

16.6.24 pm

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Preachers: Dr Antony Latham, Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good evening, and welcome to the service tonight. It's good to have a few visitors with us as well, and you're especially welcome to the service. We're going to begin this time of worship. We'll sing to God's praise, and we sing from Psalm 119, and the first two stanzas of the psalm.

Psalm 119, verses 1 and 2, and I will read these verses in English, and then we'll sing in Gaelic for those who are visiting.

We remain seated to sing in Gaelic, and we stand to sing in English. Don't ask me why. It's just the way it's always been. So we will sing these verses to God's praise.

Blessed are they that undefiled and straight are in the way, who in the Lord's most holy law do walk and do not stray. Blessed are they who too observe as statutes are inclined, and who do seek the living God with their whole heart and mind.

We'll sing these two verses in Gaelic, and after we've sang in Gaelic, Callum will lead us in prayer in Gaelic. And we sing these verses in Gaelic.

[1 : 45] And we sing these verses in Gaelic.

[illegible]

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

[3 : 29] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah. Amen. Amen.

[5 : 20] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. We'll sing to you God's praise again and the words of the hymn are on the screen. What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer? What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer?

[9 : 38] There is no more for heaven than to give. He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom.
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace. To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus.
For my life is wholly bound to Him. Oh, how strange and wide, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

Night is dark, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, and I am not forsaken. For by my side the Savior, He will stay.

I labor on in weakness and rejoicing. For in my need His power is dismay.

[10 : 45] To this I hold, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, my Savior, and I am not forsaken. Through the deep, His power is dismay.

For the night has been won, and I shall overcome. Yet not I, but through Christ in me.

No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven. The future's sure, the price it has been paid.

For Jesus bled and 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 need.

[11 : 46] All the chains are released, I am saved. I am free, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

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

[12 : 47] To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus. All the glory evermore to Him.

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

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

If you could turn now please to God's word. And open your Bibles at Matthew chapter 5. Tonight I'm going to say very little.

What I'd like to do is read this sermon. We spent, I think, seven weeks looking through the Sermon on the Mount.

[13 : 56] This sermon that Jesus preached on that mountain all these years ago. And it's no ordinary sermon. Because it's God the Son who is preaching the sermon.

They were hearing the word of God directly from the Son of God. So I want to just read the sermon in whole. We've split it into sections. It's good to actually read the whole sermon.

And think about how it sounded on the day that it was preached. And then I want to just spend one or two minutes. I promise you one or two minutes. Thinking about the response that we read of in the text to the sermon.

And then we'll move on to the next part of the service. So Matthew chapter 5 verse 1. Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain. And when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

[15 : 06] Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. So Jesus, he calls his disciples in and promises them blessing as they come to him.

And then having called them in, he now sends them out. And that's what we keep seeing in this sermon. Come in, now go out. And then he says to the disciples, he sends them out. You are the salt of the earth.

But if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It's no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world.

[16 : 14] A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand. And it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Then in the next section, through to the end of the chapter, Jesus speaks to them about the detail of their lives. How can they be salt? How can they be light? Well, they can be salt and light in the way that they act and they react.

Anger, lust, divorce, oaths. He goes right into the detail, the nitty gritty of our lives. And he says, this is how you can live out the reality of being salt and light.

And I'm not going to go into all the details of that. You can see that through to the end of the chapter. The way that we are angry and not angry. The way that we seek not to lust.

The way that we are within marriage. The way that we are truthful in our word. The way that we don't retaliate, but we show mercy and grace to each other.

[17 : 22] The way that we love our enemies. Jesus says, in these ways, in your lives, as I send you out, show that you are my disciples. Show that you are salt and light.

And then, after that section where Jesus sends them out, the magnitude of the task is immense.

And we can just imagine them as they are hearing this. And then he calls them back in. The whole of chapter 6 is a chapter about the life lived with God.

As a worshipper of God. And so he says, Jesus says in chapter 6, verse 1. Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them.

For then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues. And in the streets that they may be praised by others.

[18 : 19] Truly, I say to you, they have received a reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. So that your giving may be in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

It's about the relationship with the Father. And when you pray, says Jesus, you must not be like the hypocrites. They love to stand and pray in synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by others.

Truly, I say to you, they have received a reward. But when you pray, go into your room, shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do. For they think they'll be heard for their many words. Don't be like them. For your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Pray then like this. For your Father, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

[19 : 19] And forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received a reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face that your fasting may not be seen by others, but by your Father who is in secret.

And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. The emphasis again, life with the Father. The relationship with God. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body.

[20 : 23] So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if the eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to the span of his life?

And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

[21 : 21] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, what shall we drink, what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. So Jesus is calling them in. He calls them in, he sends them out, salt and light, he calls them back into this life of worship.

And now he sends them back again in chapter 7. Judge not, he says, that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

- [22 : 23] Why do you see the speck that's 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 is a log in your own eye?

You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Do not give dogs what is holy. Do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Don't judge, says Jesus. As I send you out, don't go out with that judgmental spirit. Then he calls them back in. Ask. How do we not judge? How can we do this? How can we live this way?

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.

Or which of you, if a son asks 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?

- [23 : 30] So whatever you wish that others would do for you, do also for them. For this is the law and the prophets. Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide in the way. It's 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. 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, 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.

- [24 : 38] Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them, says Jesus, 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 when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at this teaching.

For he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.

What was the response of the people to this unique, amazing, powerful sermon of Jesus?

Well, it says they were astonished at his teaching. So what do you think of that response? Well, it's not a bad response to be astonished, to be astounded, to be amazed by the authority with which Jesus spoke.

- [26 : 10] It's not bad. They weren't sleeping through the sermon. They weren't unmoved. They were impressed. They were astonished. It's a decent response, but it's not enough.

To be astonished or to be amazed or to be amused isn't enough to save us from sin.

To be saved, we need to accept Jesus by faith. We need to believe him. We need to bow before him.

We need to trust him. And tonight we're going to hear from Anthony in just a moment as he shares with us how he came to believe.

How he came beyond astonishment to faith through these words. We're going to sing before Anthony comes up.

[27 : 10] And we're going to sing a psalm that Anthony's chosen, Psalm 119 and from verses 33 to verse 40. We'll stand to sing. Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine.

And to observe it to the end, I shall my heart in pride.

Give understanding unto me, so in thy law shall I.

Yea, with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully.

In thy lost path make me too low. For I delight that in my heart unto thy testimonies.

[29 : 00] And not to be denied. Turn now away my sight and eyes.

From you in manatee. And in thy good and holy way.

Be pleased to quicken me. Confer to me thy gracious word, which I did gladly hear.

In thy seventh Lord who is devoted to thy fear.

Turn now away my fear reproach. For good thy judgments be.

[30 : 35] O for thy peace I have longed. In thy truth quicken me.

NING Open our eyes and our ears and touch our hearts that we may be moved from amazement or from astonishment to accepting Christ as our Savior and our Lord and knowing the assurance of being in him.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, thank you so much for asking me to speak my testimony.

Again, some of you already heard my testimony, but it's a great opportunity to talk a bit more in detail about the Sermon on the Mount, which we've been studying over the past weeks.

Well, I was born in Dublin, in Ireland. I was the youngest of five children.

[32 : 19] My parents had gone through a really difficult time because their third child, Michael, aged four, was drowned before I was born.

So they had this great trauma. But I was always amazed at my mother's faith in God, despite that. And she knew, she said many, many times, she knew that Michael was with the Lord Jesus.

And that sustained her. And that was so amazing to me. I went to church. It was a church of Ireland, Anglican church. Quite sort of low-key, friendly place.

The gospel was not particularly clearly preached, to be honest with you. But there was lots of scripture. So I was exposed to that. A very well-meaning place, but I'd say rather dry.

I went to Sunday school. And I heard the Bible. There was some, mostly, prayer at bedtime. My mother would pray with me.

[33 : 27] And she gave me some Bible notes, which I was able to read at times. I went to boarding school up in the north of Ireland, in Eskillon. And, yeah, that was quite a tough sort of place, really, to be.

I went to the age of 12 for five years. And at boarding school, I went through what's called confirmation, which is a thing that happens in the Anglican church, where it's around about age 12, 13.

You go through some lessons about scripture. And the Bible, how to be a Christian. And then you go through a fairly formal process of accepting the Christian faith.

And a bishop comes along, and it's a big church service. And I went through that, not totally and sincerely, but to be honest, I didn't really understand.

It was all dark to me. I didn't really understand it. And as I grew up, as a teenager, I began to doubt, seriously doubt, that the whole thing was true at all.

[34 : 34] I loved science and, of course, did biology. And I found that the theory of evolution, for instance, seemed to describe how we came about, and that creation didn't seem to be necessary even.

Of course, that's a load of nonsense. But that's what I believed at the time. And so I went to university to study medicine. I was quite happy to have discussions and arguments with, occasionally, with Christian people.

I admired them for their faith. But I thought I knew it all. I was an agnostic, I suppose. I wouldn't say I'd had no belief.

I even dabbled a little bit in looking into Eastern religions and ideas. So I suppose, in one sense, I was actually searching a bit.

Probably my main interest, to be honest with you, was climbing and mountaineering, even more than medicine, or particularly more than medicine. And God actually spoke to me at least once when I was in a very dangerous position.

[35 : 46] I've mentioned this before, on a particular climb in the Alps, where we were in a lot of danger. And I felt that he'd actually said, I actually have something for you.

There's a plan for your life. And I actually believed it at the time, but did nothing about it. Absolutely nothing, really. I qualified.

I then volunteered to work in a hospital in Kenya. Very soon after, I qualified as a doctor. It was run by Irish Catholic nuns. It was in a beautiful, remote area of Kenya.

Very poor. There were some other volunteers there as well. And it was really hard going. Often I was the only doctor.

It was just a doctor and nurses. And it was a very busy hospital. I was definitely not experienced enough for it. There were very extreme cases.

[36 : 46] Late presentation of people coming in. Much death, particularly among children. And I started to seek God in this situation, in these circumstances.

I said, God, if you're here, help. That sort of very basic prayer that some of us here may have had. There was actually, there was at least one African doctor who came to visit for a short time.

And he witnessed to me and he told me about his faith. And I'm sure that had a big effect on me. And I'm quite sure that my mother's prayers were very important as well. Now, one afternoon, I had a few hours.

And I was sitting in my little house in Africa. And I saw this Bible. This is actually the very one. Sitting on a shelf gathering dust.

And this is the Bible that my parents gave me when I was confirmed. Actually, I can read a little card that my mother put in here.

[37 : 55] To Antony on the day of his confirmation, December the 1st, 1968. And that gives you a hint of how old I am. Wishing you every blessing in the future with love from mom and dad.

Romans 8, verse 38 to 39. Her favorite verses. Most of us know those wonderful verses as well. So I picked it up and I said, I'll give it a go.

I started Matthew. It's a New Testament. So I started to read. And I went through the first chapters. And I got to chapter 5, which of course we've just read.

The Sermon on the Mount. And those very first words of the Beatitudes hit me. Blessed are the poor in spirit. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Now I knew that I was spiritually completely bankrupt, basically. I was needing help. And that was an amazing verse. Just that very first verse.

[39 : 00] It was a sort of comfort to the soul, I think. That one verse. There's nothing there about trying hard to believe. Nothing about pride. In fact, it's the very opposite.

And I think I'd seen people who seemed to be poor in the spirit. Who mourned. Who were meek. Patients, particularly, who were struggling.

And dying. Many who are humble. Tired. And grateful. I remember one young girl who had very advanced TB. She came in far too late.

She had TB of the spine. And she was wasting away in the bed. She couldn't move. There's a sort of serenity about her. A beauty. A humility.

Great courage. And she died so young. Despite all the treatment we tried to give her. But she left an impression on me. Like many others did. And I was being taught by such people.

[39 : 59] How privileged I was. How proud I was. How unlike that young girl I was. Now here Jesus affirms emphatically the poor in spirit.

Those who mourn. Those who are meek. Those who seek after and hunger for righteousness. The merciful. The pure in heart. The peacemakers. The persecuted. And this teaching started to reach deep down inside me.

I was obviously ready to receive it. And it completely contrasts. Or contrasted to me. With the world's teaching. Which is all about self-fulfillment.

Self-realization. Self-assertiveness. The exact opposite. So refreshing. So absolutely true. And I noticed in verse 12 of that chapter.

That those who are blessed for being persecuted and reviled. Were those who are persecuted for his sake. Jesus was owning this.

[41 : 03] Now imagine if David came up to the pulpit here and said. Blessed are you if you're persecuted for my sake. This is different. This is Jesus speaking.

The son of God. And I just felt that Jesus in those few verses. Was not simply teaching good ideas. He was teaching his morality. His truth.

His righteousness. His righteousness. Unlike any other teacher before or since. Obviously the Holy Spirit was beginning to work in me. As I read through all this.

And I was really captivated. He caught me absolutely immediately. And from then to the end of the sermon. And it's quite a long sermon. I was completely hooked. It was pure joy.

With a few tears thrown in. There was something about the purity of the teaching. The sermon is full of astounding. What I would call counter-cultural morality.

[42 : 03] Anger. It's not just about acts of murder that he prohibits. But just being angry with your brother. He constantly goes to the real root of our sinfulness. It's inside us.

Not just that which people observe. Lust. Not just committing adultery. It's the looking with lustful intent that really matters. Again he gets to the core of the problem.

The heart. Marriage. He upholds the sanctity of marriage. Oaths. Don't swear by anything. Simply say yes or no. Anything else comes from the evil one.

Retaliation. If anyone slaps you on the cheek. Turn to him the other one also. If you're forced to go one mile. Go two miles. Generosity. Give to the one who begs from you.

- Don't refuse the one who would borrow from you. Enemies. Pray for them. Hypocrisy.
- [43 : 03] Don't do any of your giving or religious practices for show. And then this shattering verse on perfection. Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.
- You can see here that already before any of us has finished reading this. We fail to meet this standard completely. None of us is perfect. And I knew I was miles off.
- Yet how wonderful it is. This is God's standard. This shows us what God is like. Perfect in goodness and holiness.
- And as I read this I knew of course that I couldn't possibly achieve it. But I was so glad that it was totally uncompromising. Who would worship a God who said it's okay to do a bit of sin here and there.
- This is uncompromising. Prayer as he goes on. Make it simple. Private. Between you and the father. Forgiveness. Unless we forgive then we cannot be forgiven.
- [44 : 10] Treasures. Lay them up in heaven. Those of the earth disintegrate. Even the sentence. Where your treasure is there your heart will be also. Is revolutionary.
- Anxiety. Anxiety. Don't stress about life. Food. Clothes. Tomorrow. Of the birds who are fed by the father.
- Are you not of much more value than they? And this long. I think this long passage about anxiety. Is probably the longest passage there. Shows how he understands us.
- With our stresses and our strains. He wants simple trust in him. Glorious stuff. Judgment. Simply don't judge others.
- Take the log out of your own eye. Then help others to take the speck out of theirs. It's brilliant. I don't mind saying that I was very emotional at this point.
- [45 : 07] As I was reading through it. I found it beautiful. Glorious. Perfect. I felt I was in the presence of Jesus himself. I was totally aware of my personal inadequacy.
- And unworthiness. But he was there with me. And then we have these wonderful words. Ask. And it will be given. Seek. And you will find.
- Knock. And it will be opened to you. There's a wonderful willingness here. In this section. Chapter 7. Verses 7 to 11. From God.
- To answer our pleas for mercy. And grace. And I knew I needed this. And silently. And wordlessly. I was asking him for this. As I went through it.
- And as I read this. I already knew he was Lord. He was real. He was with me. And I knew his love for me. He was there. As real as this lectern.
- [46 : 08] I knew him. It was like coming gloriously home somehow. It's a good way of describing it. Gloriously home. After being away in the wilderness.
- A prodigal seeing his father running towards him. All my worldly reasons for keeping away. All my so called cleverer thoughts.
- They evaporated completely. I then got a heading here. The authority of the teaching. I recognize that this teaching has authority.
- I'd read so many different books. With ideas. Clever thinkers. People good with words. But this was different. This was from the authority.
- It's not easy to define. But it was absolutely. And still is absolutely clear. Notice at the beginning of chapter 5 verse 1. He sat down.
- [47 : 05] No grandstanding. Not on some pulpit. He sat down. And his words just flowed from the source effortlessly. There was no need to beef it up.

Or try to appear clever. Like so many teachers of wisdom. It's completely revolutionary. Simply rings true. It is the truth. Direct from the source of truth.

Verse 11 again from chapter 5. It is the persecuted on his account. For his sake. That are blessed. And he puts himself there.

The very source and center. Of what life is all about. And at the very end of the sermon. As David has read.

We read what I already felt myself. And when Jesus finished these sayings. The crowd were astonished. At his teaching. For he was teaching them.

[48 : 03] As one who had authority. Not as their scribes. Other translations here have. The word astounded. Others say amazed. One translation say.

They were overwhelmed. That's a fair description of how I felt then. To be honest with you. There's nothing wrong with emotion. In the right place.

It's not enough. As David quite rightly said. But if it leads you to the way. The truth and the life. That is Jesus. Then it can be a good emotion. And by the time I finished chapter 7.

He was Lord. And so began a relationship. I've lost my place here. Hang on. I just want to say a little bit.

About my lack of theology. My lack of understanding. Of things to do with theology. I came to faith. With very little understanding. Really of scripture. I'd heard lots of scripture.

[49 : 06] But I hadn't had much teaching. And any young ones here. There are a few. You know more. Than I did. About theology.

About the Bible. Only later. Did I understand more. About the real meaning of the cross. And the deeper things of God. But I knew enough. As a baby Christian.

To follow him. And so. May that be an encouragement. To those of you. Who feel they don't understand. Everything in the Bible. Or the catechism maybe. There's no need to be clever.

Or to know everything. After all. Jesus said in Matthew 18. 3. Unless you turn. And become like children. You'll never enter the kingdom of God.

There's then. A heading I've got here. The impossibility. Of obeying. All this teaching. So what happened then? Perfect obedience.

[50 : 07] And harmony. No. No. The thing is that this teaching. Is perfect. It is the perfect law. Of God. I was not perfect.

And I'm not perfect. I've fouled up. I've failed again. And again. To obey this teaching. Does that mean that somehow. I'm lost. Or hopeless. No.

And this is where the teaching of grace. Through the cross. Comes in. To reassure us. I was reading again. Those verses in Galatians chapter 2. Where Paul says.

He's been crucified with Christ. And no longer lives. But Christ lives in him. But it's easy to miss. Verse 21. Just after this.

Which says. I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness were through the law. Then Christ died. For no purpose. So we have the perfection of the law.

[51 : 05] Exemplified in this incredible sermon. On the mount. And our complete inability. To fulfill it ourselves. And God says here in Galatians.

That if we were able to somehow. Completely obey this law. This teaching of Jesus. And therefore achieve our own righteousness. Then Jesus would not need to have died.

We would then have become perfect. On our own. But we are totally. Unable. To achieve this perfection. And I'm sure.

Everybody here agrees with that. Is there no hope then? The absolute hope. Is in this. Jesus has paid.

The penalty. For all our sin. On the cross. As the Bible says. He became sin. For us. This morning's hymn. Actually summed it up.

[51 : 58] When we were singing. This morning. You'll remember. When Satan tempts me to despair. And tells me of the guilt within. Upward I look. And see him there.

Who made an end. To all my sin. We have no righteousness of our own. He amazingly becomes. Our righteousness before God. Again in the same hymn.

Behold him there. The risen lamb. My perfect spotless righteousness. So by having faith in him. This is what I've discovered. We can live with his righteousness.

And not ours. And this is what Paul means. When he says. I do not nullify the grace of God. For if righteousness were through the law. Then Christ died for no purpose.

But he did die. What was his purpose? To rescue sinners like me. And to confer his righteousness. When we trust in him. 2 Corinthians 5.21.

[52 : 58] God made him. Who had no sin. To be sin for us. So that in him. We might become. The righteousness of God. God. Now I know.

That if I depended on my own righteousness. I would be lost. I became a baby Christian. Ignorant. Of most theology. But sure of one thing.

Jesus loved me. And was with me. All the way. Now. The next heading. I think is an important one. Growing closer.

In obedience to his teaching. Of course we still want to obey this teaching. But how? Well. What does Jesus say? John 15.5.

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.

[53 : 56] That's it. Apart from him. You can do nothing. With him. We will start to bear fruit. Fruit. Fruit that starts to look like.

The Sermon on the Mount. Forget about self-improvement. Without him. We've all tried that. Haven't we? We all know. Too. Of the fruit of the Spirit.

In Galatians. Wonderful fruit. That reflect the Sermon on the Mount. But this fruit is only of the Spirit. Not us. I need daily.

To abide in him. I've had to learn that sometimes the hard way. More and more. That this fruit might begin. In me. And it's the quality time.

We spend to give that relationship with Jesus. Through Bible and prayer. That. Really matters. And remember. As we heard in the children's talk today.

[54 : 53] In the battle with Satan. And there will be one. Jesus is the winner. Here. Is there a way back. When we fouled it up. Is my last.

My last little heading here. We had a man from Harris. Speaking to our little road to recovery. Group. On Tuesday. He now lives in Inverness.

Many here will know him. He truthfully told us. How terrible. His condition. His alcoholism. Had been over many years. He nearly died.

Quite often. He was suicidal. And during those dark times. He said to us. He assumed. That God. Had abandoned him.

How would God have anything to do. With such a person. He thought. He said. He said. He became a Christian. And he's not had a drop of alcohol. Since 2009.

I need thy presence every past begun, On the thy grace can't boil the tender's blood, To like thyself my guidance take a thee, Through glad and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no fool, when thee are done to bless, Hills of no wicked, on tears no better rest, Where is that sin, where great thy victory?

I triumph still in the cup, abide with me. O love thy cross, before my closing eyes, Shine through the blue, and point me to the skies, And storming grace, a dark's big shadows free, In life, in death, O Lord, combine with me.

[62 : 24] Heavenly Father, we thank you for the testimony that we have heard this evening. And we thank you for all that Anthony has shared. And we thank you for your word, And for the power of your word. We thank you for the beauty, And the authority of the sermon that we have heard, That reveals to us your purity, And the wonder of who you are in yourself.

You are the God who is worthy of worship. You are the God that we have been made to worship. Our hearts are restless until they find rest in you. And we pray for any tonight who may be the way that Anthony was When he was seeking, And where he was searching for a reality, For the reality of knowing you.

We thank you that even this evening, We have heard more in that testimony that Anthony knew As he sat there that afternoon in Kenya. And we ask, Lord, That if there's anyone here tonight Who hasn't yet asked you to be their Lord and Savior, That they would do that even now.

Pray for some who may be at a distance, Those who may have fouled things up, Who may have done that. We know, Lord, that we do that day by day.

We thank you that there's always a way back Because of your grace. And for any who are at a distance, We pray that they would come back And realize that you're the God who never gives up on us.

[63 : 52] And we ask, Lord, That you would help each one of us that knows you To abide in you. Apart from you, Lord, We can do nothing. But our hearts don't want to be apart from you.

We want to be close with you. And so we pray that you would help us this week To walk close with you And to know the joy and the peace, The blessing, And also to bear the fruit That comes from a close walk with God.

So bless your word to us, we pray. Bless the testimony to us, we pray. And help us to live by your word, To live by your truth, To live close with you.

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, The fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, Be with us all now and forevermore. Amen.