

15.3.26 am

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Date: 15 March 2026

Preacher: Reverend Donald Macdonald

[0:00] Good morning, everyone. A warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see everyone.! Good to see one or two who may be visiting or here for the first time. And you're especially! There's tea and coffee at the end of the service for those who are able to stay behind.

And the evening service tonight will be taken by Scott, our minister in training. YF tonight for S1 to S6 meets after the service and the prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven. I'll take that one myself this week. Men's Bible study is on Thursday. Is that correct, Scotia? Thursday at half past seven to nine. And you have the passage here from Luke 24. All men are welcome there. On the 20th, we've got a hospitality evening and it's out at Lusk and Tara Jeeves and Fiona are putting on pizzas in Jeeves' homemade pizza oven. So be encouraged to go along to that if you're able to do so. Service is next Sunday. I'll take the morning service myself, God willing. The evening service will have Roddy McRae, Roddy Barbas as he's known to quite a few. Roddy was a minister in the Church of Scotland in the neighbouring parish when I was in Loch Caron. And then he came into the Free Church after that. And he has been in Helmsdale with John Struthers over the years. He now works for Mission International. So he'll share God's word and he'll share a little about the work of Mission International. And then he'll share his testimony with the YF in the evening after that. Two more things, I think, or three more things. Well, two more things. There's two camps. You've got the details on the screen. I'm not going to go through them just now. There's one camp for P6 and P7. There's another camp for S1 to S3. And if you want to go to these, those who are of age, you can book on the 16th of March. I think they open at eight o'clock. The S1 to S6 girls are invited to attend the Faith Over Fear gathering. And that's Gillian and Iona who are organising that. That's on the 28th of March. And if you want to go to that, then please go and speak to Gillian and Iona so they know roughly how many they're catering for. So these, I think, are all the notices. There is more, but you can read through the rest yourselves at your own convenience. So let's worship God and let us sing to his praise. We'll sing Mission Praise 51. Be thy my vision, O Lord of my heart.

He have my vision, O Lord of my heart.

He have my vision, O Lord of my heart. Not be all else to me, say that thou art.

[3:28] Heave my soul, O Lord of my heart. Heave my soul, O Lord of my heart. Heave my soul, O Lord of my heart. ■■■ Heal of my wisdom, thou my true word, I ever with thee, thou with me, Lord.

Thou my big father, I'd like to start, thou with me dwelling, and I with thee won.

Be thou my battle, shield sword for the fight, be thou my day, beauty, thou my delight.

Thou my soul's shelter, thou my height over, praise the beheathen word, o fulgur of my love.

Precious I heed not your hands empty praise, thou my inheritance thou adores, thou art the holy first in my heart.

[5:20] My king of heaven, my treasure the light. My king of heaven, after victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, o bright heaven's sun.

Heart of my own heart, whatever ye hold, still be my vision, o ruler of all.

One more notice that I forgot to give, and that is, those who are able to help on Thursday night, if you could go to the Scalladale Centre, at what time, Mary?

Half past six. The Scalladale Centre, and Tom, who runs the Scalladale Centre, has been super helpful to us. Whenever we've had camps, he's kind of gone above and beyond.

And it's a big centre, they've done a lot to tidy it up, and needs a good deep clean at the beginning of the season. And so we offered to help Tom with that deep clean.

[6:46] And so many hands make light work. If you're able to go there at half past six on Thursday, then it would be appreciated. So let's now unite our hearts in prayer.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day, and we thank you that we have the desire to come to this place.

And even if we don't have the desire to come to this place, we thank you that in your providence, Lord, you have brought us this morning to this place.

And we thank you that as we gather together, we gather in the name of Jesus. We thank you that as we gather together, we open the Word of God. And we thank you that your Word is powerful. We thank you that as we open your Word, we are directed to look to Jesus, the one who is our Saviour.

[7:50] The one whom we remember at each Lord's Day as we come. We thank you that this is the first day of the week, the day where we remember that Jesus rose from the dead.

We pray that we would never lose sight and lose a sense of wonder of the message of the Gospel. We thank you for what the hymn writer calls the strange design of God.

That God the Son would come to this world to buy back the people that were lost through his own blood.

We thank you that he who was sinless became sin, so that we who are sinners can become righteous because of all that he has done.

We thank you that we are saved not by our works, not by our religion, but we're saved by the amazing grace of God. And we pray, Father, that this day our eyes would be opened to see, maybe for the first time, or maybe afresh, we pray that we would see the amazing grace of Jesus.

[9:13] We pray that you would clear from our minds all that would distract us. As we come to this place, our minds will be full of the things that are ahead of us, and this week the things that we left behind last week.

Many responsibilities, many cares, many things that burden us and make us anxious. We pray that for this hour, our focus would not be on them, but we would be able to say, Be thou my vision.

That we would see Christ as our Savior, that we would see you, Lord God, as our Father. And that we would have the courage and the encouragement and the joy of knowing that the Holy Spirit lives in the heart of everyone who believes, working within us to make us more like Jesus.

And we pray that you would, Lord God, make us more like Jesus, those of us who are your people. We confess that we are sinners. We confess that the good that we want to do, we so often don't do. The evil that we don't want to do, we so often do. And we cry out with the Apostle Paul, who will rescue me from this body of death. But we thank you that the answer is Jesus.

[10:32] And so, Lord Jesus, help us to hear your call, to come to you in faith. And Holy Spirit, work in us, Lord, we pray, that we would be made more Christ-like.

We thank you that as we gather this morning, we gather conscious that this world is broken in so many ways. But we thank you that we know that you are the God who is sovereign.

We watch our TV screens, and we can barely believe at times the extent of the trouble and turmoil that war brings.

And we're conscious that there is more war ongoing at this time than there has been since World War II ended. And Lord, we pray that you would be at work bringing peace where there is war.

We pray that you would be at work bringing comfort and strength to those who are suffering. And we pray, Lord, that in a world that is groaning, that we would know the the courage and confidence and assurance that Jesus has promised that he will come back and redeem all things, make all things new.

[11:53] So help us, we pray, to be ready for that day when the Lord Jesus returns or calls us from this world to stand before him. We thank you that in Christ we are secure.

May we be found in Christ. We pray for our country. You have told us, Lord, to pray for those in authority over us. And we pray for them.

We confess that we are a country that is so wayward, but we pray that you would draw us back. We confess that we are part of a country that is so determined to turn away from your word.

We ask, Lord, that you would have mercy upon us and that you would revive your work in this land. And we pray for ourselves here in the congregation, those who would desire to be here, but who can't be, who watch online at home.

We pray that they would know your presence with them. We pray for the old. We pray for the young. We thank you, Lord, for the voices that we hear week by week. And we ask, Lord, that as they grow up, that they would grow up knowing that Jesus loves them.

[13:03] And we pray that they would grow up to remember their creator and trust Christ as their savior. So go before us, Lord, we pray. We pray on for those who are sick, those in hospital, those receiving treatment.

We pray for your healing hand to be upon them. We pray on for those who are grieving. And on Mother's Day, especially we are conscious of some who will feel that grief in an acute way. We pray for your comfort for them. We pray on for those who struggle with addictions, with anxiety, with worry, with depression. Lord, you know our hearts, you know our homes, you know our situations.

And we ask that you would meet us at the point of your need, our need. So help us, we pray. Cleanse us from sin. Lead us in worship, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

Amen. Have you got your thinking caps on this morning?

[14:23] Yeah. Good, good, good. I want to test your brains this morning. Ask you a few questions. And will you answer me? Yep.

Yep. I want you, first of all, to see if anybody can name, put your hand up if you think you can name, five different animals.

Go find me first. One. One. Two. Three. A cheetah, yeah.

And a leopard. Five animals, well done. Under pressure as well. Good job. Second question. Can somebody name me five different football players?

Let's do a joint effort of Benjamin and Joseph. Benjamin, you first. Neymar.

[15:31] Number one. Joseph. Ronaldo. Ronaldo. Number two. Joseph. Benjamin. Pardon? Emmanuel.

Emmanuel, yep. Can't even get my tongue around that. I'm nervous in the morning. Three. Yes, good job. Joseph. Messi. Messi. Number four. Number five.

Got another one, Benjamin? One. Teamwork. Number five. Good job. Teamwork, you guys.

Another one. Five different chocolate bars.

Fraser. Fraser.! Kit Kat number one. Snickers number two. Mars number three.

Rocky, Robin, Biscuit number four. A what? A what was the last one? A Yorkie number five.

[16:33] Good job. You're good at this. What else did I have? Five different football teams. Shawnee. Good job.

Excellent. Excellent. Celtic, last but definitely not least. Last one. Well, not quite the last one, but kind of last one.

Five different countries. Okay, let's try. Everyone who's got their hands up, let's see. So Joseph, you give me a country. Africa.

Africa. Good job. Who next, Benjamin? Barcelona. Barcelona. Which is in which country? Spain.

Spain. Good job. Number two.

Scotland. Finland. Scotland. Number three. Well, girls are very quiet today. Another country. Olivia.

[17:36] Italy. Good job. Number four. Who else is hiding down there?

Lily. Number country. How about Ireland?

She said, Donald. Donald's helping you. He said, Ireland. No, not Ireland, she says. No. No, no. We got another country instead of Ireland? Yeah.

Pardon? America. Good job. Good job. So your thinking caps are definitely on, and you've definitely done very, very well in thinking about all these five different things.

Now, I wonder, I don't want you to answer me just now with names, but I wonder if I was to ask you afterwards if you could name five people that you pray for in the morning and five people that you

pray for at night.

Could you give me five names plus five names? You think? Some are saying, maybe not.

[18:51] Some are saying, yeah. Boys and girls, do you pray? Do you pray in the morning and at night?

Maybe at times in the day as well. Sometimes something scary happens or we're nervous. And we feel like we're in trouble. And we might pray and say, God, will you please help me?

And in the morning, we might be saying, please help me with this day. Jesus is alive. Good job, Joseph. When we pray, Benjamin?

God, yeah. Jesus and God are always the right answers. When we pray, listen to this. God hears our prayers. It says in Psalm 116, Sometimes, boys and girls, when you give me an answer, because you're down there and I'm a bit higher, I might go like this.

What was that? Did you say Ireland? Ireland, yes. And I'll bow down so I can hear what you're saying.

[20:16] And you know, boys and girls, when you pray in your room or wherever it is, the Psalm is telling us, it's as if God bows his ear right down because he wants to hear exactly what you're praying for.

And boys and girls, there are some people who are sick. Like Lydia. Like Lydia. And we keep on praying for her, don't we? Some people who are sad.

And we keep on praying for them. And there are some boys and girls in school who don't know really who Jesus is.

And I hope you're trusting Jesus, but there are some of your friends who are not trusting Jesus. Because they don't know that he loves them. And do you know what we can do? We can tell them about Jesus, but even more importantly, we can tell Jesus about them.

So at Sunday school, you're going to get these. I'll give you one so you can see it. And it says, pray for 10.

[21:24] And it's not just for the Sunday school. It's for anybody who wants them. Write the names of 10 people that you're going to pray for in 2026 and beyond.

Morning prayer list, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Evening prayer list, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. And if you pray, boys and girls, for your friends who don't yet know Jesus, God loves to hear and he loves to answer these prayers.

So you can take these home with you. And you can write the names down of some people that you're going to pray for. And then pray for them in the morning. Pray for them at night.

We pray now and ask God to help us with that. Lord God, we thank you that you love us. And we thank you that it's your will that we would come to you.

We thank you for all these boys and girls who have come to church. And we pray that every one of them would come in faith to Jesus and ask Jesus to be their savior. But we pray also for people who might be in our school class or our nursery class and who don't know Jesus yet.

[22:38] And as we think of them in our minds, we pray that you would help us to write our names down on these little bookmarks. And help us to pray. Sometimes we find it hard to pray.

Sometimes we forget to pray. Sometimes we don't know what to pray. But we ask, Lord, that you would help us. And that you would hear us as we come to you in prayer. So bless the boys and girls we pray today.

And bless them and help them and us as we continue to pray for those around us whom we want to know. Whom we want to come to know Jesus. And we ask all this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Okay, let's sing now to God's praise. Mission Praise 1075. Jesus. All for Jesus. All for Jesus. All I am and I am ever old to be.

Jesus. All for Jesus. All for Jesus. All I am and I am and I am ever old to be.

[24:18] All my ambitions, all for God's demands. I surrender these into your hearts.

All my ambitions, all for God's demands. I surrender these into your hearts.

All for God's plans. For it's only in your will that I am free. For it's only in your will that I am free.

Jesus, Lord Jesus, all I am and have and ever will be.

Okay boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school, remember to pray for them as we go. And just as they're heading out, Anthony, Dr Latham's on the mission board and one of the things the

mission board have come up with this year is just a kind of idea to help us to be encouraged to pray for people around us.

[26:19] They call it Pray for 10 or Engage 2026. It's really just what I was speaking to the children about. But if you want to do that, there's a wee leaflet there. There's some bookmarks you can just put in the book that you're reading or your Bible and note down if you feel that you're able to do that.

10 people that you'll pray for day by day. So I'll leave them just there. You can get them at the cup of tea if you want to do that. So let's turn now to God's word.

We'll go to Matthew chapter 20. Matthew chapter 20. Matthew chapter 20.

And we'll read from verse 17 to verse 28. Which connects amazingly smoothly with where Neil Lachey was last weekend.

Lessons about humility. Lessons about who we are to be as humble servants rather than seeking greatness for ourselves. So this is where we've got to in our studies.

[27:35] And we'll read from verse 17 of Matthew 20. And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the 12 disciples aside and on the way he said to them, See, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified.

And he will be raised on the third day. Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to Jesus with her sons and kneeling before him, she asked him for something and he said to her, What do you want?

She said to him, Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left in your kingdom. Jesus answered, You do not know what you're asking.

Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? And they said to him, We are able. He said to them, You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant.

But it is for those whom it has been prepared by the Father, my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were indignant with the two brothers.

[28:50] But Jesus called them to him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord over them and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.

Even as the Son of Man came, not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing again now to God's praise. We'll sing in Gaelic the first two stanzas of Psalm 23.

Psalm 23, the first two stanzas, I'll read them in English. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, even for his own name's sake. These verses will remain seated to sing to God's praise in Gaelic.

[30:01] of the night. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32:31] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[35:01] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[58:36] Why are they so angry? Well, they're angry because James and John asked this question about getting the top seats in the kingdom of heaven. That's why they're angry. But why are they angry about that? Why would that make them angry? Well, the reason they were angry was because they wanted the seats. Not James and John. How dare they ask for these seats? That's the seat I was wanting. That's why they're angry. Green, the commentator, says the other disciples are angry not because they have a different attitude to greatness, but because they want the top seats themselves. And Jesus knows what's going on in their conversation. He knows what's going on in their hearts. And so Jesus calls them all over to sort this out. In verse 25 to 27, it says, Jesus called them to him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord over them and their great ones exercise authority over them, it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant. And whoever would be first among you must be your slave. So what Jesus does here is he challenges their anger. Jesus challenges this anger that has resulted in so much stress and strain between the disciples. And then he teaches them about humility.

He teaches them about being servant-hearted. Just to apply this before we move on to our last point, let me ask you the question that I've been asking myself over these last few days. What makes you angry? If you think through the last few days, think about the times when your temperature has started to rise and your fuse has been short.

Think about the times that you've spoken a sharp word. What caused it? What caused it? What causes you and I the most stress and frustration? Is it not true that much of our anger is selfish? It's disciple anger.

How come I didn't get in my way? It's always been done this way. Why should there be change? Why is this change not? Why is it not me that's doing this?

Or it might be, I did all these things. I did this and that and the next thing. And no one noticed me. He got all the credit for it. I never got nothing.

[62:18] You're sitting on your phone. How dare they send me that text? What do they mean by that? Who do you think they're speaking to?

One commentator, Ross, says it is at places like this that we can easily see ourselves in the disciples.

How easily are we offended when we do not receive the honour and respect that we think we deserve.

What about me? How dare they speak to me like that? How come I wasn't given this?

How come I never got my way? The way they looked at me. I'm offended. I think if we're honest that's probably the majority of our anger.

[63:38] Or maybe you're just much better than me. When actually should we be angry? Because there is a time to be angry. When should there be a righteous indignation that rises within us?

Well, let me tell you when there should be righteous indignation. It's not when I'm not recognised and given my place. It's when Jesus is not recognised and given his place.

It's when he is not being lifted up as Lord and King. It's when his name is being cursed and not blessed.

That's what should light our fuse. That's what should cause us to feel anger. It's when his word is closed. It's when his word is defined.

It's when his word is set aside. That's when we should feel angry. Our anger should not be driven by a desire for self to be exalted.

[64:55] Our anger should be driven by a desire for Christ to be exalted. And our right anger should not cause us to pout and sulk and blow up and explode.

it should actually cause us to pray. Last quote from a commentator on this point.

Ross is his name and it says in his commentary thinking more highly of ourselves than we should will lead to division among the people of God.

It is love and humility that bind us together. And then he prays which you never really read in a commentary.

Then he prays and says may God purify our hearts and remove all pride from us.

[66:05] a reaction that points to stress and finally a resolve that points to salvation.

So Jesus concludes this lesson to the disciples about the need to be humble not proud and self-seeking. He concludes this lesson by modelling that humility.

Jesus finishes this section in verse 28 by saying even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

That's where Jesus finishes this lesson. He takes the focus off the disciples and he brings it on to himself. Who is the Son of Man?

Well the Son of Man is the phrase that Jesus always used to speak of himself. And so Jesus says the Son of Man came.

[67:18] Where did he where did the Son of Man come from? Well the Son of Man the Lord Jesus he came from heaven. think about these things.

It's beyond our minds can go but we need to go there. Jesus God the Son the Son of Man he came from heaven. He came from a place where he was highly exalted and served continually by the angels.

That's where he came from. And where did he come to? He came to this broken world. We sing in the carol at Christmas time he came down to earth from heaven who was God and Lord of all.

And why did he do it? he did it in order to give his life as a ransom for many.

Some of us have been following the story of the kidnap of the lady in America Nancy Guthrie. 84 year old was kidnapped from her home in Arizona in the middle of the night and there was a ransom of 6 million US dollars 4.4 million sterling.

[68:57] That's been set that's been demanded from the kidnappers. And we're familiar with these kind of stories. Someone is captured kidnapped and the kidnappers say you want them back you want them freed pay the ransom.

The payment of a ransom brings freedom to those who have been captured and Jesus came to this world he came down to earth from heaven the son of man God the son and he came to bring us freedom.

he could see that we were not free we were lost we were hopeless we were in the clutches of Satan sinners and Jesus came to bring us freedom freedom from Satan freedom from the penalty for our sin freedom from death freedom from hell that's why he came and what was the price to be paid for our freedom for our salvation well Peter tells us in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 18 he says you were ransomed ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers not with perishable things such as silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ and that takes us back to finish to our opening verses where Jesus explains to the disciples what he had resolved to do for the sake of our salvation verse 17 and 19

Jesus was going up to Jerusalem he took the disciples aside and on the way he said to them see we are going up to Jerusalem and the son of man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified and he will be raised on the third day and Jesus knew all this he foretold all this to his disciples he knew all that was ahead of him he knew about the mocking he knew about the flogging he knew about the suffering he knew about the dying and he resolved to keep on going and all that Jesus resolved to do the good news for us is that he has done it disciples are looking forward we're looking back and we see on that cross he has done it he gave his life as a ransom for many and the question

I want to finish with is are you one of the many has he ransomed you from sin and Satan and death and hell are you trusting or will you trust him for your salvation let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your word we thank you Lord Jesus for all these lessons that were taught to the disciples lessons that we acknowledge that we are in need of every day if not every hour forgive us

[74:10] Lord for our pride forgive us for our self-seeking forgive us for our self-obsessing and help us to see Jesus not self but Jesus and help us as we go from here into a world where there is all kinds of things going on help us when we feel indignation when we feel anger and stress

and frustration help us to be able to diagnose why we feel what we feel and when it is pride and self that shakes its fist help us to repent help us we pray to more and more have a desire for the glory for the exaltation of Jesus and for any who have not yet come to Jesus and ask for forgiveness ask for cleansing from sin ask for the overcoming from death and heaven as opposed to hell we pray that even now some may bow their heads and in their hearts say

Lord Jesus will you pay my ransom will you be my saviour we thank you that's a prayer that is always heard and is always answered so help us to pray we ask in Jesus name amen we'll sing to conclude from mission praise 987 here is love vast as the ocean loving kindness as the flood when the prince of life our ransom shed for us his precious blood died in■■■■!

■■■■! is is is mighty brothers or

And his peace and perfect justice Kiss the guilty world in love And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore.

Amen.