man.

[58 : 41] Very quickly, the third thing, Jesus' requirement of the man. Verse 14, Jesus ordered him, don't tell anyone, but go assure yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them.

So Jesus, he gives some instructions, some directions to this man. And you might say, well, is this salvation by works? Is this what's going to save this man?

And the answer to that clearly is no. Already he's clean. We know that. The grace of God has already transformed him.

But what we see here as Jesus imposes requirements on the man is that Jesus does not despise the law of God. Rather, he fulfills the law of God.

he tells the man to go and live by the law of God. In a sense, Jesus says to the man, you're clean.

[59 : 42] I've told you that. Now go and live a life that shows that out. That was Jesus' requirement of this man.

I could say more about this, but time is gone and I think the application is what Jesus required of him. He requires of us. If we're saved, if we're healed, if we have received the grace of God, then we don't despise the law of God.

We don't disregard the word of God. We live by it. Paul says in Romans chapter 6 verses 1, 1 and 2, shall we go on sinning, that grace may increase by no means.

We are those who have died to sin. How can we live in it any longer? It would have been madness for this man who has been cured of leprosy to go back to his old way of life as a leper.

He's been born again. And so he'll live that way. And the application for us is if we are born again, we don't go back to live in the old way of sin.

[61 : 04] We want to live in the freedom that is in Christ and that freedom is found as we seek to live his way. Ephesians 2 verses 8 to 10, for it's by grace you've been saved through faith.

This is not from yourselves, it's the gift of God, not by works that no one can boast. We love that verse. But it doesn't stop there. God says to the Apostle Paul, for we are God's handiwork created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do.

So if we are in Christ, we have that requirement to live in such a way that we show out that we are in Christ. And as we show out through these good works that we are in Christ, we express our love for him and our thankfulness to him for all that he has done in saving us.

Final point, just a second. We see here Jesus recharge before he continues in ministry. Verse 15, the news about him spread all the more so that the crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. So we have this picture at the end of this short passage.

[62 : 36] The crowds are unmanageable. The crowds are huge. Jesus now has celebrity status in that place. And remember, Jesus was a human and in his humanity, that brought temptation.

Temptation that the devil would have been trying to capitalize on. It would have been temptation to stay there a while, to enjoy the acclaim of the crowds, to do more healings.

So his popularity levels would skyrocket. At that point for Jesus, it would have been such a pleasure to be amongst these crowds.

But there was risk and there was temptation in popularity. humanity. And so we find Jesus not constantly with the crowds, where he has been celebrated, where he is in so much demand, where he is so popular, but rather we see that often, not occasionally, but often, Jesus withdrew to the lonely places to be with his father.

father. Jesus needed that recharge as he went to the place of prayer.

[64 : 03] And if he did, how much more do we as we seek to follow him? Let me just give you a quote from J.C.

Ryle to finish. I came across in the course of the week. Ryle, as he reflects on this passage, says, Why is it that there is so much apparent religious working, and yet so little result in positive conversions to God?

So many sermons, and yet so few souls saved. So much machinery, and yet so little effect produced. So much running here and there, and yet so few brought to Christ.

Why is all this, says Ryle? The reply is short and simple. There is not enough private prayer. The cause of Christ does not need less working, but it does need among the workers more praying.

Let us each examine ourselves and amend our ways. The most successful workmen in the Lord's vineyard are those who are like their master, often and much upon their knees.

[65 : 29] So let us be encouraged, me first, let us all be encouraged to be like our Saviour, in that place of prayer, seeking that recharge as we seek to follow Christ.

And we'll pray. Our Heavenly Father, we ask that you would take these words, that you would apply them to our lives through your Spirit, and that you would help us if we have not yet come to Christ, made our approach to do so even now.

and for those of us, Lord, who are following Jesus, we pray that you would help us to follow closely and enable us as we go from this passage, seeing Jesus on his knees, we pray that you would forgive us for our neglect so often in that area.

Help us, we pray, to be more in prayer as we look for your kingdom to come and for the gospel work to progress. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. We'll sing to conclude and we'll sing from Psalm 116 and from verses 1 to verse 6.

[66 : 53] I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear. I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear. So Adam will lead us as he sings from verse 1 to verse 6 of Psalm 116.

I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear.

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

Of death the cords and sorrows did about me compass round.

the pains of hell took hold on me I, grief and trouble found.

[68 : 06] Upon the name of God the Lord then did I call and say deliver my soul O Lord I do thee humbly pray.

God merciful and righteous is yea gracious is our Lord God saves the meek I was brought low he did me help afford Lord and I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forevermore.

Amen.