

8.9.24 am

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning everyone. Warm welcome to the service this morning and those who are visiting with us. If you have one or two with us today, you are very welcome.

And if you are able to stay behind, please do so. There is tea and there is coffee after the service in the morning here. I'm not going to read through all the intimations. I said that a couple of weeks ago.

I am going to highlight just a few that may be overlooked otherwise. The first is to say thank you to all those who were here, all those who helped out in any way last night at the Curry evening. It was a great evening. I'm scanning the room looking for Cammie. Is he here? Where are you, Cammie? There. It was a great evening and I think there was something in the region of... £1,800 and there's still a donation to come in this morning. So £1,800. These were expensive curries. £1,800 was raised last night for the Island Study Conference which will be next year in February.

[1 : 0 9] Cammie and David Cameron and Anne are all on the committee for that. That's how they've organised the event here. So if you weren't there last night but you'd like to make a donation, you can still do that today.

So please, please note that and thank you for all who helped. In the course of the week, just a couple of things to highlight. There's lots there but I'm just going to highlight a couple of things. First of all, Tuesday night... Tuesday night... There is Road to Recovery as usual.

Road to Recovery is on Tuesday at 7 till 8. So usually there's just a very few of us that meet in the wee room along at the end. But this coming Tuesday, there's going to be an open meeting. It won't be in this room, it'll be in the prayer meeting hall. And at that meeting, there'll be one speaker who I don't know if he's confirmed yet. So I'm not going to mention his name.

[2 : 0 9] And also Shona, our own Shona Davidson. I don't know if she's here but she'll be listening online if she's not here. But I think Shona's going to share a word of testimony of that as well.

There'll be savoury snacks and sweet snacks. Thanks. And just the opportunity to come together to praise God and to hear a little of how God works with those who have that particular struggle with addiction.

All of us struggle with sin. All of us struggle with addictions of one kind or another. But we'll hear a little about that ministry. And for those who maybe don't attend but who want to know a little more and who want to pray, I would commend that meeting on Tuesday evening.

The ordination and induction of David Ferguson to the congregation in North Uist is due to take place this coming Saturday at 11 o'clock in North Uist in the Free Church over there.

And if you'd like to go, there is a bus on the other side that would say you're taking your car over just to get numbers of how many would like to use that and how many they're catering for.

[3 : 1 9] Maybe you could have a word with me and I could give an indication of that to those on the other side of the sound. The last thing to highlight is that next Sunday, the morning service, Scott will be preaching.

He'll be taking that service. The evening service will be cancelled here. We won't have an evening service here. It's the Scalpy Communion through Thursday until Sunday.

And you've had the details of the preachers there. But to give us the chance, we don't often get the chance to come together as two congregations because usually our weekends are clashing. But on this occasion, we're not.

And so there's the opportunity to come and join together with the congregation in Scalpy next Sunday evening. And that is at six o'clock.

So please note that also. Let's begin this time of worship. We're going to sing the hymn, Bless the Lord, O My Soul.

[4 : 19] And just before we do so, I'm going to read a couple of verses from Psalm 103, which is the psalm that this hymn is a paraphrase of. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me.

Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgives all your iniquity. Who heals all your diseases. Who redeems your life from the pit.

Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. Who satisfies you with good. So that your youth is renewed like the eagles. We'll stand to sing in just a moment to worship God in this hymn.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul.

Worship his holy name. Sing like never before. O my soul, I'll worship your holy name.

[5 : 37] The sun comes up. It's a new day dawning. It's time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me. Let me be singing when the evening comes.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul. Worship his holy name.

Sing like never before. Oh, my soul, O my soul. I'll worship your holy name.

You're rich in love and you're slow to anger. Your name is great and your heart is kind.

[6 : 35] For all your goodness I will keep on singing. Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul. Worship his holy name.

Sing like never before. Oh, my soul, O my soul. I'll worship your holy name.

And on that day when my strength is failing, The end draws near and my time has come.

Still, my soul, I'll sing your praise unending. Ten thousand years and then forever more.

[7 : 35] Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul. Worship his holy name.

Sing like never before. Oh, my soul, O my soul. I'll worship your holy name.

I'll worship your holy name. I'll worship your holy name.

Amen. Let's draw near to God in prayer.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day. And we thank you for so many reasons that we have to consider and to stir us to worship.

[8 : 38] We thank you that we can say with the psalmist all these years ago, Bless the Lord, O my soul. And we thank you that you are the God who is worthy of our praise every day of our lives.

We thank you that that's a song, it's a prayer. It's an expression of worship that should never cease to be heard from us. We think back to the psalmist who wrote these words.

And as we think about his life, we can think about many different events. Days of rejoicing and days of trouble.

Days when there was peace. And days when there was great distress. Days when things were bright and when life seemed easy.

Days when there was darkness and there was great difficulty. And yet the continuing prayer and praise was, Bless the Lord, O my soul.

[9 : 40] We ask that you would help us to follow that lead. And we pray that you would help us today. Whatever is going on in our lives to be able to say, With our lips and from our hearts, Bless the Lord, O my soul.

We thank you for seasons. Sometimes when we find ourselves going through refreshing times. When there are green pastures and still waters. We thank you for these seasons where we know that sense of life being good.

And things going our way. And we thank you that every blessing that we enjoy in these times comes from your hand. We thank you that also when we're going through struggles.

And when we experience grief. When we are going through heartache. When we are anxious. When we are troubled. Still you are with us.

[10 : 43] And you promise that you will never leave us. Nor forsake us. We thank you that sometimes it's in the hardest of times that we realize more of your love for us.

Sometimes in the hardest of times that we are made more like Jesus. So we ask that you would be working within us. You know each one of us here.

Our families, our situations, our struggles. And as we come before you. We ask Lord that you would bless us.

And that you would help us to worship you. Through whatever we are going through in life. We pray for anyone who's never yet come to the point of worship. Who may come and sit in services.

Who may even say the words. But the heart is unchanged. We ask Holy Spirit that you would be working. In each heart this morning.

[11 : 43] That we would see our sin. And that we would see Jesus as the saviour. The only saviour of sinners. That we would come to the cross each one of us.

Seeking that forgiveness. And that we would rejoice. In the empty tomb. The fact that Jesus who died in our place. Rose from the dead. And promises everlasting life to all.

Who believe. Help us each one we pray. To believe. Grant to us the gift of faith. That every one of us would be. Believing in Jesus.

That we would be saved. And that we would worship. On this the Lord's day. In spirit. And in truth. We pray for. Those who are with us.

Visiting today. We thank you for them. We ask that you would bless them. And the congregations that they may come from. Lord. That you would be. At work there. As that you would be at work here.

[12 : 39] And we pray for some of our own. Who are. Away from us at this time. We think. Especially of. Some of the students. Who are heading back. Some perhaps. Anxious about. The way ahead.

We ask that you would. Minister to them. That you would bless them. As they travel. That you would bless them. Those who are at a distance. And that they would know. That wherever they are.

That you are with them. We pray Lord. For our nation. You have told us to pray. For our nation. We pray for those. That you have allowed. To be in authority over us.

And we ask that you would give them. Wisdom. That you would grant them. The humility. To see that they are in need of wisdom. As a country. We are far from you. Have mercy upon us.

We pray. And draw us back. And we pray for all nations. That right across the world. On this day. The name of Jesus. Would be lifted up. We pray even for countries.

[13 : 33] Where the name of Jesus. Cannot be named. And yet still. In these places. You have your people. And we ask that through. Words where possible.

And witness. That Jesus would be lifted up. And that many. Would be drawn to him. We pray for those. Who struggle Lord. With addictions. As we mentioned.

Road to recovery. We ask for the meeting. On Tuesday evening. That you would draw many of us. To that meeting. That we would be. Inable to. Worship you together.

And to pray. For those who struggle. And we ask Lord. That. Even those who may watch. At a distance today. That you would help them. As you would help us.

We recognize. That all of us are sinners. We struggle in different ways. But we are all. Sinners in need of your grace. And so we pray. For that ministry in particular.

[14 : 27] We ask now. That you would go before us. In the service. That you would take away. From our minds. Every distraction. That you would work. In our hearts. To make them soft.

And responsive. To your word. And we pray. That your word. Would go forth. In power. And be recognized. As the word of God. And not the word. Of a man. Hear our prayers.

Take away our sin. As we confess them. And fill us with the Holy Spirit. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. Boys and girls. Would you like to come forward please?

Yes. How are you all today?

Good. Good. Very simple question for you today. Well. Let me start. Let me rewind a little minute.

[15 : 27] First of all. This week. I had. Two days of meetings. And they were in Inverness. Has anybody ever been to Inverness? Yeah.

Tell me this. How do you get to Inverness? If you were wanting to get to Inverness. How would you get there? If you were going to go to Stornoway.

Then you would get to go to Inverness. So you'd get to Stornoway. So you'd go in the car to Stornoway. And then what next? Could use the ferry to go to Inverness.

Could use the ferry to go to Inverness. Yeah. So that's one way. Any other ways to get to Inverness? Ben? Not Ben. Yeah Ben.

Drive. You could drive. Yes. You'd drive. And then you'd get the ferry. Yeah. Johnny? Drive to Stornoway. And then drive.

[16 : 25] And then drive to Inverness. Yeah. So you'd drive ferry. And then drive to Inverness.

Yeah. Michael? And then the airport. You could go to the airport. So. You could head to Stornoway to the airport.

And then you could fly over to Inverness. So you could drive to Stornoway. And go over on the ferry. Or you could drive to Stornoway. or you could go over on the plane.

Any other ways? Callum? You could swim if you're a really good swimmer. Yeah? Are you a good swimmer? Not bad, yeah.

Michael? You could drive. You could drive, yeah. Well, you couldn't drive all the way, of course. Maybe a hovercraft.

A boat, a submarine. Yeah. I'm thinking more simple, which is nice. Because all of our so far is Stornoway. Shawnee? You could go on Tarbert Ferry as well. So here's the question.

[17 : 25] Is there one way to go to Stornoway, or are there many different ways to go to Stornoway? Stornoway? I thought it was Inverness. Sorry, Inverness, sorry, yeah. Where would I be without you, Michael?

Inverness, yeah. One way or different ways? There's different ways. Here's another question for you, right? Most of you here, you've been in the church quite a lot of times, haven't you?

Yes. Tell me this. Is there... See, when you're coming into the church, is there one way, one door, or are there different ways, different doors?

To come into the church? Yeah. Yeah. Back door. There's different... How many doors is there? Lots of different doors. There's a door over there. You can't open it. You can't open it from the outside, but you can open it there.

There's a door over there. There's a door over that way. If you were fit, and not too big, you could maybe climb in the window.

[18 : 29] Thank you. Like, yeah. Another story, another day. There's a hidden door. There's a hidden door right over at the side.

It's not hidden anymore. Everybody knows about it now. So there's quite a lot of different doors.

There's quite a lot of different ways. If you want to come into the church, and if you want to go out to the church, not one door, not one way.

Lots of different doors, lots of different ways. If you want to get to Inverness, not one way. There's different ways. Last question. Most important question. How do you get to heaven?

Finally. You believe in Jesus. Let me ask it another way. Is there one way to heaven? Or are there lots of different ways to heaven?

Is there one way, or is there lots of ways to get to heaven? There's only one way to get to heaven. And what is there a way?

[19 : 33] Finally, you said it. To believe in who? To believe in Jesus. Listen to what Jesus said. One day, he was sitting with his disciples.

His disciples had lots of different questions. And he said this to his disciples. He said it to a guy called Thomas, who was always asking questions. And Jesus said, I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father. That's another way of saying, no one gets to heaven, except through me. Can you remember that? Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father. No one gets to heaven, except through me. So boys and girls, do you want to go to heaven? Not today, but do you want to get to heaven?

We all want to get to heaven. So how do we get to heaven? We get to heaven by believing in Jesus. There's only one way. Some people would say, I can get to heaven by doing lots of good works.

[20 : 42] That's not the way. Some people would say, I can choose all different religions. There's lots of different doors. Jesus says, none of these doors open. One way, one name, and it's Jesus.

So let's believe in heaven, and let's pray. Let's close our eyes, put our hands together, and let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you've opened up the way to heaven. We thank you that you are the way, that you are the door, that you are the gate, and everyone who comes to you gets to heaven.

We thank you that when we want to have our sins forgiven, when we want to know that we are safe forever, when we want to have everlasting life, we come to Jesus. We believe in Jesus, and he is the one who unlocks heaven's door and gives us life that is forever.

So help us, we pray young and old, to be believing in Jesus, and to know that we are safe today, and forever. And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now, we're going to sing a psalm, and it's a psalm that speaks about Jesus.

We pray for the young ones. We thank you for them and for the way that they listen. We ask that as they go through to Sunday school, that they would hear the good news about Jesus and that they would understand and believe and walk with Jesus from the early days all the way through their lives.

We pray for those in the creche as well and the wee one with us in the service here too, that you would bless each one of them. We ask that you would help us not to hinder the young ones from coming to Jesus, but let them come to Jesus and do everything we can through our prayers and our words and our actions to bring these young ones to Jesus.

So hear our prayers and help us as we study your word. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. If you could open your Bibles, please, at Matthew chapter 10.

It's a fair chunk that we're looking at today, so you'll find it much easier to look at the text on my face. In fact, it might be easier at all to actually just leave the text on the screen for those who might not have a Bible.

[36 : 44] And I'll just tell you various points that we'll go through, but it might be easier to follow with the text and through the points. Matthew 10, and looking at the whole chapter, I suppose, in terms of the context, but looking from verses 8 to verse 42 in particular.

And what we see in this chapter is Jesus calling the twelve disciples, the apostles, to come to him. And then having come to Jesus, he sends them out on this particular mission. He sends them out into ministry. I was thinking back probably 17, 18 years now when I was preparing this and remembering when I first was sent out, I suppose, into ministry.

It's good to have Scott here with us as a minister in training. And I remember being a minister in training. It was a probationary minister, we were called, in a church in Inverness.

And I'd only been in the church. I'd finished my training. And I'd only been in the church for about two weeks. And the minister who was there told me that he was going off on holiday for the next four weeks.

[38 : 17] And I was astounded. So I asked him the question, well, who's taking all the services? And he looked at me and he said, you are. Morning, evening, prayer meeting, you are.

And then I said, what happens if someone dies? Who takes the funeral? And he said, well, you'll take the funeral.

I said, but I've never taken a funeral. He said, well, you'll soon learn. And he smiled. And off he went on four weeks of blissful holiday. I think I had 16 funerals in four weeks.

I'm not even joking. But I can remember back to that conversation as he was heading off and I realized I was going to be on my own. To say I was apprehensive at the prospect of that is a massive understatement.

And I think as we look here at the apostles in Matthew 10, as we look in on the 12, I imagine as Jesus sent them out to minister, they would have been feeling fearful.

[39 : 30] So in verses 8 through to verse 42, Jesus, having called them in and now sending them out, he prepares them for the mission that he'd set out for them.

And he tells them what to bring as they go out in his name. He tells them what to expect to encounter in ministry.

And Jesus' words, this speech, this lesson that he shares with the disciples, it's full of instruction, it's full of teaching.

And yet it's full of the realism of what to expect as they went out onto the mission field. And it's also reassuring because Jesus addresses their fears as they go out.

So we're going to look at this section today. And if you're asking the question from the outset, what's this got to do with me? The reality is, if you're a Christian, it's got everything to do with you.

[40 : 38] In one sense, every one of us is called to be a minister. We are sent out every day to be salt and light.

So these words are not just for the apostles, the disciples back then. They're for disciples of Jesus who are here in this place today.

So we've got five points in the time that we have, hopefully. And the first point that we come to this morning is provision.

Jesus speaks to them, first of all, as they're heading off about provision. And in verse 8, where we start off, Jesus, he shares the job description with the apostles, the disciples.

And he tells them what they're to do. He says, And the answer was from Jesus.

[42 : 06] He promised to provide them with what they needed to be able to serve him. If you rewind back to verse 1, Jesus called to him his 12 disciples in verse 1 So Jesus, he promises to give them what they needed to serve him.

He promises to provide everything that they needed to be equipped with to be his ministers. And they were going forth on the basis of that promise.

And we do the same. To be a minister for Jesus, whether it's in full-time ministry like Scott is going into, or whether we're teaching an SU group like Ian and Cammie, whether we're involved in Little Fishers, or Road to Recovery, or YF, or Sunday School, right down to the quiet conversations with friends that no one else sees, all these ministries, all these things that we are called to do, Jesus promises to give us what we need.

Promises to give us the strength, to give us the words, to give us the courage that we need to be able to serve him. John 15, we quote so often, Jesus says to the disciples, apart from me, you can do nothing.

But as we come to Jesus, he provides what we need to be able to serve him. So there's that promise of provision in ministry.

[44 : 02] And notice that Jesus' promise of provision, it goes right down to the small details. Verse 9, Jesus says to the twelve, acquire no gold, nor silver, nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff, for the labourer deserves his food.

So Jesus, going right down to the details, he says to the disciples, you don't need to bring suitcases full of clothes as you head off on this mission. They didn't need to have vast sums of money saved before they departed out on this work of mission.

They could trust God to provide what they needed. Verse 11, And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart.

So the disciples, you can imagine them saying, well, we're going off. We don't know how much money we have. We're only taking the one outfit. Where are we going to stay?

And Jesus says, the accommodation will be provided. But notice he doesn't give them a postcode. He doesn't give them something to put in the sat nav.

[45 : 29] He just says, you go off and you serve me and the accommodation will be provided. And he says also, don't go hopping from house to house.

You know, looking for luxury. Just find the place that's provided and stay in that one place. It's a base that you can minister from. But it's all part of the promise of provision.

Hannah, the commentator, Hannah got a fright when I said that. Hannah said, the emphasis here is upon simplicity, austerity, and the urgency of the mission.

It is not so much that Jesus desires his servants to suffer from lack. It is that he wants them to remain dependent and most likely grow in faith and trust.

So Jesus, he calls the disciples to come to him. He sends them out and as they go out, fearful, he makes this promise that he will provide what they need to minister in his name.

[46 : 40] From the courage, from the words, right down to the money and the clothes and the accommodation. And as we think about this, there's both a comfort and there's challenge in these verses.

The comfort is found in knowing that God will provide what we need. If we are disciples of Jesus, if we are children who call God our Father, we have the promise and we can find that earlier in the Sermon on the Mount also, we have the promise that God will provide what we need.

Both spiritually and even materially. And so we don't need to worry. So there's the comfort of knowing that.

But then, there's also the challenge here of following the example of the disciples in travelling light. Max Lucado, the author, wrote a book called Travelling Light.

And he, in the book, makes the case, the observation that when we are Christians, when we are in this world, we are travelling through it.

[48 : 10] We are called to serve Jesus. And so the challenge is not to pick up lots and lots of this world's stuff that will hold us back, but to travel light, to depend on Jesus.

And to remember, we're only here for a wee while. And so, our focus is not to get to the next comfortable place of accommodation. Our focus is to be on the mission that Jesus has given us to follow him and to tell people about him.

So, the first point here is provision. Jesus, as he sends out the disciples, he gives them this promise of provision. The second thing, the second point is persecution.

Because as Jesus sends out the disciples, he also warns them, as you go, don't worry, I will provide for you, but as you go, you need to know you're going into persecution.

As you enter the house, says Jesus, verse 12, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

[49 : 25] And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or time. Truly I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah for that time.

So Jesus, as he speaks with his disciples, he's saying to them very plainly, not everyone will be happy to see you. Not everyone will be happy to receive you.

There will be resistance as you go out in my name. And there will be flat out rejection of you and the message that you bring. And to those who were listening in from the sidelines, those who weren't the disciples of Jesus, but those who were listening in with interest, Jesus is saying that if they were part of the group who would reject the disciples and the teaching the disciples bring, there would be judgment.

So to the disciples, Jesus says, know this, some will reject you, some will resist you. And to the wider group, some of whom would be the rejecters and the resisters, Jesus is saying to them, if you reject me and my people and the message, there will be judgment.

So already we're seeing that the disciples are heading off into a pretty turbulent mission.

Sometimes we hear about spin doctors in politics and particularly that are spin doctors.

[51 : 20] And they're experts that are hiding the negative and emphasizing the positive. But we see right from the outset here that Jesus is no spin doctor.

He speaks plainly to the twelve about some of the hard things that they will face. And he goes on in verse 16 and emphasizes it even more.

He says, Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. So be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves. And he tells them about the kind of wolves to expect.

He talks about political wolves, governors and kings. And then he speaks to them about religious wolves. religious wolves.

And he even talks about wolves that would be within their own families. You will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, says Jesus, verse 18, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

[52 : 27] When they deliver you over, do not be anxious of how you are to speak or what you are to say, for you are to say what will be given you in that hour. There's a wee word of encouragement there for those who, like we all do, get stressed out about witnessing.

Sometimes we think, you know, I could never speak for Jesus. I can never go out and share the gospel with my friends because I don't know what to say. And Jesus is saying to them back then and he says to us still today, don't worry about what you have to say.

The words will be put in your mouth in the hour that you have opportunity. So don't stress over what's in the future.

For it's not you who speak, verse 20, says Jesus, but the spirit of your father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death and the father is child and children will rise against parents and have them put to death and you will be hated by all for my name's sake but the one who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in one town flee to the next for truly I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the son of man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher not a servant above his master.

[53 : 51] It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household?

Again, picture the disciples this fragile group of unusual characters. They're just about to go out on their first mission and Jesus says, well this can you imagine the colour draining from the disciples' faces as Jesus gives them this pre-mission talk?

The question we might ask is, why does Jesus speak so bluntly to them? Why is he so candid with them? And I think the answer to the question is so that they would know that they could trust him.

He doesn't just send them off saying, off you go guys, it's going to be great, you're going to have a ball. He says, no this is how it's going to be. There's going to be opposition, there's going to be difficulty, there's going to be persecution and when they then experience that persecution with each hit they take they would know more and more that they could trust Jesus and they wouldn't be surprised or confused or discouraged when the hits start to come.

So Jesus says, expect persecution and that's a message that we have to take on board today because today Christianity is not a popular teaching.

[55 : 54] Today, if you say that you follow Jesus and if you say today that you hold on to the Bible's teaching, there will be no shortage of people who will oppose you.

But Jesus said to his disciples back then and he says to us today, this is what to expect if you're going to follow me.

Jesus is saying to the Christians who are here this morning, don't be surprised, don't be discouraged if sometimes you have to take a hit for Jesus sake.

ministry. It's part of the cost of ministry. persecution. And if we're taking no hits, we have to wonder if we're actually part of the mission.

Jesus is very plain about the cost of persecution. He doesn't hide the cost in the small print. He doesn't, you know, like the adverts on TV, they give you the product and in the last two seconds, there's this sped up expression of the terms and conditions.

[57 : 17] Jesus doesn't give us all the difficult things in a sped up two seconds. He spells it out up front. This is the cost of following and serving Jesus.

There is persecution, provision, persecution. The next point is protection. So Jesus has just warned the twelve about those who will persecute them, but he goes on to say in verse 26, have no fear of them.

And again, we can just imagine the disciples' faces. We can imagine the whites of their eyes thinking about what on earth are we going out into? You can imagine them shaking at the prospect of all that's ahead of them and Jesus then says to them, have no fear.

Have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, verse 27, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

Jesus says to the disciples, don't worry about those who are going to persecute you. They are going to persecute you, but don't fear them.

[58 : 47] And when you encounter them, Jesus is saying, don't close down. When we experience persecution, and our persecution is very low level, when we experience persecution, persecution is the wrong word, but when we experience opposition, or rejection, or ridicule, what happens?

We tend to go quiet. We go off mission. And Jesus is saying to the disciples there, don't do that. Don't be frightened of those who come against you. And then in verse 28 and following Jesus puts fear into perspective.

He talks about them, talking about the persecutors, and them, they, the persecutors, they seem so big and scary. But what Jesus does in this verse is he shows how small they are compared to him, the God of heaven and earth.

and then he talks about the things that cause us to be fearful in this passing world, and he puts them into perspective. He shows how trivial they are compared to the really fearful situation of spending eternity in hell.

[60 : 18] Do not fear, verse 28, says Jesus, those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.

Rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. fear him for. If we just pause for a moment to apply this.

If the God of heaven and earth is against you, if you are sitting here this morning and you are rejecting God, if you are sitting here week by week and you are refusing to trust Jesus, then you should be fearful.

If we are in that position of rejecting the Lord, then we should be fearful of hell. We should be fearful of ending up in that place where soul and body are destroyed.

Remember, these are Jesus' words. But if, on the other hand, the God of heaven and earth is our Father, God, if Jesus is our Savior, we have nothing to fear.

[62 : 11] We have no one to fear because we have the promise of eternal fatherly protection. fear. So Jesus says to the disciples, don't fear those.

They can attack you physically. They can do nothing to your soul if you're in Christ. He says, fear the God who is able to cause you to depart into hell if you're outside of Christ.

Verse 29, are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Talking about the protection of God. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your father.

But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, says Jesus, you are of more value than many sparrows.

So take this promise. Those who are Christians here, take hold of this promise. If we are trusting in Christ, we have the protection of God over us.

[63 : 45] We have no one and we have nothing to fear. Even if we were taken from here and placed in a country where there is acute persecution, we have no one and we have nothing to fear.

fear. And when we grasp that, when we have this big perspective of eternity as opposed to the short segment that we call this world, and when we have the assurance of the God of eternity who is with us and who is for us, we can know joy, we can have peace.

and we can follow Jesus and we can minister in his name with courage and boldness and joy because we are protected, not from harm, but we are protected in harm.

The commentator says, the person who fears God alone need never fear any man or group of men. The fear of God is the fear that cancels fear.

Next point, we're almost there, is profession. Verse 32 and following. Jesus is teaching his disciples disciples, that as they go out into this turbulent mission, they are to profess that they belong to Jesus.

[65 : 39] They're not to go undercover, they're to profess that they belong to Jesus. One commentator says, God has no secret service. The public confession of faith in Christ is one evidence of true salvation.

Jesus says in verse 32, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

confession. So Jesus is calling them and he's calling us to profession, to standing up and telling people that we belong to Jesus.

And this is a really serious word for them and it's a really serious word for us. No secret agent, says Jesus. No secret mission.

If you belong to Jesus, if you are serving Jesus, you need to be out in the open. Even though it's going to cause persecution, even though it's going to cause resistance and rejection and make life difficult, Jesus says you need to profess my name.

[66 : 58] And some of us might be saying, you know, if I come out as a Christian in school if I profess my faith in Jesus, if I go to the communion table, it's going to cause trouble.

I've got friends who are going to say something about that. I've got friends and family members who are going to have a hard time waiting for me if I come out and profess my faith in Jesus.

And Jesus says, I know that. But you still must profess. even if it does bring trouble.

And even if it is costly and scary. And in verse 34 through to verse 39, Jesus speaks into the real issue that many have of just conflict even within a family.

Because one person says, I belong to Jesus, and the rest say, I don't want you to. One says, I want to serve Jesus, and the rest of the family are saying, just calm down.

[68 : 11] Don't be such a zealot. Just enjoy the world of it. Jesus says, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

Whoever loves son and daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

It's not an easy passage to digest, is it? Jesus sets the bar high. He seems to demand a level of commitment that maybe we're not that comfortable with.

but the reason is because Jesus is looking for disciples who are committed. Disciples who are not ashamed to say that he is Lord.

Disciples who are willing to follow him and to profess faith in him, even if it costs everything, everything in this world.

[69 : 34] world. And if we're here this morning and all we see is this world, we're going to read this and say, the cost of this is just far too high.

I'm not willing to pay this kind of a price. But to finish this section, Jesus takes our gaze from this world level.

And he reminds us of heaven. To the last point is paradise. Whoever receives you, says Jesus, receives me, verse 40.

Whoever receives me, receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he's a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. The one who receives a righteous person because he's a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.

And whoever gives one of these little ones, even a cup of cold water because he's a disciple, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

[70 : 49] So Jesus has spoken about the cost. He's hidden none of that. And now three times rewards.

In three verses, Jesus speaks about rewards. Hannah, the commentator, says, those who live a life characterized by empty pursuits will end up empty handed.

If we pour our life into this world, if we pour everything we have into getting this amazing property and being the best gamer or the greatest academic in the school or having the best wardrobe or whatever it is that we pour our life into in this world, if our life is characterized by what the commentator calls empty pursuits, at the end of this world, we're going to be empty handed. We can have the whole world, but we take nothing with us. We're empty handed. But Jesus is saying those who follow and serve him will receive a reward.

reward. So where is the place that the disciples of Jesus will receive rewards? Well, it's not this world, because almost all these disciples were martyred.

[72 : 33] They were killed for Jesus' sake. So where will we experience the rewards that Jesus speaks of? Where will we experience the fullness of God's provision?

Where will there be an experience of unending peace? Where will we know the reality of no persecution?

Where is there eternal protection, eternal security? Well, it's heaven. it's paradise.

We should think often about heaven because if we don't think often about heaven, we're going to waste our lives on earth.

if we don't think about heaven and hell, our lives here will be all about self.

[73 : 51] It's just what our culture is pressing us to do, is just be consumed with self. All we see is these 40, 50, 60, 70 years, and nothing beyond it, we will live lives which are all about self, not about the Savior.

If all we see is this world, we will live lives that's all about me, nothing about ministering for Jesus. and yet that's what the disciples back then were called to do, be ministers for Jesus.

And that's what we, if we are disciples of Jesus, are called to do today. Not live lives full of self and me, but live for the Savior.

accept the mission. Be a minister of Jesus Christ. We will pray.

[75 : 11] Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We feel challenged by your word as we think about the mission that Jesus set for disciples back then and still today.

We confess that often we fail, often we go off mission, often we fall silent, often we default back to living for self and not for the Savior.

Forgive us, we pray, and help us if we are believers in Jesus, to profess that and to live our lives here, serving Jesus and seeking a reward that is not instant in this world, but is eternal in the world to come.

Help us to see that there is a higher throne and may we be ready for that day and for that place. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We sing to conclude the hymn Mission Praise 1116.

There is a higher throne where we're encouraged to look to heaven. Amen. there is a higher throne that all this world has over faithful once from every time will one day come before the sun we'll stand made faultless through the believing hearts by promised grace salvation comes hear heaven's voice to sing their conquers and the rings the heaven of the sun of sky their praises bright all glory

[77 : 39] NINGNINGNING Strength and honor I to God and me Who reigns on earth forevermore
And there we'll find our home Our life before the throne Will honor Him in your earthly soul Where
we belong He'll wipe these tears they die As burst and thunder die The Lamb becomes the
shepherd king We'll reign with Him If heaven's choice to sing

And wondrous thunderings To ever force the star-fucked skies And raise His price O glory, blessed
Lamb Stand as the Lord and our To God our King Who reigns on earth Forevermore 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 Amen Amen.