

18.5.25 am

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Date: 18 May 2025

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

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

Cresce and Sunday School, as usual. I think everybody knows that. There's nobody who would be looking to use that who's not aware of things at present. The service this evening will be taken by Scott, and the YF will resume tonight after various different things on over the last few weeks.

Kirk Session meeting tomorrow at 6. Please take note of that, elders. And a notice also about the Scalladale Junior Youth Camp this past weekend.

20 campers from across the Presbytery gathered for the Presbytery Youth Camp. We had them here with us last Sunday morning. A great weekend was had. The camp was partly funded by the Presbytery Youth Fund, which many individuals through Presbytery contribute to.

The Presbytery Youth Committee would like to thank everyone for their contributions, which makes weekends like this possible. And let's pray that all that was heard over the course of that weekend will be blessed to the young ones who were there.

[1 : 18] Lots of other notices. I'll highlight just a couple more. The Purim meeting on Wednesday will be taken by Scott. I say that just to encourage you to come along. That's at half past seven on Wednesday.

And men's Bible study every second Thursday. This Thursday at half past seven is one of the weeks that we will have the Bible study.

If you want any information about that, please speak to Scott. But service is next Sunday. I'll take the morning service in Scott in the evening, just as is the case today.

One final notice. It's hoped to have a very short Zoom meeting on Tuesday at half past six to gauge if there's enough helpers to run a holiday club this summer. So there'll be an email that goes out on the usual email.

And if you're able to help with that, please indicate or please come to the meeting so we can try to finalise some arrangements. These, I think, are all the notices.

[2 : 15] So let's now worship God and we'll sing to his praise from Mission Praise 1164. The words will be on the screen in just a moment.

Come, O fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace. We'll stand to sing to God's praise in just a moment. O fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace.

Teams of mercy never ceasing, all our songs of God is praise. Teams of God's love, unto your treasure.

Teams of my angels, tongues above. Teams that tell the God bless treasure. Of my Lord's unchanging love.

I remember God's great mercy. By his help I've safely done.

[3 : 34] And I know he will not fail me, but will surely bring me home. Jesus told me when a stranger, walking far away from God.

But to rescue me from danger, shed for me his precious blood. In God's grace I am his debtor. May the eyelids all renew. Let thy grace, Lord, my love better. Find my wandering heart to you. Go to wander, Lord, and heal it. Go to leave the Lord alone. Take my heart, O take and seal it. Seal it from your courts above. Let's unite our hearts in prayer to God.

[4 : 52] Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day, and we thank you for your gospel.

We thank you for the gospel that we have been singing in that first praise. We thank you for the gospel that we have been singing in that first praise. We thank you that you are the God who calls

us to come to you. And when we come, we are promised that the curse of sin is taken away from us.

And the blessing of God is given to us. So we ask, Lord, that we would respond to that praise that we have sung. That we would come to the fount of every blessing.

And that we would receive the grace that is offered freely to us. In and through Jesus. We thank you for all that we receive. That sometimes we take for granted.

Even the water that we drink and the food that we eat. The building that we sit in this morning. The homes that we are able to go back to. The measure of health and strength that we receive.

[5 : 57] We thank you, Lord, that you are the God who gives every good gift that comes from heaven above. And we ask, Lord, that you would enable us to be mindful and thankful for every blessing.

Every token of grace that we receive. Every breath, even that we breathe, is a gift from you. Help us to remember that. And to turn even our breath into expressions of praise for who you are.

And what you have done for us in Christ. And what you continue to do for us moment by moment.

We thank you, above all, for sending your Son, the Lord Jesus, into this world.

We thank you that he is the Savior. We thank you that he is the one who made it possible for us to receive the grace of God. That grace that saves.

We are conscious, Lord, that we cannot save ourselves. Not by ourselves, not by works, not by anything that we do. But we thank you that Jesus came into this world to do the work of salvation.

[7 : 02] We thank you that he lived for us that sinless life in our place. We thank you that he willingly went to the cross, the Lamb of God, slain to take away the sin of the world.

We thank you for the perfect sacrifice that Jesus was. The sacrifice that ended all sacrifices. And we thank you that when we believe in him, we have the assurance of sins forgiven.

And the resurrection life, which he himself demonstrated, is given to us as we believe. So give us faith, we pray, each of us, that we would believe. And we thank you, Lord, for the hope that we have in Christ.

We thank you for resurrection life. And we thank you for the comfort that that brings to those who grieve. We are conscious once more of many whose hearts are sore.

We are conscious of those who have met over the last few days in funeral services. We are conscious also of those who await funeral services over the next couple of weeks.

[8 : 06] And Lord, as we remember families who are grieving, we ask that they would know your comfort. And we pray that as your word is opened, as we come together as your people at funeral services, that we would hear and that we would take hold by faith of the promises of the hope of the gospel message.

So be at work, Lord, amongst us, we pray. Minister to us. Meet us at the point of our need. We thank you that you know us and you know our needs. We pray for those who may be anxious this morning.

We live in a world where things are so uncertain. We live in a world where often we are so conscious of brokenness. And we ask, Lord, that you would minister to us when we feel that sense of being ill at ease, that feel, feel that sense of anxiety.

We pray for some, the young ones that we think of, especially who are preparing to sit exams and who may have sat exams over past weeks. And some who are anxious about what is to come in terms of assessment.

Some who are anxious about results to come. And we ask that they would know the peace of God that passes all understanding. And that they and we would remember that you are the God who is with us in every situation and who has a plan for our lives.

[9 : 26] We thank you that although things come into our lives that surprise us, there is nothing that surprises you. And you promise to give to us all that we need, day by day, as we look to you.

So be with those who may have that anxiety over exams and assessments. We pray for those who may be anxious about their own health or the health of those that they love.

We pray for others who may be ill at ease over the job situation, the unpredictability of work. We are conscious of those who have that wrestle also.

We thank you, Lord, that we can take everything to you in prayer, from the details of our own lives to the situations that are far from us in the world. And we thank, Lord, of a world that needs to experience your peace.

We pray for countries where there is war. We pray for Ukraine. We pray for the tensions between India and Pakistan at this time.

[10:27] We pray for the Middle East, which always seems to be on the edge of conflict. And we ask, Lord, that although these places are far from us, although these situations we feel helpless ourselves to be able to do anything about, we thank you that we can take this to the Lord in prayer, and that the God of heaven and earth is able to hear and intervene.

So we pray, Lord, that you would be at work in these places, bringing peace. And yet we thank you that even when there is no peace, as we heard last Sunday, you are at work in places where there is war.

We think of all these people who have come to faith in Christ in Ukraine in the time of war. We thank you for many ministers who have gone out with the gospel message over this period. And we pray that you would be at work there as we continue to remember them. We pray also for the young ones who were at Scaloray last weekend. We thank you for all that was done there. And we ask that you would bless the seed that was sown to these young hearts, that they would hear, that they would remember what they were taught, that they would believe, and that they would walk with the Lord Jesus today and all the days of their lives.

[11:43] So be at work, Lord. With them we pray. Hear our prayers. Take away our sin. And lead us and guide us as we would seek to worship you. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? Please. Please. Are you guys today? I used to have to stand up there because I've got no microphone down here, but I've got a microphone here today. Something to show you today. Can you tell me what this is? It's a phone. It's a phone, yeah. So tell me, what do you normally use a phone for? Shawnee? Online stuff, yeah.

Maybe I should ask an older person. Let's get a hear. What do you usually use a phone for? Phoning people, yeah. So that's the old-fashioned way of thinking.

[12:59] When we first had phones, even mobile phones, what we would use them for wasn't going online and stuff. We would use it for phoning people. But this phone has a problem.

What does it say? It says, iPhone unavailable. And the date's wrong, really, as well. 11th of March, is it?

Yeah, the date's wrong as well. So this phone was a phone that one of the girls used before. And then they stopped using it when they got a different phone.

And then when one of us thought, we'll just use it for a wee while, we couldn't remember the password. So we're trying the password. Was it this? Was it that?

Was it the next thing? And we tried and we tried and we tried. And none of them worked. And we tried so many times that we kept getting locked out for like four hours and five hours and six hours.

[14:06] And then we tried even more. And now it looks like we're locked out forever. So it doesn't say try again in eight hours. It just says unavailable.

Maybe one of you technical people can take it away and you can wipe the thing. And we could start all over again. But it's a phone. And you would think that you could use it for phoning people.

But this phone, can't use it for phoning anybody, can you? And Anna, in the week in Glasgow, she's got a phone. And she was FaceTiming from her computer.

And she was FaceTiming from the computer because her phone just went kaput. And it stopped working. Battery died. Systems crashed. So she had a phone and it looked like she could use it to phoning people.

But it didn't work at all. And then you can have a phone that works. Like the one up there. And you can use it to phoning people in Tarbert.

[15:08] When you're in Tarbert, but see if you drive to Liberborough and you stop in Scarista. There's not a bit of signal. So even a phone that works, there's some places you go and you can't even make a call because there's not enough signal.

There's no Wi-Fi. There's no coverage to be able to do anything. So phones are things that we find very useful. But sometimes they're frustrating because they don't work.

And you might want to speak to somebody, but you can't. Do you think, boys and girls, that God wants you to speak to Him?

Are you sure? Do you think so? So if you want to speak to God today, right now, what do you do?

Friendly? You pray. And if you maybe were waking up and it's two o'clock in the morning and you're a bit scared because you've heard about a bogeyman under the bed, they don't really exist.

[16 : 24] But you know, it's two o'clock in the morning and it's dark and you're thinking, I wonder. And you want to speak to God. What do you do? Do you want to?

Do you pray? And if you're about to set an exam, like some of the grumpy teenagers, and you're feeling nervous and you want God to help you, and you want to ask Him to help you, what do they have to do?

Yeah. They have to pray. And do you think God hears our prayers? Yeah? Sometimes or always? Always. And you think that there's some places that we could go and God can't hear us because of where we are? No.

Even in Skarista, when we pray, He will hear us. We could go to Africa, we could go to India, we could go to Romania, we could go to anywhere in the world, and we can pray, and God will hear, and He's promised that He will answer.

[17 : 41] And He'll answer our prayers in the best way. We don't always understand that, but that's the truth. He always answers in the best way. So, what I was thinking about this morning is, isn't it good that God, when He wants us to speak to Him, isn't it good that He hasn't given us a phone?

We don't need a contract, we don't need to pay every month, we don't need to have a battery charged up, we don't need to have a device, anywhere, anytime, we can speak to God, and He hears us, and He answers our prayers.

So, let's pray just now, will we? Lord God, we thank You that You love us, and we thank You that You want us to speak to You.

You've given us the Bible, and we know that that's how You speak to us. But we thank You that we can speak to You about anything, the things that worry us, the things that make us excited, the things that make us sad, the things that make us happy.

We thank You that we can speak to You about all these things, and You hear our prayers, and You answer our prayers. We thank You that we don't need a phone, we don't need a contract, we don't need to pay money, we don't need to be in a special place, we don't have to be in church to pray, we thank You that we can pray in our rooms, from our beds, when we're playing football, when we're in the classroom, and You always hear, and answer our prayers.

[19 : 18] So help us, whether we're young, like the boys and girls, or whether we're older, to be always praying, and we thank You that You hear, and You answer us, always.

And we pray all these things, in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now, a hymn about that. What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear, what a privilege to carry everything, to God, in prayer.

What a privilege to carry, everything to God, in prayer.

How free trials and temptations, with kita.

How free kita. How free kita. How free kita. How free kita. How free kita. How free kita. How free kita. How free kita. How free kita.

[20 : 58] How free kita. How free kita. How free kita. to the Lord in prayer. Can we find our friends so grateful, who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with the Lord of prayer?

Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer. To thy friends despise for safety, take it to the Lord in prayer.

In his arms he'll take our shielding, thou wilt find us always there. Okay boys and girls, if you head through to Sunday school, remember to pray for them as they go.

I think they've raced the age this week.

[22 : 49] I'm just talking about Cammie. And if we could turn in our Bibles please to Matthew chapter 14 please.

Matthew chapter 14.

We've been going through Matthew over the last while and we've come to verse 13. The feeding of the 5,000. This is God's word.

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

Then he went to shore and saw a great crowd. And he had compassion on them and healed their sick. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, This is a desolate place and the day is now over.

[24 : 02] Send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves. But Jesus said, They need not go away. You give them something to eat. They said to him, We have only five loaves here and two fish.

And he said, Bring them here to me. Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said, A blessing.

Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

And those who ate were about five thousand men besides women and children. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

We'll sing again now to God's praise. This time in Gaelic. We'll sing from Psalm 46 and the last two stanzas of Psalm 46 in Gaelic.

[25 : 11] Be still and know that I am God. Among the heathen I will be exalted. I on earth will be exalted high. Our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side.

The God of Jacob, our refuge forever, will abide. These two stanzas of Psalm 46 and we'll remain seated to sing in Gaelic to God's praise.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[27 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[29 : 34] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. And so, what's the awful text?

[32 : 54] And we're the death of the death of the death of the death, and we walked with through a part of our life? What do we do when we go to the doctors and we sit down and we receive a diagnosis that we would have never wanted?

What do we do when we suddenly realize that the relationship that we cherished for so long is coming to an end?

What do we do even when we deal with something like the possible loss of a job? Because we're conscious of those who are wrestling with that just now.

Well, what did Jesus do when he received bad news? Look at verse 13. Now, when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself.

So what we learn here is that Jesus, having received this awful news, he has a quiet time. He has a time of devotion when he is able to be alone with his Father in prayer.

[34 : 26] And that's our first point this morning. It's a devotion. The first point is devotion. And every Christian, or every Christian that's spiritually healthy, knows how important it is to have a devotional time.

We talk about doing our devotion sometimes. We know how important it is to have a time that we set aside to be still and to know the presence of God with us.

We know how important it is to have a time where we are able to draw near to God in prayer, a time when we are able to sit with our Bibles and ask God to speak to us, a time where we can seek the help that we know that we need or the strength that we feel so lacking of.

Or sometimes a time where we can seek the comfort of God when our hearts are sore. Every Christian who is healthy knows the importance of that time of devotion.

And that's what Jesus is doing here. God the Son needs to be with God the Father. He needs this time. And so he withdraws.

[35 : 58] And he goes in a boat to a desolate place to have a quiet time. To have a devotional time with his Father.

And as we try to think ourselves into the experience of Jesus here, it's hard to imagine what emotions were flowing through the mind and the heart of Jesus as he receives this news about John.

We can, I think, reasonably surmise that Jesus would have felt an acute sense of grief because he's lost a loved one.

And that will be heavy upon him. I think it's highly likely as well that Jesus would have been feeling that sense of righteous anger fear towards Herod and Herodias who had executed John. and perhaps there's even that sense of growing fear as the shadow of the cross was being cast across the path of Jesus.

[37 : 19] Remember, John's death is pointing us forward to Jesus' death. He was the forerunner in life and in death of Jesus.

And so all these things are likely in the mind and the experience of Jesus as he takes this time. And yet he takes the time.

And I think it's worth noting that the first thing Jesus does when he hears this news is he has this time of devotion.

I think for many of us, I can speak for myself, I can't speak for all of us, but I think for many of us, when we receive news like this, we would have been more likely to want to have multiple conversations discussing the horror of what happened to John, our friend, our fellow disciple. I think we would have likely wanted to have conversations about the arrangements that now have to be made in the aftermath of this gruesome event. Or maybe we would have liked to have taken action immediately.

[38 : 47] Some of us are wired that way. When we get bad news, when we are horrified by something, we just immediately want to take action. So maybe that would have been our response.

We want to do something. We want to do something about Herod and Herodias. We want to seek to try to have them removed from power somehow.

But notice that Jesus, he doesn't speak with anyone before he first speaks to his Father. And he doesn't do anything until he has first taken time to be still in the presence of his Father.

And this devotional time, it's not a one-off. We're not looking at a situation that we see once in the Gospels.

This is something that we see Jesus doing many times. at different junctures in the Gospel records. We see Jesus going up onto a mountain to pray.

[40 : 06] We see Jesus getting into a boat in that lonely place on the waters. We see Jesus withdrawing from the crowds.

We see Jesus, we think about Gethsemane, even withdrawing from his closest disciples. to be alone with his Father for a time of devotion.

And so as we apply this to ourselves, if Jesus did not neglect that time of devotion, if Jesus needed to maintain this spiritual discipline, how much more do I, and how much more do you, how much more do we have to do this?

So let me ask the question before we move on to our next point. How is your devotional time? How are our devotional times at this point?

Are we? Life is busy, I know, but are we still reading our Bibles day by day?

[41 : 28] Not just church. Are we still reading our Bibles morning by morning? It's a very, very simple question. But it's such a crucial discipline.

Are we still going to a quiet place day by day to pray? Robert Murray McShane was a minister who, he died before the age of 30, but he was probably the most, one of the most effective, fruitful ministers of the last 200 years.

And if we want an insight into what made his ministry effective, I think it's packed into this quote.

This is what he said. What a man is on his knees before God, that he is and nothing more.

What a man, a woman, a boy, a girl are on their knees before God, that they are and nothing more. It's not about standing at the front. It's not about being seen in the activity of Christian service. the key to effectiveness, the key to spiritual life is found in that hidden place where we take time to be still and know that God is with us.

[43 : 10] Devotion. It's the first thing we see as Jesus receives this awful news. The second point is interruption. Verse 13.

But when the crowds heard it, they followed Jesus on foot from the towns. Now, if we rewind to the beginning of the chapter, verse 1, we're told in verse 1 that the fame of Jesus is growing rapidly. We were thinking about the fact that Jesus' ministry was going viral. People were talking about Jesus. Crowds were rushing to see and hear Jesus. They want to experience the healing touch of Jesus.

So when these crowds hear where Jesus is going, they go as fast as they can to get to him. And what that means for Jesus' quiet time is that it's interrupted.

So Jesus' devotional time more than likely was cut shorter than he would have liked it to be.

[44 : 22] And I think this is just a short point, but I think it's a point that is worth noting for our encouragement. Because sometimes, in fact, oftentimes, this will happen.

we begin with devotion, but very quickly we're into interruption. How often do you and I sit down to read the Bible?

We've got the coffee, we've got our Bibles, we've got our daily bread, or whatever the devotional that we're using is open on our laps. We're beginning to pray and the door opens.

And there's a visitor that you weren't expecting. Nice to see them, but you weren't expecting them. So the quiet time is interrupted.

Or maybe the baby wakes up an hour earlier than was scheduled. There's the interruption. Or the pager goes off. Or a phone call comes in from work.

[45 : 24] There's a family crisis of some kind. And all of a sudden you're into the fact that there is an interruption that has to be dealt with immediately.

And that's life. There are interruptions. Not everything fits into our neatly allocated time slots.

It happened to Jesus and it will happen to us. And I think we shouldn't be too discouraged or surprised when we are interrupted.

At certain times in life and certain seasons of life we have to be flexible, we have to be adaptable with our devotional times. God understands that.

But the key thing is that we actually take the time sometime to be with Him. I think in life actually, as I was reflecting a little on this this morning, we perhaps need to be a bit more open to interruptions than we are.

[46 : 38] We have our schedules, we have our plans, we have our routines. God has a way of breaking them. And sometimes the most surprising interruptions interruptions can be used to bring the greatest blessing, as we're going to see as this story continues.

Ephesians chapter 2 says that we are saved by grace, that's verses 8 and 9, but we're saved for works, that's verse 10.

And these works were told in Ephesians 2 to verse 10. God has prepared in advance for us to do. He doesn't always share them with us.

Very often they are on our desk, on our doorstep. That's what we would consider to be an interruption, but it's actually a God-appointed scene, situation.

So, perhaps we need to be more open to interruptions than we are. Devotion, interruption, third point is compassion. Verse 14, when Jesus went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick.

[48 : 04] And again, let's just, as we step through this story, this historical record, let's try to put ourselves in Jesus' place. Because, remember, although Jesus is God the Son, he is fully human.

So, he feels what we feel, and he's grieving. He's lost one of his closest friends. And more than likely, he's tired, and he's emotionally drained.

And, humanly speaking, probably the last thing that Jesus wants to deal with is a great crowd. But they're here, with all their needs and their issues.

And so, how does Jesus react? Well, he doesn't get irritated because they've interrupted his devotional time. He doesn't ask for some space to deal with the grief that he's feeling.

We're told in verse 14 that Jesus had compassion on him. Weerspey says, the word translated, moved with compassion, literally means to have one's inner being, their bowels, stirred.

[49 : 29] his stomach is churning as he sees the needs of this crowd. Hendrickson says, another translation that would be appropriate is, his heart went out to them.

So, Jesus felt for these people deeply in their need. But the thing about compassion is, it's not just feeling, to have compassion, you don't just feel, you also have to act and come alongside those who are in need.

And so Jesus, we're told, healed, they're sick. So we see here, we see here the great compassion of God the Son.

we're given in this situation an insight into the heart of God the Son. He's full of compassion.

And that compassion is costly. As Jesus ministers to this great crowd, God when he himself is already exhausted and mourning.

[51 : 02] And yet the compassion of Christ meant that he went to them. He took time with them. He ministered to them.

And yet the compassion that we see in Matthew chapter 14 will be eclipsed by the compassion that we will see in Matthew 27 when Jesus goes to a cross to take the sickness of our sin into his body on the tree so that we can be healed, so that we can be made eternally well if we come to him.

So let me ask that question that we ask so often. Have you come to Jesus yet? Our God is full of compassion.

You and I are full of need. we need our sins forgiven. We need our hearts healed.

Jesus can do it. The compassion of Christ took him from heaven to earth to do it. God is great to come to church.

[52 : 45] But we have to do more than that. We have to come to Jesus and there's never a bad time to come to him. God says that he never casts out, he never drives away those who come to him.

He never says, don't interrupt me, I haven't got time for this. but he receives and he heals all who come to him.

And he receives and he heals all who return to him. After a time of wandering, we sang it this morning, prone to wander. Maybe we've had a week of wandering.

Our hearts are cold as we sit here this morning. What do we do? Come back to Jesus. He won't treat us the way we may treat somebody else who's given us a wide berth for a while.

He won't look at us and say, what are you doing here? He receives, he heals, he restores, because he is full of compassion.

[54 : 06] Devotion, interruption, compassion. The fourth point here is correction. Matthew now shifts the camera away from Jesus for a moment, and he focuses in on the disciples.

And what we can see instantly is the disciples appear to be less full of compassion than Jesus is. So let's just read these verses from verse 15 and following, and I'll make a few comments as we move fairly briskly through this next section.

So verse 15. Now when it was evening, the disciples came to Jesus and said, this is a desolate place, and the day is now over. Send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.

so we can see the situation. It's getting late. There's no local shops. There's no deli that's open. There's no takeaway service.

They can't do a delivery. do. And the crowds are getting hungry and they need to eat. And the disciples likely are getting weary. So they say to Jesus, I think it's time, Jesus, to send the crowds away.

[55 : 26] We've had a long day of this. So let's send them away so they can get something to eat and maybe we can get a break for five minutes. That sounds like a plan, Jesus, doesn't it?

But Jesus doesn't like their plan. And Jesus, verse 16, said, they need not go away. You give them something to eat. So Jesus, he gives correction here to the disciples.

He's always giving correction to the disciples, which is of great encouragement to me. They're always getting it wrong, just as I'm always getting it wrong. And Jesus gives this word of correction to the disciples.

They say to Jesus, we think you should send the crowds away. Jesus says to the disciples, I came to seek them, not to send them away. So that was the word of correction for the disciples on that day.

And that's the word of correction for every disciple of Jesus on every day. Jesus never sends away the lost. He seeks the lost, even when it's costly, even when it's uncomfortable, even when it's inconvenient, even when it might seem like a hassle and our energy levels are low, Jesus never

sends people away.

[57 : 04] And we take our lead from Jesus, not from our feelings. Luke 19 and verse 10 says, the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.

So that was the work that Jesus came to do, and Jesus planned to use the disciples in that work.

So, verse 16, Jesus has just given them that word of correction. they need not go away.

You give them something to eat. Then the disciples come back in verse 17, and they said to Jesus, we have only five loaves here and two fish. John tells us that there was a little boy who agrees to donate his lunch, and he has five loaves and two fish.

We think about a loaf with 20 slices. That's not the loaves that we're talking about. It's just like a bun. Five little buns, two little pickled fish. And that's all they have.

So, the disciples say to Jesus, you know, we've only got five rolls and two fish. You know, what Jesus said to the disciples, it just seemed impossible.

[58 : 24] You give them something to eat. With what? There's 5,000 men, plus women, plus children. The conservative estimate is there's 15,000 mouths to feed.

Some of the commentators think it's probably more likely 20,000, and all they have is this packed lunch, a meal deal for one. So, what the disciples are saying to Jesus is, this is a waste of time. This is an impossible task that you're giving us to do. And the task was big. They had that right. But what they had wrong was their view of Jesus was too small.

They underestimated the power of Jesus. So, Jesus says in verse 18, bring them. You've got five little loaves and two little fish, bring them to me.

It just seemed like so little that they weren't even planning on bringing this to Jesus. But Jesus says, no, no, bring it. And then, verse 19, Jesus ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass.

[59 : 47] I think Matthew gives us that detail just so that we get some kind of sense of how large the crowds were. there needed to be some kind of order and system before these many people could get fed.

So, Jesus says, have them sit down on the grass. And then, verse 19, taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus looked up to heaven and said a blessing.

So, what's Jesus doing here? Well, he's looking up to heaven to show them where the bread comes from. it came from the supplies of heaven.

And these supplies never run low. And the crowds in that desolate place, in that wilderness-type place, on that day, their minds perhaps would be soon going back to Exodus chapter 16, where the children of Israel in the wilderness are starving.

And what happened next? bread came from heaven. And that bread, that was the gift of God.

[61 : 00] And so, there are echoes of Exodus 16 in Matthew 14 here. Jesus is joining the dots. He's showing them what he's about to do.

Then he broke the bread, verse 19, still. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

And one little detail here that just occurred to me as I was studying. Note that the disciples here, the disciples who are now, they're now waiters, they didn't wait until they had 15 or 20,000 portions on plates on a hot trolley before they began to serve.

They just went out with a portion, and they passed it to the crowds. And when they'd given that portion, they went back to Jesus, and there was another one. So they took that out, and they went back to Jesus, and there was another one.

And so as they kept coming back to Jesus, miraculously, he kept on giving them food. It was like the widow's cruise of oil in 1 Kings 17.

[62 : 23] It never ran out. And here the bread and the fish, even though it didn't look like much, and it wasn't much, it didn't run out.

And I think as we apply this to ourselves, it's good, it's comforting for us to know that our God, who's the same God, he's not short of resources.

We so often are so stressed out about the things that we think that we need, that we don't yet have, and where are they going to come from?

Well, our God, who knows our need, and who promises to meet us at the point of our need, he is not short of resources. And he is not stingy in giving daily bread to those who come to him.

He is Jehovah Jireh. He is the God who provides. And so this crowd, this vast great crowd, they have their lunch provided in the middle of nowhere as they came to Jesus on that day.

[63 : 53] And yet, the bread that was provided on that day, it was pointing to Jesus. It came from Jesus, but it was pointing to Jesus.

Because who is Jesus? Well, he said in John 6, 35, I am the bread of life. And just as we read in verse 19 of the bread being broken and then given to the people, Jesus' body soon would be broken.

the bread of life, his body would be broken. His life would be given as the provision of a Savior for sinners.

Verse B says, the people were willing to receive the physical bread, but they would not receive the living bread, the Son of God come down from heaven.

That was the tragedy of us. They sat down, they opened their hands, they opened their mouths, they received, they received the temporal bread.

[65 : 23] But fast forward a little, and we can see that the vast majority of this same crowd, they would not receive the living bread that came down from heaven.

And the question for us is not so much about them, it's about us. Have we received Jesus? Jesus? No other provision has been made or will be made for our salvation.

No one else can forgive our sin. No one else has the words of eternal life.

Only Jesus, who came down from heaven, to be the Savior of all who will receive him. And that's what the disciples were learning, and that's what the crowds were being taught, although they weren't learning, as Jesus ministers this correction.

[66 : 34] So devotion, interruption, we see the compassion of Jesus, we see the correction of Jesus towards the disciples, as he ministers to the crowds, as he points to himself and all that he was about to do.

And the final thing here, very briefly, is satisfaction. Verse 20 and 21, And they all ate and were satisfied.

And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over, and those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

So Matthew finishes by telling us that the crowds, they were satisfied. They all ate.

It wasn't just a few folks who got served. They all ate, and they didn't just all eat, they were all satisfied, they all ate enough. And after they all ate, Matthew tells us that they had more food left over than they had when they began.

[67 : 49] John 6 tells us, we're not told in Matthew, but John 6 tells us about this little boy who donates his lunch, who donates the bread and the fish.

We can imagine this wee boy being sent out with a little packed lunch. He's out for the day, then he goes back home at the end of the day, and he's got more in his peace box than he had when he left.

So what's the lesson? Well, the lesson is God is powerful. He's able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think.

It's Ephesians chapter 3 verse 20. God is powerful. And that should encourage us if we are with him.

It should terrify us if we are against him. God is powerful. And the last thing to take away is God is able and he is willing to satisfy our souls.

[69 : 10] God is God one comment here says the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000 was actually a sermon in action. Jesus is the bread of life and only he can satisfy the spiritual hunger in man's heart.

God is the case and that still is the case. Success in our career will not satisfy us.

Money in our bank account will not satisfy us. Amazing cars in our garages, I speak to myself, as a dream, it will not satisfy.

More trainers, more jackets, more shoes, more clothes will not satisfy. More friends will not satisfy. More credit, more acclaim will not satisfy.

Only Jesus can satisfy the hunger in our hearts will and he will do it if we will receive him.

[70 : 31] Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, we thank you for your son, we thank you for this miracle which we are so familiar with in many ways and yet which we overlook the message of so often.

Help us, we pray, to see what the disciples needed to see more clearly, that you are the God who is powerful, you are the God who is full of compassion, you are the God who provides a saviour for us

in Christ your son, and you are the God who is able to satisfy our souls for time and for eternity. We pray that we would not be like the majority of that crowd who ate the bread, who received the temporal gifts, but rejected the saviour, the giver.

Help us, we pray, to receive the Lord Jesus, to trust in him, and to find the satisfaction of soul that only he can give. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. we'll sing to conclude Mission Praise 37. I think it's a paraphrase of Psalm 42. As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you.

[71 : 56] Wise Wise As the deer has borne the water, so my soul runs after you.

You alone are my heart's desire, and I know to worship you.

You alone are my strength, my shield. To you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire, and I know to worship you.

I want you more than gold or silver, only you and satisfied.

[73 : 11] You alone are the real joy given on the apple of my eye.

You alone are my strength, my shield. To you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire, and I know to worship you.

You're my friend, a dear my brother, even though you are a king.

I love you more than any other, so much more than any other name.

[74 : 14] You alone are my strength, my shield. To you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire, and I know to worship you.

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.