

19.5.24 am

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Date: 19 May 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see all of you. Good to see some visitors with us as well today. You're especially welcome if you're able to stay behind. There's tea and there's coffee served at the end of the service.

The intimations have been on the screen before the service began, so I'm not going to go through the intimations one by one. I'm just going to highlight a couple. The first is to note, for your encouragement in terms of coming back this evening, I won't be preaching this evening. The Reverend Ronnie Morrison from UST was with us at the communion last time, is over with us this weekend, and so I'm thankful that he's stepped in and he's going to be preaching this evening. So be encouraged to come to that service. The only other thing I'll highlight just in the intimations is that keep thinking of and praying for and keep alert to Scott, our minister in training, that will be coming in hopefully August, September. He hasn't secured accommodation yet. He's looking at a couple of possibilities, but nothing is sorted yet. I think he had hoped in one place that would have become available. It hasn't to date.

So we're kind of a wee bit uneasy about that. If you know of places or if you're able to help, please come and speak to me and I'll put you in touch with him. Let's begin this time of worship and we sing to God's praise. We sing from the Psalms, Psalm 84, and the words will be on the screen in just a moment.

Psalm 84, how lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me, thy tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant, Lord, they be. We'll stand to sing and we sing verses 1 to verse 9 to God's praise.

[1 : 51] Psalm 84, how lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me.

The tabernacles of thy grace, how blessed, Lord, they be.

My mercy so long we will be, if in thy courts to see.

My very heart and flesh, O living God for me.

Behold, the spot, O findeth earth, on her sweat, in to rest.

[2 : 56] The small of the also for herself, a purchase at the nest.

In thine own altars, where she's saved, her young watchful faith, O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Blessed are they in thy house and well, they ever give thee grace.

Blessed is the man whose strength thou art, in whose heart are thy ways.

Who pass in thorough, make us feel, therein to dig up wells.

[4 : 06] All soul, the rain that falleth down, the pools with water fills.

So they from sand, the weary go, still forward unto sand.

Until in Zion they appear, before the Lord of land.

Lord God of hosts, my prayer and fear, O Jacob's God, will hear.

Sing for a shield, look on the face of thine anointed dear.

[5 : 05] 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 this opportunity that we are given once more to come into your presence.

Jesus, we thank you for this, your name of Jesus, your Son.

You will be with us. You will make your dwelling amongst us. We thank you that that's your promise, that when we come together in this way, that you are here in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And we pray that not only would we know and believe that promise with our intellects, but we pray that we would sense your presence in our hearts.

[6 : 07] We pray that we would know in our experience the reality of God with us. We think of those who walked one day along the road in Emmaus and who were downcast, who were disappointed,

who were feeling depressed.

And as they walked, Jesus came alongside them. The resurrected Christ came alongside them. And we thank you that as they spent time looking to him, as they listened to the words of Scripture, as he expounded them, as he explained to them that everything that we've sang of, everything that is written, every chapter in the Old Testament points to him.

We thank you that as they listened and as they received that ministry, that their hearts burned within them. And we pray that we would experience something of that even today.

That our hearts would be moved, that our hearts would be burning within us as we look upon the face of Jesus. We pray that you would help us to do that. We confess that we are so distracted. We're often so conflicted in our minds. Confess, Lord, that there are many things, anxieties and worries and pressures and troubles that we find hard to leave at the door.

[7 : 33] But we pray that you would help us to take this hour, to be still and to know that you are God. Help us to lift our eyes from ground level.

Help us to look away from all that would distract us, all that may be a real responsibility for us through the working days of the week.

And help us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the author, the perfecter of our faith. We thank you that it's in Christ that we have hope. We thank you that it's in Christ that we have joy, we have peace.

We confess, Lord, that we are not only distracted, but we are sinners. We fall and we fail. The things that we do and in the things that we don't do.

Even as we think back over the days since we were last here. We confess, Lord, that we have not lived as we should. We have said things that we shouldn't have, perhaps.

[8 : 38] We have remained silent when we should have spoken up. We have spoken or thought or judged somebody in a way that is harsh, critical, not loving.

We pray that you would forgive us. And we thank you that we know where to go for forgiveness. We thank you that, as we often sing, there's a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins. And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains. So help us to come today, every one of us, confessing that we are sinners.

Seeking that cleansing. And knowing the joy and the peace. And the assurance of being forgiven. Of being in Christ.

We pray for anybody here who's not yet trusted in Jesus. We ask, Lord, that you would touch their hearts even today. That they would come to Jesus and be saved.

[9 : 40] Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus is saved. So may there be none of us here who would sit here and refuse to call. We pray for any who may be at a distance from you today.

We often sing, we often say with a hymn writer, we are prone to wonder. And as we wonder, there is sadness that overwhelms us. We pray for any who are weary and worn and sad and at a distance from Jesus.

Help each one to come. And find that the Lord is not only one who receives those who come in the first time. But we thank you that you're the God who receives us as we return to you.

In repentance and in faith. We pray for all the things that trouble us in this world. The burdens that we carry, not just for ourselves, but as we think of other people.

We pray for those who are grieving. We are always conscious of those who are grieving. We pray, especially today for the family of the Reverend Ian Morrison. Who passed away this week.

[10 : 51] We ask, Lord, that you would draw near to them. We pray for each one of the family. We pray especially for the Reverend Donald John and Fiona and Kylas.

Who looked upon them and who cared for them as a son. And we ask that you would comfort them. That you would draw near to them at this time. We pray for the congregation as they meet in Oban today.

With that sense of loss. We pray that as they grieve, that they would grieve. Not as those who have no hope. But as those who know that our hope is in Christ.

And we thank you for Ian for his faith. And for his brightness. Even as he went through hard, hard times. And we thank you, Lord, for his witness.

And for the memories that we have. So be with all those who grieve. As we think of him. And as we think of many others as well. We commit them. We commit each other to you.

[11 : 51] We pray on for those who are sick. For those who are in hospital. For those who are in care homes. For those who are waiting for procedures. And waiting for results.

Having had procedures. As we think of them in our mind's eye. We pray that you would bless them. And that you would uphold them. And that you would lay your hands of healing upon them. Where that's your will.

We pray for wisdom. For life for each day. We think of the assembly. Especially in this week to come. You have said, Lord, that. If we lack wisdom.

We are to ask. And you will give liberally. And all of us lack wisdom every day. And so we pray. For wisdom. Especially for those who meet. In the name of Jesus.

That the spirit of Jesus. That the grace of Jesus. That the presence of Jesus. Would be felt and known. We pray for the young ones. As they. As some sit here.

[12 : 47] As some are through in the creche. We thank you for them. We ask, Lord, that you would bless them. That they would grow up to know you. And to trust you. And again, we thank you for. For new life.

We thank you for. Baby Julia. And. Her first visit here. To church today. Bless her, Lord. We thank you for her. And for all. The little ones.

We ask that none of us. Would. Would hinder them. From coming to Jesus. That each one of us. Would encourage them. As they grow. To come to Jesus. And to know.

The. The blessing of. Of Jesus. Love for them. So hear our prayers. And. Take away our sin. And lead us. And guide us. We pray.

In the power. Of the Holy Spirit. That we would be. In the spirit of worship. On the Lord's day. And we ask all this. In Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen. Amen. Boys and girls.

[13 : 41] Would you like to come forward. Please. Amen. How are you all today?

Come. Come around Michael. So I can see you. How are you all today? Oh. You sound like you're getting awful close. To the holiday time. The end of a long term.

Is it? Coming towards the end of a long term. Are you weary. And worn. And tired. And homeworked out. No. Feeling fresh. Feeling good. Good stuff. Something to show you today.

There might be a picture on the screen as well. But there might not be. I'm not sure. Oh there is. Picture on the screen. And.

This guy here. Same physique as Taffy. But it's definitely not Taffy. Who's this?

[14 : 50] Who's this? He's the Hulk. So what can you tell me about the Hulk? Our Hulk expert sadly is not here. He's through the wall. But.

What do we know about the Hulk? What happens with the Hulk? Michael. He gets angry. He gets angry. And so. On the screen.

We can see. A man. I can't remember his name. Do you know his name? Pardon? Bruce. Bruce. Bruce Banner. So Bruce Banner. And I think he's like a. He's like a scientist.

He's a bit like. Dr. Latham. That kind of intelligent character. Mild mannered. And. He's there looking at a test tube or something. And. He's a very calm.

Individual. And I don't know what happened. I can't remember the story of the Hulk. But. He must have had something that was. That he took. Some injection like Spider-Man or something.

[15 : 47] I don't know the story. You can check it yourselves. But anyway. That's what he looks like. On a good morning. But then something happens. That makes him angry. And.

What happens? His. His shirt bursts off. His vest is. Is far too small. He gets big. He gets grumpy. He gets green. And he explodes. In anger. Doesn't he? So that's what. That's the story of the Hulk. Here's the question.

Do you ever get angry? Put your hand up if you get angry. Never get angry.

Looking around. And all. One by one. The hands are all. All starting to go up. And there's me. Julia there. I didn't see her at the back. So.

[16 : 45] We all. We all sometimes get angry. What kind of things. Sometimes make you angry? It's a dangerous question. For me to ask. Henry. When they're playing football.

And they tackle you. Is it just when they tackle you. Or when they tackle you badly? Badly. The bad tackles make us angry. That's a fair one. Yeah. There's. There's all times. Sometimes we get angry. Now. When you get angry. Tell me. What happens next? When you start to feel angry. Do you like. Does your jumper burst open. And you turn green. And you start to roar like the Hulk. So what happens when you get angry? Anybody going to be.

We thank you that Jesus went to the cross to take away our sin. We thank you that Jesus was willing to as it says in the Bible drink the cup that was filled with the anger the wrath of God and we thank you because he did that for us if we believe in him you're no longer angry at us but you love us and we thank you that when we die we don't have to be frightened of God's anger and hell we thank you that we have a place in heaven if we believe in Jesus so help us we pray every one of us to believe in Jesus to pray as Henry said and to ask for forgiveness and to know that we are at peace with you and we ask all this in Jesus name amen we'll sing now the words of the hymn that we just were looking at mission praise 1072 in Christ alone our hope is found he is my light my strength my song this corner soul this solid ground firm to the future strength and storm on lives on love on depths of peace when fears are still and striding cease my coverter my all in all here in the love of

[24 : 44] Christ I stand in Christ the Lord who took on flesh fullness of love in helpless way this gift of love and righteousness start by the ones he came to stay till on that cross that Jesus died the wrath of God was satisfied for every sin on him was made even the death of Christ I live there in the ground his body lay light of the world by darkness slain and bursting forth in glorious day up from the grave he rose again and as he stands in victory since

Christ has lost his grip on me for I am his and he is mine all through the precious blood of Christ! NING of man can ever clap me from his hand till he returns and what calls me home here in the power of Christ I'll stand Okay boys and girls if you head to the Sunday school for me thanks and pray for them as they go and we can turn in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 7 please Matthew chapter 7 and we'll read from verse 1 to verse 11 this is God's word Judge not that you be not judged for with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged and with the measure you use it will be measured to you why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye but do not notice the log that is in your own eye or how can you say to your brother let me take the speck out of your eye when there is the log in your own eye you hypocrite first take out the log of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye do not give dogs what is holy and do not throw your pearls before pigs lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you ask and it will be given to you seek and you will find knock and it will be opened to you for everyone who asks receives and the one who seeks finds and to the one who knocks it will be opened or which one of you if his son asks him for bread will give him a stone or if he asks for a fish will give him a serpent if you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again now to God's praise we'll sing the last three stanzas of Psalm 84 the verses we didn't sing we'll sing from

Psalm 84 verses 10 to 12 in Gaelic for in thy courts one day excels a thousand rather than my God's house will I keep a door and dwell in tents of sin for God the Lord's a sun and shield he'll grace and glory give and will withhold no good from them that uprightly do live though thou that art the Lord of hosts that man is truly blessed who by assured confidence on thee alone doth rest these three verses of Psalm 84 we sing in Gaelic and we'll remain seated to sing in GaelicNINGNING!

[30 : 18] NING!NING CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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world, we pray that you would help them, Lord, that you would open their eyes, that they would believe in the early years, that they would walk with you all the days of their lives. We pray for the congregations around us, the different denominations, whatever Christ crucified is preached, we pray that you would be working to add your blessing and to build your church. Help us, Lord, we pray, as we look to you. In Jesus' name,

[35 : 40] Amen. Amen. We're in Matthew chapter 7 this morning. We've got a few visitors with us. Just to kind of give the context, we've been looking at the Sermon on the Mount over the last few

weeks.

We're going through the Sermon on the Mount at quite high speed and trying to get the big picture on this sermon. One of the things that we've noted and one of the things that I want to keep on saying, because it's been helpful for me to keep on saying, it's just the sense of movement that there is in this sermon that Jesus preaches. We thought last week about the tide that we see day by day in the places that we live. We see the tide, it comes in and it fills the bay and then it goes back out. And it comes in and it goes back out. And that's a continuous thing. And it's a great picture of the life of the disciple of Jesus. Jesus, he calls his disciples. Look, if you just glance back to the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, chapter 5, and at the beginning we see, we see that Jesus, verse 1, he calls his disciples to come to him. He begins, he sits down, that's the indication that he's about to teach. As he sits down, the disciples, they come in to be with him. And as they come to him, as they listen to him, as they learn from him, there's blessing. They come in to Jesus in a spirit of worship.

And then having come in and listened and been with Jesus, he sends them out. They come in and worship. He sends them out to be witnesses. They come in to be close with him in intimacy. Then he sends them out into the world. And as they go out in Jesus' name, they're to be a blessing. They receive blessing and then they're to be a blessing. They come in and then they go out. So glancing at the verses, Matthew 5, verses 1 to 12, Jesus says, come to me.

And he teaches them about this life of blessing as they stay close to him. And then from verses 13 to the end of the chapter, verse 48, Jesus is saying to the disciples, go out into the world and be a blessing in all your relationships, in all the tasks, in all of life, be a blessing.

So that's the split of Matthew 5. Come in, be blessed, go out, be a blessing. And then moving into Matthew chapter 6, Jesus is teaching his disciples to come back in. So they've been out in the world. Then he says, come back in.

[38 : 37] And he's teaching them about taking time to be with the Father. He teaches them about praying and fasting and trusting in the Lord and not worrying. And being devoted to the Lord and serving the Lord.

So Matthew 6 is all about that inner life of worship. Come in, says Jesus. Fast, pray, serve. Don't worry. And now as we move into Matthew 7, Jesus is sending his disciples back out again into the world to be witnesses. So we're seeing that movement repeatedly. And as Jesus sends his disciples out, beginning of verse 7, he sends them out with a clear command not to be judgmental. So point number one, for the disciples back then and the disciples here today, is as we go out in the name of Jesus into the world to be witnesses, Jesus says to us, don't be judgmental.

Do not be judgmental. Verse 1, judge not. Now, a word that I hear being used quite often just now by young people, by teenagers, is the word judgmental. They say it often. I hear it often. She looked at me so judgmental.

And I suppose it makes sense because people's lives today are much more out there in the world wide web for everybody to see. Before, we had our own wee circle of friends. We had our own little lives. We showed people as much as we were willing to let them see. But today, with these devices and with Facebook and Instagram and all these different things, there's people on the other side of the world that we have never met and we will never meet and we know exactly what they're wearing today. We know how they've decorated their new kitchen because they Instagram their whole lives. And all the so-called friends and followers, they look in on these lives and these fashions and these trends and they, and maybe we, if we're part of that, we can be so judgmental.

[41 : 18] And Jesus says to his disciples, as they go out into the world in his name, don't be judgmental. Judge not. Judge not. So what does Jesus mean when he says judge not? Well, J.C. Ryle is helpful here. He says, what our Lord means to condemn is a censorious and fault-finding spirit, a readiness to blame others for trifling offenses or matters of indifference, a habit of passing rash and hasty judgments, a disposition to magnify the errors and infirmities of our neighbors and make the worst of them.

This, says Ryle, is what our Lord forbids when he says judge not. And J.C. Ryle wrote that probably, I think, about 200 years ago. But it speaks into what Jesus taught 2,000 years ago and it applies to what we'll be doing in 20 minutes or two days or right now.

We are prone to be so judgmental. As we look in the mirror of God's word, we have to confess that we can be so judgmental. We can scroll through social media. We're not looking for the best. We're looking for the worst.

It makes us feel quite good when we find something that's bad. We can be so judgy. And we can be just as judgy on an old-fashioned telephone.

And we can be judgy as we whisper in the local shop, as we chat about what he said and what she did. Did you hear? That judgy spirit can very, very quickly rise up on us. And Jesus says, don't do it. [43 : 29] If you're going out in my name, if you're going out to be my witnesses, don't do it. Judge not. Why not? Well, there's various reasons. Looking at verse 1 into verse 2, Jesus says, Judge not that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged.

And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. And that's ground-level wisdom. Jesus says to us, if you are a harsh, critical person, if you point a finger when someone slips up, you can be sure that when you slip up, there will be a whole village worth of fingers pointing back at you. The people that you have talked about will be talking about you. The standards that you apply to them, when you slip, they will certainly apply them to you.

So judge not, says Jesus. But there's more than that in terms of the logic and the reasoning. Jesus then uses an illustration in verses 3 to 5.

Why do you see the speck, says Jesus in verse 3, that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that's in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, when there's a log in your own eye?

[45 : 02] You hypocrite. First, take the log out of your own eye. And then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. And there's kind of dark humour.

There's comedy. There's dark comedy in this painted picture that Jesus presents. He's saying to his disciples, you disciples.

He's speaking to those 2,000 years ago, and he's speaking to us today. He's saying, disciples of Jesus, you are not in a position to make judgments. You don't have the vision, the sight, the sense to make judgments.

Yes, you might be able to see the shortfalls in others, but they can certainly see the shortfalls in you. And very often the problems that you identify in them may well be bigger in your life than they are in their lives.

There's this picture. Jesus is saying, it's laughable that you with a log sticking out of your eye would be looking at somebody with a wee speck, saying you need to sort that out.

[46 : 16] So don't do it, says Jesus. Don't be such a hypocrite. Don't be so silly as to think that you are in a position to make judgments.

That's another reason to judge not. But the main reason, I think, that Jesus is calling his disciples not to be many judges, because Jesus himself, who had 20-20 vision, who could see the mind, the heart, the thoughts, who could hear every word, Jesus who had crystal clear vision, and who was in a position to be able to judge, Jesus himself, he did not come into this world on a mission to judge. He came into this world on a mission to save. And so he's saying to his disciples, your job is not to go out as many judges. Your job is to go out and tell people about me, says Jesus, the Savior.

He came to be the Savior, not the judge. John chapter 3, verse 17 says, For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

So when we go out into the world with that condemning spirit, how can we speak with any persuasive power about a Savior?

[48 : 03] John chapter 12, verse 47, Jesus says, I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.

So Jesus says to his disciples, his witnesses back then and still today, he says, your job, your mission is not to go out judging people.

Your mission is a mission where you point people to the Savior. And you can't do it.

And I can't do it with a harsh, critical spirit. So judge not, says Jesus.

Do not be judgy. That's point number one. The second point is do be judicious. What does it mean to be judicious?

[49 : 03] Well, to be judicious means to be wise and to be discerning. Because probably the verse there, judge not, is one of the most wrongly quoted verses in the whole of the Bible.

And Jesus here is teaching us not to be thrown off balance when somebody spits at us with a judge not comment.

And so in verse 6, he says, do not give dogs what is holy. When Jesus is thinking about dogs, he's not thinking about a shortist, a little cuddly puppy dog.

He's thinking about these street dogs, scavengers, dangerous, wild animals. Do not give dogs what is holy. Do not throw pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. Do be judicious. Do be wise. Do be discerning. You have to make wise, discerning decisions in the course of life, says Jesus.

[50 : 20] Last Saturday, I had just been out on a long run. And I just come back up the drive and it was hot and I was sweaty and smelly and tired.

And I sat down on the chair out in the sun just to catch my breath for a minute. And I'd hardly sat down when I heard the dog barking.

And then I glanced around and I could hear voices. And there was two people coming up the drive that I didn't recognize. And they came up through the gate and into the garden.

And it was the Jehovah's Witnesses. Saturday afternoon, tired and weary. And the Jehovah's Witnesses appeared in the garden. I'd never met them before. They'd never come up to the man's before.

So Josh and Mary Jane appeared from California. And they wanted to speak to me about what they called good news. So I said, sit down, take a few minutes.

[51 : 20] And I said, tell me about your good news. They were nice, pleasant people. They were having a nice, pleasant conversation. And I said, tell me about your good news.

So I listened to their good news. And this is the summary of it. They said that they believed that the world was broken. We agreed on that. They believed that the reason behind that was sin.

We agreed on that too. And they said, but you know, there's good news. That's the bad news, but there is good news. And the good news is that there is heaven.

There is an escape from all this. There's heaven. And I said, well, that's good news. We agree on the fact that there is also a heaven.

I said, tell me, who's going to get to heaven? And Josh said, well, the faithful are going to get there. And I said, how do you become faithful?

[52 : 21] He said, well, you become faithful by keeping God's law, by keeping the commandments, and by working really hard to do things that please God. So I asked Josh how he was getting on with being faithful.

And he said, he wasn't sure he had 100% pass mark on this.

He wasn't sure actually he was doing all that well with being faithful. I said, so do you think you have a place in heaven? And he said he wasn't sure.

He wasn't all that confident. He wasn't all that hopeful that he had a place in heaven because he wasn't sure that he was all that faithful. Didn't sound like good news to me.

So what did I do? Well, some would say, you do nothing. They've come into your garden. They've got their beliefs. They've shared their beliefs with you.

[53 : 26] How dare you challenge their beliefs? Judge not. Is that what this verse means where Jesus teaches us not to be judgy? Well, of course it doesn't mean that.

Jesus talks in verse 15, a wee bit further on, about false prophets. That involves making a judgment. So how do we make wise, discerning choices?

Well, we have to weigh what we are hearing, what's shared with us, what we experience against the truth of God's word. And so that's what we did for the next half an hour.

I think I probably ruined the JW's afternoon. They got a Saturday afternoon sermon. And it was longer than today's one. And they heard the real good news about the amazing grace of Jesus. Because that's where there is good news. The fact that he lived a faithful life. A hundred percent faithful life. And he did it for us. Because we can't do it for us.

[54 : 37] Not only that. He didn't just live a faithful life for us. He died on the cross. To pay for all the times that we have not been faithful.

That's the good news. And so I spent half an hour sharing with Josh and Mary Jane the free offer of the gospel.

That if we believe in Jesus, we are certainly, assuredly, definitely getting into heaven.

Because we are saved through him. We are saved because of all that he has done on the cross.

And as I shared with them the pearls of the real gospel, the real good news about Jesus, they listened.

We didn't have an argument. We didn't have a battle. They went very quiet. And they listened. So I'd like us all to be praying for Josh and Mary Jane.

[55 : 56] The challenge is though, that's one experience. There are many experiences that we can have when someone won't listen. They come roaring up the drive and they want to do battle with you.

Sometimes we get taken into these conversations and people don't want to listen. In fact, they want to mock Jesus. I remember once being drawn into a conversation here and the person who spoke to me said, one of my favorite hobbies is to argue with Christians about how ridiculous Christianity is.

All they wanted to do was mock Jesus. Sometimes people want to to play with Jesus. They just want to go round and round and round in circles talking about Jesus but they don't have any intention of trusting him and bowing before him.

Sometimes people, they just want to argue about Jesus. So sometimes we have to end a conversation because the people we are talking to are taking the name of Jesus, the pearl of great price and they are trampling that name, that name that is above all names into the mud.

So we do have to be judicious. We have to be wise. We have to be discerning when we are dealing with such a precious name, such a precious gospel.

[57 : 32] Ryle says, to name the name of Christ to such people, and he is talking about those who just want to argue and mock, he says, it is truly to cast pearls before swine.

It does them not good, but harm. It is a serious thing there. Maybe some of us need to hear it. to just argue and play and laugh when the name of Jesus is mentioned.

That does harm. To sit after, to sit, listen, to sermon after sermon and have no intention of ever bowing before Jesus, but you, you stand up to him and rebel against him week by week.

With every passing week, there's no points that we are being credited with because we sat in these chairs, we're actually doing harm to our souls.

Hendrickson, the commentator, says, Christ's disciples must not endlessly continue to bring the gospel message to those who scorn it. To be sure, patience must be exercised.

[58 : 49] How patient Jesus was with Thomas, John chapter 20, and Peter, John chapter 21. But for Herod Antipas, who often had been warned, Mark chapter 6, verse 20, but had disregarded all these admonitions, Jesus had not a single word.

Luke 23, verse 9. So Jesus is not telling us to switch off our brains and accept everything we hear from every cult and every person and every new ideology.

When he says judge not, he's not telling us to switch off all our discerning faculties. We need to be judicious. We need to exercise wisdom. We need to be discerning as we go out in the name of Jesus and as we seek to speak to others about the gospel of Jesus.

So don't be judgy, but do be discerning, do be judicious. Let's hit pause for a moment before we move to the final point.

Jesus speaking to his disciples back then and still now as he sends us out into the world, as we go out in the name of Jesus, we're not to be judgy.

[60 : 17] We're not to be critical. We're not to be negative in our outlook. We're not to be... We're not to be critical and judgy in our conversations and our thoughts.

Now, that's the clear command. That's the clear instruction. Let's just for a moment pause and consider how is that going for you and for me.

How do you think we're doing in terms of our non-judgmentalism? For most of us, if not for all of us, it's a challenge because we are all sinners and there will always be things that we see in others that are wrong and they will always see things in us.

That are wrong because there are lots of things in us that are wrong because we are sinners. So this is going to be a challenge. And when it comes to being judicious and being wise and discerning, when it comes to knowing how to speak and when to be quiet and what to say and how to say it and when to step forward and when to step back, do you find that easy?

Because I don't. It's hard to go out in the name of Jesus. It's hard to go out as witnesses of Jesus. So where do we get what we need?

[61 : 57] If we're struggling with this as we are, where do we get the instruction, the strength, the wisdom that we need to be witnesses for Christ?

Well, we get it from Jesus. And so what happens next? Jesus is teaching us about going out. He says, don't be judgy. Yes, be judicious.

Be wise. Be discerning. As you're out there in my name and we come to terms with this commission and we're struggling under the weight of it and then as Jesus sees us struggle in our minds, he says, right, come back in.

Where are you going to get what you need when you're out there? You're going to get it from me, says Jesus. So back in you come. And we're called back in and he teaches us about prayer.

So the last point and very briefly is we are to ask for good things for Jesus' sake. Don't be judgy.

[63 : 01] Do be judicious and do ask for good things for Jesus' sake. Verse 7 to verse 11. Ask and it will be given to you.

Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. To the one who knocks it will be opened.

Then Jesus gives us this illustration again. Which of you if a son asks him for bread will give him a stone? Of course, no father who loves a son is going to do that.

Or if he asks for a fish will give him a serpent? If you then, says Jesus, who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?

And it's stunningly simple. And it seems almost unnecessary to say this, but it is necessary to say this because I know how often I need to hear this.

[64 : 10] We have to come to Jesus. Every day we have to come to Jesus and ask him for the good things that we need. And what are the good things of verse 11 that Jesus speaks about?

Well, the good things, the good gift that Jesus speaks about is the gift of grace. the good gift, the best gift that we could ever ask for, the supreme gift that all of us need, the good gift that Jesus in verse 11 promises we will be given if we ask for it is grace.

And what is grace? Well, you can see it on the back wall. God's riches at Christ's expense. What are God's riches?

Well, salvation. None of us here can say that we don't need salvation because we all have souls and we're going somewhere. And if we don't want to go to hell and be lost, we need salvation. It's a gift of grace. Forgiveness of sin. We're all sinners. We need to have our account wiped. How are we going to get that?

[65 : 38] By asking for grace. Eternal life. Do you want it? Of course you want it. How do we receive it? By grace.

Wisdom, discernment. grace. It's all part of God's riches. It's all part of the good gifts that God promises to those who ask.

Love for people that we might be tempted to judge because they really irritate us at times. Just as we irritate other people. We get this when we ask for it. Joy and peace even in hard times and especially in hard times.

patience, self-control, the list goes on. God's riches. They're all wrapped up in the parcel of grace that Jesus promises we will be given.

But you have to ask. God's riches at Christ's expense. The price tag for grace.

[66 : 48] grace. It's been paid for by Jesus at the cross. We don't earn it. We don't work for it. It's free.

Remember the old hymn? I hear the Savior say, Thy strength indeed is small. Child of weakness, watch and pray.

Find in me thine all in all. Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain.

He washed it white as snow. It's an anthem of grace. And this is the good thing.

these are the good things that Jesus promises to give to those who will ask him. So he says, ask and seek and knock.

[68 : 00] And the tense is continuous, which means that we keep on asking and we keep on seeking and we keep on knocking and there's growing intensity here. and the reason we are to keep on asking and keep on praying and keep on pleading is because we are always, always, always, every day, every day, every hour in need of grace.

And because Jesus is gracious and because our heavenly father is good and loving, he keeps on giving these good gifts gifts that every one of us need.

The commentator Hannah, and I'll just about finish with this, says, it is wonderful that the greatest gift, the gift of life, is simply for the asking.

It does not require a college education, it does not matter whether or not you are well connected in society, who your parents were is of no consequence. financial security is not an issue, there is a cost, but it has been paid, it is now free.

These good things, this gift of grace, is free. Eternal life, forgiveness of sin, wisdom, discernment, courage, gentleness, as we go out in Jesus' name, all these things, and a thousand more, are all freely offered to those who will ask.

[69 : 48] So to finish, two short simple questions. Question one, have we asked for grace? grace, the grace that saves, the gift of grace that takes us to heaven?

Have we asked for it? If you've never asked, you don't have. You can sit in these chairs for a thousand years, grace, but until you ask, you don't have.

But the moment you ask, because God is gracious, because our Father is loving, we will receive the forgiveness, the life, the assurance of saving grace that takes us to heaven.

That's question number one, have you asked? And question number two is, are we still asking? Did you ask today?

Did you ask this hour? Are we still asking for the grace that sustains us? the grace that keeps us keeping on all the way along the road until we get to heaven?

[71 : 25] Ask, says Jesus, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your goodness, we thank you for your love, we thank you for the assurance, the promises that we read, that the good gifts, the grace that we need that saves and sustains, is promised, it's assured, it's generously given to all who will ask.

We pray that there would be none of us here this morning who would refuse to ask. We pray that all of us would come, even now, asking for grace that saves, if we've never done that before, and asking for the grace that sustains, that keeps us keeping on, until we get to the end of the race in this world, and get the assurance of heaven, because of all that Christ has done.

So help us, we pray, not just to be hearers of the word, but to be doers of the word. Help us to receive grace, to know that we're saved, to spend time in your presence in prayer.

And for all those who are your disciples, help us to remember as we walk out the store, and as we scroll through social media, and as we pick up our telephone, and as we have conversations in the different places that we go in this week, help us to remember that our job is not to be many judges, but our job is to tell people about the Savior, the one who came into this world, not to condemn, not to criticize, but to save all who will look to help us to point people to Jesus, and we ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

[73 : 42] We'll sing to conclude the hymn on the screen, What Gift of Grace Is Jesus My Redeemer? There is no more for heaven not to give, He is my joy, my joy, my righteousness, my righteousness, and freedom, my steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace, To this I hold, my hope, my hope is only Jesus, for my life is holy but to his.

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

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

I labor on, in weakness, for in my need, his power is disclaim.

To this I hold, my shepherd, will defend me, through the deepest valley he will be.

[75 : 37] Oh, the night has been won, and I shall overcome, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dead, I know I am forgiven, the future sure, the price it has been paid.

For Jesus bled, I suffered for my pardon, and he was raised to overthrow the grave.

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

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

[76 : 40] 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 hope is only Jesus, all the glory evermore to him.

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

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

[77 : 42] When the race is complete, still my life shall repeat. Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

When the race is complete, still my life shall repeat. Yet not I, but through Christ in me.
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 forevermore. Amen.