

## 2.6.24 am

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Date: 02 June 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning and good to see some who are visiting with us as well this morning. And if you're able to stay at the end of the service, there's tea and there's coffee that's served.

It would be good to get the chance to enjoy fellowship together. I've forgotten to take my notice sheet with me, so I'll have to go through all 25 notices just for a moment. Evening service at six, we've taken by myself, God willing.

So YF on after the evening service, and this is the first night of the faith mission, tent mission in Liberborough. So that starts at half past seven-ish. I'll make sure I finish for seven.

And those who want to go on to that will be warmly welcomed there. Community lunch last Monday. Thanks for all who attended and for those who donated to Crossroads.

Ladies Fellowship, Monday night, Little Fishers, Tuesday morning. Go to the recovery Tuesday night and the prayer meeting on Wednesday night, all as usual.

[ 0 : 59 ] And a warm welcome extended to everyone. The service is next Sunday. I'm going to be away in Staffan, taking a communion on Saturday and Sunday.

So the service in the morning next week will be taken by Jeff Townend of the faith mission. And the evening service, we're not having a service here. We've been invited to go to Liberborough.

The service there will be taken by the faith mission. And we've been given the invitation to join with them for that service. So that's next Sunday night at six o'clock. Cleaning Rota.

Faith mission, tent mission, you've seen the poster. You've seen the intimation about the communion. The wedding of Nicky and Jack takes place at the church here on Friday at 12 noon. I'm glad that notice is there because I had it in my diary as one o'clock. And it's not good for the minister to be late. So 12 noon and the church family are warmly invited to come and attend the service.

[ 2 : 01 ] Keep going. And I think these are all the notices. The rest you've had the chance to read through. So let's begin this time of worship.

Let's sing to God's praise. And we'll sing the words of the hymn, which will be on the screen in just a moment. Mission Praise 755.

It's good for us to begin this service with a focus on Jesus and on the cross. The only way that we can come to God in worship is through all that has been done for us at Calvary.

And we sing now. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died. My riches gain. I count but loss. And poor contend on all my pride. We'll stand to sing in just a moment.

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory My riches gain.

[ 3 : 19 ] My riches gain. I count but loss. And poor contend on all my pride.

Forbid it all that I should boast. Save in the hand of Christ my God.

All loving things that charm me most. Thy sacrifice, them to his love.

See from his head, his hands, his feet. Sorrow and love, promingle down.

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet. Or forms composed so rich a crown.

[ 4 : 42 ] Where the realm of nature mine. That were an offering far too small.

From so amazing, so divine. Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Let's unite our hearts and prayer. Let's pray together. our heavenly father we thank you for this your day we thank you that once more that you've given us the desire to come into this place and that you've given us the opportunity the measure of health and strength that we enjoy to be able to come and we thank you that we come in response to the call that we hear in the gospel that call to come and to worship we join together lord people from different places different ages different backgrounds different interests and we are conscious of how diverse we are in many ways but we

come together in the name that is above all names the name of Jesus and we come once more as we do week by week to to gather around the cross of Jesus and to survey that cross we know lord that we cannot drift from the cross and remain in a close walk with you we confess lord that there are times that we do drift there are times that our our hearts and our eyes are filled with the the vain things that the hymn writer wrote of and we confess that sin we pray lord that you would forgive us for the way that we can be so easily distracted that the way our hearts can become so cluttered with things that take our eyes off you we thank you lord that week by week as we come together we look to Jesus we pray that this day we would see Jesus that we would hear the voice of Jesus that we would sense the presence of Jesus the one who said that he will be here in the power of the Holy Spirit where even two or three of us gather together we thank you for the cross lord we thank you that that is the the place that we go with our sin we thank you that as we see our own sin and our own need and our own falls and failures we have a place to come and that place is calvary so we ask lord that we would with the hymn writer see from his head and from his hands and from his feet the sorrow and love that flow mingled down from the cross we thank you for the blood that was shed for the remission of our sin we thank you for the penalty that was paid the wages of sin our death we thank you for the remission our death we thank you father that you sent your son into this world to lay down his life to die so that the penalty that hung over us could be paid and that we could be declared righteous that we could be justified that we could be made clean in and through Jesus we thank you not just for the cross that we surveyed but for the empty tomb that on the first day of the week as the woman went to to to see the body of Jesus we thank you that as they got to the tomb the stone was rolled away the tomb was empty and they heard the news for the first time that he is risen so we praise you lord we thank you that we serve we worship a risen living savior the one who has ascended to heaven the one who sits at the father's right hand the one who hears our prayers and and corrects our prayers orders our prayers sometimes lord we in our prayers are so muddled sometimes we can't find the right words to say sometimes we say the wrong words sometimes we have no words we thank you that Jesus makes intercession he takes even the sighs and the groans of our hearts and presents them at the throne of grace so we thank you lord for the resurrection we thank you for the hope of resurrection eternal life we thank you for the gift that this is it's all of grace not by works that we would boast but by grace and so lord we we thank you that we can boast in the cross of Jesus and we pray that you would give us the courage and the opportunity to to speak of the cross of

Jesus to those that you've put around us in our homes in school in our workplaces in the community help us to to point people to the one who loved them and to cause them and us to come and to receive the salvation that only he can give thank you for the work of the holy spirit that he lives within us that he moves within this place we pray holy spirit that you would be working in this room to help us to see Jesus in our need of Jesus we pray holy spirit that you would be moving in this community awakening souls that have no thought of Christ and no awareness of eternity and lord we pray that in the power of the holy spirit also you would be drawing back those perhaps who once looked off into the cross and who perhaps have drifted at this time we pray for the backslider we thank you lord Jesus that you have promised that none will be snatched from your hand ultimately although we know that we drift and we have to be pulled back often so for any who are at a distance lord we pray that you would draw them back we pray for the tent mission in leverborough we thank you that the gospel message we have the freedom to proclaim it in conversations in this place and we pray especially for this effort in leverborough over the next couple of weeks for donnie and for jeff and for all those who will speak and take part in these meetings draw people to that place we ask and we ask lord that you would speak with the voice that wakes the dead and make the people here the gospel of jesus we pray for that work lord for that mission that as the word of god goes forth that will not return void empty but it will achieve much for your glory and for the salvation of souls and for the encouragement of your people we pray lord for all those who are in need today week by week we are conscious of those who are sick and we have people in our minds eye who are sick some here some in different areas and we bring them to you we carry them to you in prayer as the friends of the man who was lame carried him to jesus we thank you that we can carry those whom we love to you and in prayer and we ask that you would minister to them lord and we pray for those who are grieving as we're conscious of funerals past and the week past and we're conscious of those who will gather again tomorrow comfort those who are grieving we pray and for those going through hard times for those who are going through trouble we thank you that you see every part of that trouble we thank you that jesus warned us that in this world we will have trouble but we

thank you that there is overcoming as we stay close to Jesus so for any who are struggling with whatever it might be that weighs them down that makes them anxious that makes them fearful we bring them to you in prayer and ask that you would take them through hard times and that you would bless them even in what could be described as Baker's veil so hear our prayers and lead us and guide us in worship we pray take away our sin empty us of self fill us with the Holy Spirit and may we be enabled to worship you and we ask all this in Jesus name and for his sake Amen boys and girls would you like to come forward please not so many of you today how are you today come a bit closer

[14:29] how are we today good good I have got uh someone to show you on the screen today who's this you're very shy I'm not speaking until you speak Bryce Bryce and what do you know about Bryce Michael he's back home you think what Finley he's still running away in the hills dog isn't he so he's still running away in the hills Finley says Michael says he's back home you know you were both right because I think it was on Friday they spotted well during the week for those who weren't here last week that this is uh the dog uh that belongs to to one of uh the good shepherds in our congregation and uh he came from Wales he hadn't really got to know his owners yet and uh he was only just out of the uh the car I think after coming and and he took off and he was up on the hill nobody could find him and so there was a big search party looking for Bryce and he was being spotted here there and everywhere and after uh looking for him uh they they eventually figured out where he was he was down and he was kind of hiding between fish farms and trees and so uh they they put a cage out for him with uh some food because he was getting hungry and I think it was on Thursday night uh they managed to catch him and so Bryce was caught and he was safe and uh a big thing went on on Facebook Bryce is home all these comments you know celebrate celebrations Bryce is home and so there should be great celebrations the dog that was lost is now found great rejoicing and so Bryce was with Alistair in the house he's in the kitchen lying down by the stove he got his big dinner his tummy was full he had water he was living the the life of Riley he was enjoying life and then the first time the door was opened Alistair was there and I think I think he was in the cage actually and when he opened the cage door just a wee bit you know what Bryce did he jumped right over Alistair's head plate smashing as he went on his way out of the house and now he's back on the hill but we know where he is and there's a plan to get him back so he's safe he's getting food every day but he's still kind of on the run as far as I know he's still kind of on the run so we can keep on praying for Bryce but here's the thing when you think about it imagine you are Bryce the dog what would be the best thing to do would it be best to come to Alistair and to have your food in a bowl every day and to have water to drink and to have a nice stove to sit by just until he gets to know everybody and have his dog friends and have some jobs to do would it be best to choose that life or would it be best to run away to the hills and the fish farms and you're gobbling up bits of old fish and whatever you can find what's the best life to have is it best to choose to be with Alistair who'll care for him or best to

choose to be lost out in a hill what do you think what best to be with Alistair isn't it and so we almost want to say to Bryce why are you being so silly you know you could have a good life you could you could be safe you could be well fed you could have everything you need if you just stay close to Alistair how can you be so silly but then I think about my own heart see for us boys and girls what's the best thing is it best in our lives to stay close to Jesus who'll give us the strength that we need when we feel weak and who'll give us courage when we're feeling scared is it best to stay close to Jesus who'll be the friend that sticks closer than any other friend is it best to stick close to Jesus who'll forgive us our sins whenever we're confessing our sins and who'll care for us and who'll love us better than anyone else ever will or is it best to drift away from Jesus and just do our own thing what do you think think family it's best to stay close to Jesus isn't it but can I tell you a secret sometimes I drift away and sometimes rather than listening to Jesus and listening to what he's got to say to me in the morning and then speaking to him in prayer phone goes and I've got a notification for this and a notification for that and I start looking at this and I start looking at that and I start looking at the next thing and then I've got this job to do and that job to do and I could have been with Jesus hearing what he had to say to me for the day and I didn't and when we do that day after day after day it's like we slide we backslide further and further and further away from Jesus and you know it feels sad when we do that our hearts are sad when we do that and it's just not a good place to be in it's like being Bryce on the hill so we might look at Bryce and we might say what a silly thing to do but I need to look at me and I need to say sorry to Jesus quite often for being

as silly as Bryce when I drift from him last thing before we finish so Bryce he was found for a wee while then he jumped over Alistair's head out of the cage smashed some plates in the kitchen he's back out in the hill Peter's not getting a wink of sleep because he's forever looking for the dog Alistair's not getting a proper sleep because he's always thinking about the dog what do you think Alistair and Peter have said have they just said oh we're done with that dog just let the dog go what do you think they're doing what do you think they're doing

Fraser they're still looking for him and they're still calling him and they've got a place ready for him and they want him to come back and that's how God is with us even though we drift and even though we keep making the same mistakes sometimes over and over again and even though we don't listen to the Bible as often as we should and even though we keep picking up our phones and wasting our time and even though sometimes we do bad things and we make God sad he doesn't say I'm done with him or her he keeps saying come to me come back to me and he's promised that if we come says this in John chapter 6 he'll never cast us out he'll never push us away he'll always take us close and he'll hold us tight so let's be thankful for the

[ 22 : 56 ] God who loves us enough to keep on calling us and let's learn to come to him and to stay close to him we pray we pray Lord God we thank you that you love us and we thank you that you keep calling us we thank you for the first time we heard your voice and the first time we realized that we had sin in our hearts and the first time that we realized that we had to come to you to be forgiven we thank you Lord that when we come asking you to take our sin away and asking us to make us your children we thank you that you hear our prayers and you save us and we thank you that even though we drift from you and even though we do silly things even though sometimes we do bad things even though often we forget you we thank you that as we come back as we return to you you've promised that you will return to us and we thank you that we are safe not because of our strength and our ability to stay close to you but we thank you that we are safe because you have promised that even though at times you'll let us wander you'll keep on pulling us back and so

Lord we pray that you'd help us not to wander but to come to you and to stay close to you and we thank you that we can pray about everything and we do pray for Bryce again that he would be found that he'd be safe and that he would learn that the people in our Dasig will be good to him and care for him and we pray that you would give Alistair and Peter and all those who are looking for him strength and wisdom and all that they have to do we thank you that there's nothing too small that we can't bring to you in prayer and so we bring Bryce to you in prayer as well and we ask all these things in Jesus name amen we're going to sing now and we're going to sing a hymn which we don't know I was thinking about Bryce and I was thinking about that wee story and Anna was playing a hymn in the house and as I was hearing the hymn and hearing the words I was thinking if we only knew that that would be a good one to sing this morning so then I said well why not learn it so a bit of pressure for Anna you can pray for her but we're going to learn this new hymn it's a getty hymn or they're part one of the they're one of the authors of it and it's called hold me saviour so what we'll do is we'll hear the verse and the chorus being sung first by Anna and then after she's sung the verse and the chorus we'll all stand up we'll sing the verse and the chorus again and then we'll sing the rest of the hymn together closer to your sight every love that leans to worship is a precious price hold me saviour now I'm dead of birth lord of your goodness go with me guide and keep me gently lead me your presence with me is my peace may my

Let me stay When my heart is heavy laden Help me bear the weight May my burden bring me closer to your side Every life that leads to worship Is a precious price Holy Savior, now and ever Lord, let your goodness go with me Guide and keep me Gently lead me Your presence with me is my peace I be Savior, let your nearness

Chill me every hour Show me marvels of your mercy Wonders of your power By your streams of water Taking me through this land Joys await me on the way And always near at hand Holy Savior, now and ever Lord, let your goodness go with me Guide and keep me Gently lead me Your presence with me is my peace Keep me Savior to the finish

Faithful till the end Then I'll sing that never was a true A better friend Through the gates of glory Lead me, lead me all the way There my faith will turn to sight And prayer will turn to praise Holy Savior, now and ever Lord, let your goodness go with me Guide and keep me Gently lead me Your presence with me Your presence with me Is my peace Savior, now and ever Savior, now and ever Savior, now and ever

[ 30 : 22 ] Lord, let your goodness go with me Lord, let your goodness go with me Guide and keep me Gently lead me Your presence with me is my peace.

Okay, boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school. It's a good effort. There was one line that we were wanting to speed up and run away with. Once we get that one line mastered, we'll have that one in our repertoire.

If we could turn now, please, in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 7. Matthew chapter 7, and we'll read from verse 13 to the end of the chapter.

So Jesus is speaking on the Sermon on the Mount as it comes to a conclusion, and this is God's word.

Jesus says, Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide, and the way is easy that leads to destruction. And those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard that leads to life.

[ 32 : 12 ] And those who find it are few. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits.

Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Everyone then who hears these words of mine, and does them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

[ 33 : 20 ] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell. And great was the fall of it. And when Jesus finished saying these sayings, and when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing now the first two stanzas, the first two verses of Psalm 62 in Gaelic.

I'll read the verses in English. My soul with expectation depends on God indeed. My strength and my salvation doth from him alone proceed.

He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence, much moved I shall not be. These two verses of Psalm 62, we sing in Gaelic, and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic to God's praise.

[ 35 : 03 ] NINGNINGNINGNINGNINGNING CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Let's pray for a moment as we come back to God's work.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the Word of God. We thank you for the Bible, for this book that was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

We thank you for the amazing fact that we have a record here of a sermon that was preached by God the Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

[ 39 : 16 ] And we ask that you would help us, Holy Spirit, that you would teach us, that you would clear from our minds all that would distract us, that you would soften our hearts and that you would minister to us in this time.

We pray for the young ones who've gone out. We thank you for them. Those who were sitting down on the floor, those who are through in the creche, those who pass through the church week by week.

We bring them to you, Lord, in prayer. We ask that there would be nothing in our lives that would hinder them from coming to you. And we pray for those who are at home, those who are watching at this time, who are struggling and don't have enough strength to get out today.

We pray that you would minister to them also in the power of your Spirit. And we pray for any who are at home because they have no desire to come and who likely are doing something else at this time.

And we bring them to you as well. And we ask that you would minister to them, that you would speak to them. We know, Lord, that soul thirst is brought about by you.

[ 40 : 22 ] It's not a work that we can do ourselves. It's a work of the Spirit. And so we pray for those who are at a distance this morning. We pray for those around the world as well who gather as we do, but who gather without the safety and the luxury of a building that's secure and warm and dry.

We think especially of our brother Patrick Jock, who was with us on Wednesday evening. We pray for the church in Sudan where they build church buildings.

And often within months they're flattened and burned and looted. And they just start again and build the building back up again and gather together.

We thank you for the commitment and the perseverance of those who are your people living in places where there's no peace. And we ask that you would bless them today as they come together in worship.

And for those who gather as persecuted Christians in secrecy, who risk their lives in coming together in the name of Jesus. We remember them and we ask, Lord, that you would bless them and protect them and give them wisdom and courage in these places where it's dangerous to be a Christian.

[ 41 : 38 ] So bless them. Bless us, we pray. Help us as we come to you. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. This life, this world is a world and life is unavoidably full of decisions.

Our lives at every point, every day, our lives are full of decisions that we have to make. There's the small everyday decisions like, what do I wear?

And depending on what stage of life you are, that decision can take longer for some than it can take for others. Try living in a house with three girls and it can take a while.

Two of them are gone. I'm exposed with one. There's the decision about what we will wear. There's the decisions, small decisions like, where will I park? Park church on a Sunday morning.

Please don't park over there in the hotel car park. Park somewhere else. But these are decisions that we have to make. Where am I going to park? Where's the space going to be? If you wait till after the service, there's a table there.

[ 42 : 54 ] Julian and Peggy are on today. There's the most amazing cakes and tray breaks. And you're going to get asked the question, is there going to be tea or coffee? It's a decision you're going to have to make. What will I eat for lunch?

The decision that we're going to have to make. These are the kind of small everyday decisions that we encounter day by day, week by week. And then there's the bigger decisions in life.

Like, who will I marry? We've got Nicky and Jack who are having their wedding here on Friday. And the decision to marry is a big decision.

It's probably the biggest decision that we make in life. Because it's a life-changing decision. What career will I pursue? What course will I go and study if I go to university?

What trade will I try and pick up and master over the years? These decisions are more significant because they change the course of our lives.

[ 43 : 57 ] But the most important decision that we will all make is the decision of whether or not we will trust and follow and keep on following Jesus.

The most important choice that we all face, it doesn't concern money. It doesn't concern education. It doesn't concern our love lives or our work or career path. The most important choice we all face concerns Jesus. And it's the most important choice that we make because it affects not just this life. It will affect this life. It will transform this life. But it affects not just this life. It affects eternity. And where we will spend it.

Whether we will be in heaven with the Lord or whether we will be in hell apart from the Lord. Now if you have Matthew chapter 7 open in front of you, you'll find that helpful.

[ 45 : 13 ] We're coming to the end of the sermon that Jesus preached. And as Jesus comes to the end of the sermon, he takes us to the point of decision.

He's asking us to make a choice. He's asking us to choose to trust him. He's asking us to choose to follow him. Of course, he won't force us.

When we see people who are lost, sometimes we wish he would force. But he won't. God has given us free will. So yes, it's a work of the Spirit to draw us.

It's a work of the Spirit to open our eyes, to show us our sin, to show us Jesus. But when we are taken to that position, we have a decision of our will to make. We have a choice to make.

And Jesus is asking us through this sermon, what will you do? Which way will you go? Which path will you take?

[ 46 : 23 ] Which voice will you listen to? Sometimes when we are on a journey south down in our holidays or something like that, where we can be on a motorway, or you're driving through a city, and you're going along a straight road.

And as you're coming towards the end of this road that seems to be straight, the road just goes 17 different ways. We're thinking, where on earth am I supposed to go?

That's sometimes what we see ahead of us when we're on a journey on a road. Sometimes we're driving along a straight road, and there's only two ways. And that's the situation that's here in Matthew 7.

It's just two ways. On that mountain 2,000 years ago, Jesus, as he preaches, he sets before the people two ways.

And here, in this place, 2,000 years later, Jesus sets before us two ways. And he asks each of us, as individuals, to choose wisely which way we will go.

[ 47 : 49 ] Three points for the message this morning. First of all, there's two gates. And secondly, there's two trees.

And thirdly, there are two houses. And you can see very clearly in the pictures that Jesus uses. He is giving a very polarized picture.

There's two ways. Two gates, two houses, and two trees. So first of all, we come to two gates, and we touched on this last Sunday.

Jesus says in verse 13, Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide, and the way is easy that leads to destruction. And those who enter by it are many.

For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard that leads to life. And those who find it are few. So two gates. It's the first picture.

[ 48 : 57 ] So I was preparing this. My mind went back to 10 days ago, probably. I'd been away on the mainland, and I was in Glasgow Airport, and I was preparing to come home.

I was in the airport in plenty of time. I'd been working, and I was just sitting, having a coffee, and I was just waiting for directions, because you've got the screens all over the airport, telling you which gate you've got to go to.

But I'd come early enough for the screen to say, your gate will be notified to you at quarter to seven, or whatever the time was. So I was sitting, waiting for the gate number to come up.

I was working away on the laptop, and having a coffee, and every now and again, I would take a wanderer up and see, is the gate up? And eventually, the gate number came up, and I checked it, and it was gate number 11.

Stornoway, Logan Air, Flight LM, whatever, gate number 11. So up I, I got off my chair, closed the laptop, put the coffee away, and I wandered in the direction of, of gate number 11.

[ 50 : 04 ] And I'd been to Glasgow Airport quite a few times, and as I was walking, I was thinking, this walk seems to be a bit longer than usual. Don't remember walking for this long in the past to get to, to get, get to the gate for Stornoway.

And it all seemed a bit unfamiliar to me as well, because I was seeing things in passing shops in the, in the airport that I didn't remember seeing before. But I kept on going for a while, and then I stopped, because I just wasn't sure that I was going the right way.

So I stepped back a little, and I looked for one of the screens, and I went back to the screens, and I checked it. And it wasn't gate 11 at all that I was supposed to be heading for.

It was gate number one. And as I looked at my watch, I needed to be there now. So what did I do? I had to turn around. And I had to move at high speed to get to the right gate, because gate number one took you to Stornoway.

Gate number 11 went somewhat obscure in Eastern Europe. So there was two very different destinations. Two gates, two destinations.

[ 51 : 21 ] And that's the picture that Jesus paints. Two gates that lead to two very different destinations. There's the narrow gate.

It's the less popular gate. There's fewer people who are going through it, because Jesus says it leads to a way that is hard. And the word hard there in the Greek is a word that's related to the word for pressure and persecution.

Jesus is saying narrow gate, hard way, pressurized way. It's persecution if you head in that direction. But the destination, says Jesus, for those who go through the narrow gate, it's life. It's life. That's gate number one. Narrow gate. Hard, pressurized way. Potential persecution, but at the end of it, destination, life.

Then there's the other gate, and it's a wide gate. It's a more popular gate, because it leads to what Jesus calls an easy way.

[ 52 : 45 ] Literally, in the Greek, it means a broad way. A way where there's no restrictions placed upon you. It's a way where anything goes.

You can do what you want. You can be what you want. You can live as you want. It's a wide gate. It's an easy way. It's a broad, expansive path.

There's lots and lots of people on it, says Jesus. But the destination for those who go through the wide gate is destruction.

It's death. And Jesus is saying to us, along with the people on that mountain 2,000 years ago, he is saying, make your choice.

Jesus is the narrow gate. We thought about that last Sunday. And if we come to him, if we follow him, we're on the way to life.

[ 53 : 47 ] If we are following Jesus, we are on the way to eternal life. The way is not an easy way. Sometimes it's a hard way to be a Christian.

Sometimes there will be pressure placed upon us when we are Christians. More so than if we weren't. sometimes we will be persecuted.

The way that Jesus leads us is not a way where we can do any selfish, sinful thing that we want.

There are restrictions. Day by day we are called to put selfish self, the flesh, to death.

Day by day we are called to repent of the sin that sometimes looks delicious to us. The gate is narrow says Jesus.

The way is hard but it leads to life. The question is an obvious question, are you and I on that way?

[ 55 : 11 ] Have we come to Jesus? Are we day by day turning away from sin and self and following Jesus?

If you're not in that way then you need to do what I did in Glasgow Airport. You need to turn around. You need to repent. That's what the word means.

Turn around. Change direction. and go to the right gate and do it quickly before the gate closes.

Every time I'm in the airport, every three or four minutes, maybe more frequently than that even, you have the tannoy announcement and you hear the person on the other end of the tannoy shouting, saying, last call for passengers X, Y, and Z.

Flight number whatever, leaving for Amsterdam. This is the last call. We're just about to close the gate. If you want to get on the plane, you need to move now. Get out of W. H. Smith, put your coffee down, get to the gate.

[ 56 : 21 ] It's just about to close. This is the last call. the scary thing is, we don't know when our last call will come.

We don't get 16 announcements. We don't know what day we are going to be called from this world. But today, if you hear the voice of Jesus, come to him.

do it quickly. Perhaps there's still time. Two gates. Secondly, there's two trees.

Verse 15. Jesus says, Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thorn bushes? Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thorn bushes? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

[ 57 : 33 ] Healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits.

So the next picture that Jesus uses in this sermon as he takes it to a conclusion is the picture of two trees. There's two gates and there's two trees.

In verse 17 we see that there's a bad diseased tree and it bears bad fruit, the kind of rotten fruit that will make you sick. Then in verse 18 there's the good healthy tree and it bears good fruit, the kind of fruit that will make you strong and well.

And the good tree with good fruit, it lives and it grows and it flourishes and the bad tree is cut down and thrown into the fire.

So that's the picture. What's Jesus talking about in this picture? Well we don't have to guess, we don't have to speculate and wonder what this applies to.

[ 58 : 51 ] Jesus tells us very plainly in verse 15. He's talking about false prophets. So how can a false prophet be spotted?

Because there were false prophets in the company that Jesus was preaching to. So how can false prophets be spotted? Well Jesus says this in verse 15, it's not that easy to spot a false prophet.

They don't come with a uniform and a badge that says false prophet, they come all dressed up, Jesus says in verse 15, like wolves in sheep's clothing.

So how do we spot them? Well actually I think that's not the best question to ask. That's not the right question for us to ask.

How do we spot a false prophet? How can we be alert to a false prophet amongst us? That's not the question. Remember the film Ghostbusters? these three guys that were dedicated in their lives to spotting, to looking for ghosts so that they could see them, they could find them, they could zap them.

[ 60 : 13 ] Well there are some people, there are some religious people and they take on the role of being false prophet busters. They're always looking for what's wrong with other people.

They love nothing more than blasting other people. But the emphasis in the Bible tends not to be on looking for what's wrong with other people.

It's about looking for what's wrong with me. Because I don't know what's going on in the heart of other people. I only know what's going on in the heart of me.

remember when Paul was counseling young Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 16 he's writing to Timothy he's giving him advice about ministry and he says to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4 verse 16 he says keep a close watch on yourself and the teacher.

In the New Living translation it says keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. And you know being a good tree being a good teacher rather than a false teacher it's about believing what the Bible says about Jesus and then living in such a way as to show through our lives that we do believe that Jesus is who he says he is.

[ 61 : 55 ] Being a good tree is about there being no disconnect between what we preach and what we practice. And Jesus goes on to make that application it's a serious application in verses 21 to 23.

He says there not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven.

On that day, that day is the day of judgment. Jesus says many will say to me Lord Lord this is an earnest crying Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name and then I will declare to them I never knew you.

Depart from me you workers of lawlessness. these are uncomfortable words.

Remember I have to live with them for longer than you do. And when we think back to the Sermon on the Mount when we think back 2000 years in time remember the most religious men of that day were listening to this sermon.

[ 63 : 24 ] The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes, they were in the front row. They were people with degrees in theology.

They were people with high positions in the church. And they're all listening intently to what Jesus has to say and yet Jesus says I don't know them.

Just thinking about it. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, one of the disciples, was sitting beside Jesus listening to this sermon and yet when it came to salvation Jesus didn't know him.

So at the heart of all this teaching what we have is the need for a personal saving relationship with Jesus.

Jesus is saying the thing that makes the difference is not your PhD, not your BTh, not your position in the church, not your ability to preach, not your ability to prophesy, not your ability to cast out demons.

[ 64 : 42 ] What matters is that I know you. what matters is that you have a saving personal relationship with me, says Jesus.

And the passage I think connects with John chapter 15 and again in John chapter 15, Jesus, he uses the illustration of a tree. Jesus is the tree, he is the true vine.

Jesus is the source of all health and all salvation and we become good trees, we become disciples by being connected through faith to him and abiding in him.

Jesus says in John 15 verse 5, I am the vine, you are the branches, whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches, are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.

[ 65 : 56 ] So what kind of tree are you? Asks Jesus. It doesn't matter if you're a preacher, it doesn't matter if you're a lecturer in theology, it doesn't matter if you're the moderator of the church of the whatever.

Jesus says to each of us, what kind of tree are you? Bad trees will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

It's a picture of hell, a picture of eternal death. good trees will grow. They'll be forever healthy and fruitful.

It's a picture of heaven. It's a picture of eternal life. It's very black and white. It's very clear.

It's very unsettling. It's very searching. because it's very important. your eternity and mine depend on what's going on in our hearts in relation to this teaching.

[ 67 : 25 ] Good trees are known by Jesus. Good trees know Jesus. They have a saving relationship, a live, current relationship with Jesus.

Good trees accept Christ. We confess our sin. We repent of our sin day by day, hour by hour. We put self to death continually as we abide in him.

Two trees, two gates, finally, two houses. Verse 24 to verse 27. Everyone then, says Jesus, who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, the floods came, the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

And the rain fell, the floods came, the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell. And great was the fall of it.

[ 68 : 46 ] It's a picture of two houses. Now, the thing about a house with a sand foundation and a house with a rock foundation is that at first they look just exactly the same.

There's no difference to the naked eye that the house on the sand foundation, the house on the rock foundation, at the beginning, when they get the completion certificate, they look just identical. They're the same. But over time, the house with the sand foundation, it starts to get damp because there's no foundation. You start to see a wee bit of subsidence.

The walls crack, just a wee bit. And then when a storm hits water level rises, the house with the sand foundation is washed away.

It's gone. It's just rubble. Whereas the house with the rock foundation, it stands firm. So that's the picture.

[ 70 : 06 ] It's very simple, it's very clear, and it's instructive. So if we just stick with the picture for a moment and think in terms of the illustration, why would anyone ever build a house on a sand foundation?

Well, there's two reasons. One is cost, and two is time. See, the thing is, it costs a lot of money to dig down and get the foundation right, and all that money that's required to dig down and get the foundation right, it's in the ground.

No one can see it. It's hidden. Now, if we saved on that money, and we put the money into what's above the ground, and got the best finishes, and the most stylish interiors, people, when they drive past the house, they would say, what a house.

It's a palace, it's amazing, it's beautiful, because you've pumped all the money into what's above the ground level. People will be impressed when they see the facade of the house.

So one of the reasons that we might want to build on a sand foundation is that it saves money. We don't have to spend all that money on the foundation. We can put it into the style.

[ 71 : 28 ] And the second reason we might want to build a house on a sand foundation is time. Because you save all that time in having to dig down. And if all we're thinking about is now, if we're only worried about today, if we have no thought of tomorrow or next week, when it comes to the construction, we'll cut some corners.

We'll take some risks, we'll neglect the foundation. foundation. But if we're sensible, if we think long term, we know that storms do come eventually.

Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow. But eventually, at some point, storms will come. And if we're wise, we will make sure that the foundation is strong, so that when the storms hit, we're not washed down the river.

river. So that's the picture. What's this picture all about? It's all about Jesus.

Who is the firm foundation? Jesus is. Jesus is the solid rock. He is the rock of our salvation. That's Psalm 95, isn't it?

[ 72 : 47 ] Our eternal security is founded on the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus. We're going to sing at the end in just a minute.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand. All other ground sinking sand.

earth. And so this picture that Jesus paints, it illustrates how important it is to build our lives here and our lives eternally on Jesus.

Are you building your life? Am I building my life on Jesus?

Is the cross precious to me? Is my joy, is my security at finding that empty tomb? tomb? Why would we not choose this morning to build our lives on Jesus?

[ 74 : 06 ] Same two reasons as the foolish builder. Cost and time. what does Jesus ask from me?

If I'm going to be his disciple, he asks for everything. He asks me to hand my life over to him and follow him.

Because he is Lord. And he is king. He isn't just the saviour who gives me a ticket for heaven and then sends me off to do whatever I like.

He is Lord. He is king. So I owe him everything. There's a cost to that.

And so for some, they don't want to build their lives on Jesus because it costs too much. and there are others who don't want to build their lives on Jesus because of the time factor.

[ 75 : 21 ] See, if all we think about, if all we live for is today, then we're going to build our lives on making money.

we're going to build our lives on being popular. Getting the approval of everybody. We're going to build our lives on owning material things that will impress people.

because all we can see is today. We want stuff in our hands. We want to check our bank accounts and say, oh well, I'm still secure because I've got X thousand in the bank.

I can pay the bills. We check our Facebook and our Instagram. People are still, they're liking my posts. Nobody's giving me a thumbs down. So many people building their lives on that stuff.

Because all they're thinking about is today. But Jesus says, remember, that day is coming. The storm of judgment day ultimately is coming.

[ 76 : 41 ] And only those who have built, their lives on Jesus will stand and be secure and be safe forever.

So what will it be? Asks Jesus. You need to make your choice. Two houses.

trees. What are you building your life on? Only a life built on Jesus will stand forever.

Two trees. Which tree are you? Asks Jesus. There is only eternal life and eternal health in those who know and who are known by Jesus.

And two gates. Which one will you enter? Only the narrow gate. Only those who come to and through Jesus are on the way to life.

[ 78 : 02 ] your choice. Make your decision, says Jesus.

Life and eternity are determined by this decision. Choose wisely. We'll close by saying to God's praise.

a hymn which is a response to this. If we sing this hymn from our hearts, then we are choosing to follow, to trust, and to build our lives on Jesus.

Mission praise 473. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Jesus'  
My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
No merit of my own, I claim, but only...