

2.3.25 am

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] If you are able to claim them as soon as possible that will be great. After a few weeks those items are claimed less we will thank us for.
- Those who attended and helped at the BIDWIRE for Friday night, just a word of thanks for that. There was quite a number of children that went out and it was a good night that heard Stuart still walking on the ladder.
- But everybody else seemed to enjoy the evening. The last thing to note is that we were in Romania a few years back and it was a request from the Camp of Romania that some from Harris from the Foundation here could go back and help us out of the kind of jobs that we were involved with in the year past.
- So the date that we would like us to go if we were able is the 26th of May for a week. It could be men and women, or practical work to do and some spiritual things as well.
- So the 26th of May for a week. If you are able to go please speak to Peggy who is over there. And we can see if it was enough to really take a team over there at that time.
- [1 : 2 2] So these I think are all the notices. So let's begin this time of worship. We will sing to God's praise, the words on the screen. That is familiar to us and loved by us.
- Five hundred and seven years. We will sing the chorus that will be singing about the greatness of God, a great bill of art.
- So we will sing this song. We will sing this song. Amen. I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, that went throughout the universe this way.
- That sings my soul, my Savior brought to thee, I'll breathe the heart, I'll breathe the heart.
- That sings my soul, my Savior brought to thee. I see the stars, I hear the wind, I hear the wind, I hear the wind.
- [3 : 3 7] I hear the wind, I hear the wind.
- I hear the stars, I hear the light. And when I think, I've got his son, God's spirit. Sent him to die, I scarce can't take it in.
- At all the cross, my burden gladly paid He bled and died to take away my sin And since my soul, my Savior, go to thee How great thou art, how great thou art Then since my soul, my Savior, go to thee How great thou art, how great thou art When Christ shall come, where shines of our foundation And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart
- Then shall I bow in humble and oration And there proclaim, my God, the great thou art And since my soul, my Savior, go to thee How great thou art, how great thou art And since my soul, my Savior, go to thee How great thou art, how great thou art Bless you and I with our hearts and prayer And let's pray Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this your day

And we thank you for that hell that we have sang over so many years That speaks to us of the wonder and the greatness, the glory of who you are And the good news of the gospel We thank you that as we look around As we encourage you to do so on that hill We are reminded of the fact that you are the God who has created all things The beauty of the landscapes that we are privileged to see Day by day The power of the sea that we are conscious of in these parts The skies, when they are clear at night And we see the stars and we see the brightness of the moon We thank you that in all that we see In all that instills within us a sense of wonder We thank you that we are pointed to the one who has made it all You are our creator, God And we thank you that we are able to come this morning to worship you

[7 : 32] And to recognize that everything that we see Everything that we are in wonder of Everything, even that we are in our being Comes from your creative hand that we ask for And you would make us conscious of that day by day That as we look at it We would be caused from within to praise you For who you are We thank you not only that you are our creator But we thank you that you are the God that we can call our savior We thank you for Jesus We thank you Father for sending your son into this world When I think of God as son, not spirit We thank you Father that you sent your son into this world to die And to die for our sin So that we could be offered salvation So that we could receive the amazing grace That has been paid for our company And we pray once more on this Lord's Day

That our minds would come back and settle at that place That we would once more seek out of it That we would once more Because to look in wonder too at that cross The old rugged cross that we sent on And the Prince of Glory died on So that we could have the promise of sins forgiven And life that is eternal If we believe in it When we pray for that gift of faith We know that we cannot save ourselves Because we know that we cannot even take hold of these truths Or respond to the offer of the gospel That faith And faith is a gift from God And so we pray for that faith this morning We pray that if we are your people That we would increase our faith That we would see more clearly Of who you are That we would feel more of that love that you have for us

That we would feel more love for you And we pray that if there are those here Who are not your people Or even if there are those whose hearts have grown cold Those who may be at a distance at this time And who may not even feel like opening their mouth to sin Lord we know that our hearts can get that way And we pray for the gift of faith once more Lord we pray for that prayer that we are taught by Jesus And we ask Lord that we would each one have faith That we would each one cry in the word of that prayer that we are taught by Jesus Lord have mercy on me The sin And we thank you that when we cry for that mercy We are promised that we will be justified That we will be saved

And that we will be ready for that day That we are sent off when Christ will return We pray that that would be a day That we look to you with joy And not run from it With a sense of dread So Lord be at work amongst us we pray in our hearts That we may see and hear and respond to the gospel message We pray for the communion weekend as we have spoken on But we pray Lord that you would be with Ian and Dolan As they prepare for the services that you would give to them A word that you would lay upon their hearts A word from you We ask Lord that you would open our hearts That we may be ready to receive The grace that is offered in the gospel And we pray for any who may be aware Of the striving of the Holy Spirit In their hearts over the past weeks

Months even years And we hear the call To come to Jesus And to face faith in Jesus And we ask Lord That you would give courage to those who are your people That each one may come And remember the Lord's death Until he comes And we pray also Lord For any who may come and sit at the table About who are very Rarely remembering the death of the Lord Jesus We are conscious that we can come And go through rituals We can come and take bread and wine And it can mean very little to us And we ask Lord that there would be none Who would sit at the table next weekend Without an amendment With a sense of wonder and love That you are the God And our Savior And the one who is one day of all our worship But not the tailings of our time And our efforts

[12 : 43] So be at work amongst us Lord We pray We pray for a world that is so turbulent And so volatile We pray for places where there is war Especially We think of Ukraine There's been much in the news this week And we ask for peace to reveal In places where there is war We pray for the Middle East Where there is so much unrest And never any great measure of peace We pray for those that you are allowed to be In positions of authority In the world And sometimes we struggle As we listen to The things they say And the way that they act and react From you And so we pray And so we pray That humility that comes from God

That they would seek That we would seek wisdom That comes from heaven And we ask for it For it And not just the world And not just our nation And those who believe us We pray for ourselves as a community And we continue to pray for those who are sick At home and in hospital We pray for your healing touch To be upon them And your presence to be worth them And we pray for those who grieve For loved ones Who have passed on In recent weeks and months And years And decades We know that the pain of grief Lingers long And we ask for our That we comfort those who grieve We pray on for those who struggle With addictions We pray on for those who wrestle With anxiety And whose minds can become dark at times We ask that they And each one of us Would look to you And that we would recognise That we are made In the image of God And that you're the God

Who loves us And calls us To be your children And to come to you As our Father And so hear our prayers And lead us And guide us And in worship We pray That our worship Be in spirit And in truth Cleanse us from sin And in our midst We fix our eyes On Jesus We ask We ask it In his name And for our ministry Amen Amen Would you like to Come forward Please How's everyone today?

All good? Something to show you today? Well let's come a bit closer Come on a bit closer Come on Come on Just by Gordon's feet Will you Will I reach?

Come on It's up to show you today Do you know What these are?

[16 : 29] You will know Michael So I'll come back I'll come on you Second Somebody in the back Have your hand up What do you think These are? Probably show You guys as well Horseshoe Start here Did you say Did you say Horseshoe?

No it's not Horseshoe That's what I was It's not Horseshoe No No Any idea? This here No?

No So nobody here Goes where these are I'll give you a clue Part of the car Michael?

Part of the car You know more specific? Yes We've got a resident mechanic Expert Oh is that like spring?

It's a spring It's a spring So do you know What a spring Do you know what it is? Do you know where these Springs come from? Like Your car?

[17 : 37] Yeah They come from your car What do they do These springs? They're only like Used the wheel on the way They're attached to the wheels Aren't they? So If we were to go and look at If we were to go and look at That's what I'm at No Nothing happened yesterday But you can ask some more questions I'm at the pinnacle I'm at the pinnacle I can't feel all of them I can't feel all of them I need to get an expert on To help me But See if you go and look at Our car It's the Passat The long ladder If I If we were to go and look at The car Would you be able to see The springs?

Or if you were to go and look at Any car Would you see the springs? Go ahead of them Is that one of your car? It's the one of the Silver one of the Big black It's the big black one I want to drive it So you believe in that one?

I believe in that one It's just the only village It's nice So If you go and look at The car So the Passat The big bar I actually washed it I think we were doing it Last Saturday And see what I washed it I cleaned the wheels And I gave it a proper wash And I didn't give it a polish But I gave it a nice clean Inside and out And it looked It looked beautiful And there was a bit of sunshine That day I was looking at The other thing That's a nice looking car Quite happy with the car It looked perfect From the outside But underneath There was something going on So I was driving it You know one day Last week And I thought It doesn't seem quite right And there was A few noises That were coming So I took that along To Angus You know the new garden So long Out in a good direction Took it to Angus

And I said to Angus Car's not driving Quite right I don't think So maybe check it So he jacked it up Lifted it up So the wheels were You could see the wheels And he went He went in like that Underneath When he grabbed the wheel And he went There we go There's your trouble Spring's broken And I said Oh well I'll figure it out He says Hang on a second So he said Let's just check it On the other side On the other side There you go Another spring broke So Do you think I was really happy Not really No Because every time You have to go To the garage And see my character It easily cost Quite a lot of money And so I wasn't It wasn't exactly Good news When he said By the way There's a spring broken On that side And there's a spring broken On the other side But do you think Was I glad That he told me Yes

Yes Why The car wasn't Really safe Was it Because The light of the spring Was being solid The car Didn't drag my ride And it wasn't Really safe And if we carried On the ride And it says It would have broken Again And then We all might have Came around So I was not Very pleased At the news Because it was Bad news But I was glad He told Because I needed To know the Bad news Does God tell us Ever Bad news Does he tell us The truth Yeah And when he tells

[21 : 35] Us the truth About our lives Is it always The news No Because A bit like The car You know We might look Who came Outside And we might Be able to Behave ourselves Reasonably well When people Are watching But underneath And nobody Can see Except God And there's A problem In our hearts And what's it Called It's called Sin And when we Hear about Sin Especially when We hear for the First time About sin It's not good news It's bad news Is it When we hear About sin But God Tells us Because he Loves us And because He wants to Fix The problem Of sin So tomorrow Morning I have to go And see At this He can go

In the car And he'll Take out The old Sprints And he'll Put in New sprints And he'll Give him A bill And then Everything Hopefully Will be fine So if I Want the car Fixed I need to Go and see Andrews If I Want my Heart Fixed If you Want the Car Fixed If you Want the Sin In your Heart To be Taken Away Do we Go and see Andrews And ask Him to Fix us Do we Go and see The doctor And ask Him to Fix us So who Do we Go to And ask Him to Fix us Could we Go to The cave To go To Jesus There's One place There's One name Who's Able to Fix the Problem of Sin In our Hearts And his Name Is Jesus And Just

One thing I'm going To go I don't Know what The bill Is going To be For The Splints But I Have to Pay The bill To take Our Sin Are we The bill To make Our hearts Clean How much Does it cost Us to have Our hearts Made Well Michael How much Does it cost Us first Nothing Because the Price Is the Blood Of Jesus And he Tailed And next Weekend If we Will To come Back Here And we Are all Well And Spared That we Will Remember The price That Jesus Pained To make Our hearts Well So let's Pray Lord Jesus We thank you That you Love us We thank you That you Love us Enough Tell us The truth About our Hearts We thank You That although We are Sinners You Came into This world To save Sinners We thank

For So may I bless you every morning Our sins may have been His mercy is gone We will
come to the cross we possibly roam What Father so tender is for in our soul

[illegible]

And immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of sun. But when the sun rose, they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among the thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked.

[29 : 51] And he answered them, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.

Indeed, in their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled and says, You will indeed hear, but never understand. You will indeed see, but never perceive. For this people's heart is grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I will hear.

Hear then, and proud of the story. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.

[31 : 08] This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on Rockyland, this is the one who hears the word, and immediately receives a withdrawal, and yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises, on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

As for what was sown upon thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and proves unfruitful.

As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word, and understands it, he indeed bears fruit, and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing again to God's grace, and we'll sing this time from Psalm 51.

Psalm 51, the first two verses, the first two standards, and hence the first three verses of the heart. After thy help of kindness, Lord, have mercy upon me, for thy compassion, and spirit, locked out all, mine, and every deal.

[32 : 27] Sing the first two stances of this sermon, and we'll be seated to sing, and we'll be seated to sing, and we'll be seated in Gal. And we'll be seated in Gal.

I'll see you next time.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[34 : 50] Thank you.

Thank you.

if you turn back please to Matthew John thank you thank you Father we thank you for the word that we have a word that speaks to us of the forgiveness that is assured to us as we come to you and we thank you for Jesus and for that blood that was shed to promise to us forgiveness of sin in heaven if we believe and we pray that you would help us to believe we pray once more as we open your word that you would illuminate our minds that you would help us to think clearly to speak clearly to understand and to respond we pray for our hearts as we bow before you at this time and you know every heart in this place just like and you know that every one of us is represented in the parable that we've read and we pray for we've read and you would and you would show us who we are at heart level as we think about the words of Jesus just like and we pray that each heart would become if it is not already a good soil and our hearts would be warm and open and responsive and expect to receive the grace of the Lord Jesus so help us we pray we pray again for the children we thank you for them those in Sunday Stoke those in the Crest as well we ask that they would continue to see clearly and to hear the voice of Jesus we pray that they would believe that they would profess their faith in the early years and that they would walk all their days with you our Jesus and we pray for places where it's not easy for your people to meet as we meet here today we thought on Wednesday evening about the situation in India where people are under so much persecution we can think about

Nigeria we can think about Iran we can think about many different countries in the world where there's fierce persecution and yet your people continue to come together even though it may cost them everything we ask Lord that you would bless them and we would not forget and we pray that we would not take for granted the freedom that we have to gather today in worship and we ask that we truly would be worshiping as we gather in this time so hear our prayers and help us as we would to you apart from you Lord we can do nothing and we say get all these spirits in Jesus name Amen Matthew chapter 13 and I want to begin with an underline of a phrase that Jesus uses in the Bible he talks about the secrets of the kingdom of heaven and we thought about this last Sunday

I want to return to this briefly as we approach the Bible and indeed as we approach all the Bible because at this point is the lead into not just the Bible of the sword but all the Bible that Jesus determines the secrets of the kingdom of heaven and I'm thinking about that word secret in general we're familiar with the word we're familiar with the concept that there are some areas in our lives where there are things that we want to keep secret basic things like email I can't open your laptop and just access your email if I was to take over your laptop because emails are protected usually with a password or a code that keeps seeking the information that is on the account only the people who have the code and the access the password are able to get into the email to get to get out of the internet and you can't get into internet banking unless you have the code the access the password that enables information to be gathered and even more basic than that we can lock our garden shed and lock the container outside and put a heavy duty padlock to secure the door and only also the code and the combination that will be able to access the lock and then open the door

[41 : 01] I was reading this week briefly about World of War 2 and the historical commentator was saying that one of the greatest factors that secured victory for the allies was the cracking of the secret code that was used in the opposing forces so secrets and secret codes are often used in this world and yet as we return to Matthew chapter 11 here sorry chapter 13 here we learn as we listen to Jesus that the parables were a kind of code that Jesus used to reveal some of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven so that's the first point of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven verses 1 to 9 if you've got the passage open in front of you we can see in these verses that

Jesus he tells a story he tells a parable we thought last week we looked what a parable is the literal means throw alongside Jesus throws a story alongside the truth that he's teaching so Jesus he tells this open parable the parable of the sower but the disciples of Jesus they're not sure why he takes his approach they're not sure why Jesus tells this parable so the disciples verse 10 came to Jesus and said why do you speak to them parables and he answered them to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven but to them it has not been given so the parables were a bit like a secret code and some listened to the parables and as they listened they understood more and more of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven others who listened to the parables and the understood nothing and that was going on in that day and it's probably going on here this morning as soon as you listen to this parable that Jesus tells us there's more and more of the revelation of

Jesus and the secrets of the kingdom of heaven others hear the words may not even hear the words but nothing registers so what was the difference between those who listened to the parables and who understood and those who didn't what was the difference between those who gained access to the seekers of the kingdom of heaven and who gained access to heaven itself and those who did it and I think if you sum up the answer to that question with one word it's the word of grace and what is grace well grace is what God gives to those who the riches!

the righteousness the salvation the forgiveness all these things are packed into this word grace and God gives grace to those who are eager those who are willing those who are ready those who have an appetite to receive it and so Jesus says to the disciples in verse 11 to you disciples it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven but to them those who are resisting Jesus it has not been given for to the one who has disciples more will be given and he will have an abundance that from the one who has not even what he has will be taken away so Jesus he's speaking this and on that day when Jesus first told this pattern there were many who stood before

Jesus and to listen to the words that he said but they didn't want him there were many in the congregation on that first day and they were in the congregation physically but they didn't want Jesus they didn't want to receive Jesus and they didn't really want to receive any of the truth that Jesus preached so we can personalize even in our minds are this vast crowd and in that crowd there were disciples there were those who were eager to be with Jesus and to hear everything that Jesus had to say but maybe there were others who were in the congregation and they were a quiet place to have a snooze there were maybe people who were in that congregation on that day they'd been dragged along they didn't want to go but their wife said come on

[46 : 59] I'm not going on my own you're coming and so there they were standing there reluctantly but they're still there maybe there were some who heard that Jesus had given a free meal to 15 thousand people on one occasion and they were hungry and they wanted some of this free food so they came along expecting that they might get something like that from Jesus maybe there were others who heard that Jesus could do amazing miracles there's nothing decent on Netflix so let's go along and see what miracles Jesus might be able to perform to entertain me so people were likely in the congregation for all kinds of reasons but many of the people who were there for these kind of reasons they didn't want to teach us they didn't want heaven they weren't able to speak anything they go on next Tuesday not thinking about eternity the angels their disciples they were those who wanted to be with him for a disciple he was with

Jesus and those who had that desire to be with Jesus they were given Jesus they were given grace they were given to know more and more of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven and today this is still going on what was happening on that day still happening today today we're in the age of grace grace is still being offered every time the word of God is read and preached grace has been offered to us the secrets of the kingdom of heaven are still available to those who will receive

Jesus but if we come along and say you're in a combination like this we don't want to receive grace if we don't want to have Jesus as our savior and our king we won't be given and the secrets of the kingdom of heaven will remain secret so Jesus as he introduces the parables and he said to them and he said to us think carefully about how you listen as you listen to these parables it's a serious thing to come and listen how you are carefully about how you listen think carefully about how you come into the house of God think carefully about how your heart is think carefully about what you expect how you prepare as you command the word of

God and that truth applies not just to this parable but to all the parables to the secrets of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus speaks about as a kind of introduction of the parables and then we move into the substance of the parable and point number two that we come to look at the parables so I will look specifically first of all at the sower so where is to leave more Jesus said a sower went out to sow so let's just think about that picture of Jesus making a sower as a farmer you might say a drofter and in that context where Jesus first preached they were used to seeing sowers going out to sow seed and they didn't go out with combine harvesters and how we seen they sowed wheat and barley by hand it was commonly seen so everybody knew immediately what Jesus was talking about they could see this picture in their minds eyes so who is the sower in this parable who is the sower in this allegory that Jesus is seen well the sower is

Jesus verse 37 we fast forward a little and back that up and Jesus says the one who sows the root seed is the son of man so the sower is Jesus and the activity of sowing is the illustrating the eternity of preaching which is what Jesus was doing so this parable applies in the first instance to Jesus on that day as he preaches but this parable applies not just to Jesus it applies to everyone who preaches the truth that Jesus preaches so in a sense every believer who goes out to faithfully share the message of the Bible we are swords end of the commentator says the sword is the son of man and anyone who faithfully proclaims the son of man's message and if we are disciples of

[53 : 23] Jesus not just me but we all of us we are called to be swords we are called not to be silent not to be secret believers but we are to proclaim the truth about Jesus wherever he puts us amongst our friends in a family circle in a workplace we are to proclaim the truth about Jesus how am I doing that maybe a more pointless question next Sunday if we are sparing well there is the opportunity for us to proclaim the truth about Jesus to proclaim the Lord's death until he comes next Sunday we don't even have to open our wailes to proclaim the truth about

Jesus we are to take the bread we are to take the wine and as we do so we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes if you're a believer this is your duty it's a command it's a call as we do this we in a sense sow the truth of the gospel the sword the next point as we step to this is the seed so we have the sword and the sword is Jesus as he proclaims the truth and it's also those who proclaim the same truth that Jesus proclaimed the next point as we step to this is the seed so Jesus talks about the sword who sows the seed so what is the seed in terms of the symbolism of this parable one commentator says the seed is the word of God proclaimed by the sword of God and it seems very almost too obvious to say it but we need to say it the seed is the word of God proclaimed by the sword of God and this is what has to be sown for to be healed for to be an effect for to be to be fruit the truth the word of God not my opinions not my denominations not my church not my religion but the word of

God the gospel that's where the power is that's the seed so think a daft example think about profiting at a potato planting time imagine if the doctor decided he wasn't going to plant potato scissors here he was going to plant ping pong balls so he could go out of the same machinery and work the same lines and do all the same actions the water goes in the grind is plastic ping pong balls it would be a waste of time and there would be no harvest for it would be harvest seed must be planted J.C.

Ryle says like the sower the preacher must sow good seed if he wants to see fruit he must sow the pure word of God and not the traditions of the church or the doctrines of the men without this his labour will be in vain he may go to and fro and seem to say much and to work in his weakly line of ministerial duty but there will be no harvest of souls for him no living results no conversions so the seed is the word of God and as you are calling the money to sow the word of God and it's your responsibility in a sense to make sure that everyone who ever stands here what we proclaim is God's word if it isn't God's word come to challenge hold to account because this is where the life is the seed is the word of

God but in a sense the seed is also God the word and John in John chapter 1 tells us that the word made flesh is Jesus so the life giving seed is Jesus himself which is why we have to be speaking about Jesus I'll say it again it's very easy to talk about church and buildings and clubs and intimations it's very easy to talk about denominations people will talk all day about denominations but our command is to speak about Jesus the life giving seed is Jesus himself and thinking about the seed for the seed to be effective and for the seed to bring life what does the seed have to do has to die what does it remain in the packet for the seed to be effective and for the seed has to disappear it has to die

[59 : 25] Jesus in John chapter 12 and verse 24 says truly truly I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains alone but if it dies it bears much fruit and so even at this stage when we're a little distance from the drops we have pointed to the drops for God and the son the work means flesh the seed of the woman Genesis 3 15 he would die there's an oblique pointing forward to the fact that Jesus had the seed he would die and the fruit of his death is salvation is eternal life for all who believe so your obvious next question is do you believe do you and I believe you

Jesus are we saved through this death flux it's a tragedy if we come we can sit in the seats and never believe you have to believe you have to ask for that forgiveness you have to ask for that salvation you have to ask for that peace!

to save him and save! to believe we'll be saved and we're saved why would we sit next Sunday to protect him or not?

We're saved why would we take salvation and hide away in a corner and not profess the Lord's death and not profess and proclaim that he is our senior the soul are deceived finally the soul through the manifestation of sorrow Jesus is showing us our hearts and there's a picture here of every heart in this room in Bible so this is not a point where we should close our eyes and tune out and have a sleep and just think well does this apply to you and this applies to me sometimes you know we go to a big event and there's a group photograph It's taken and when the photograph is put online you immediately see the photograph and you start scanning through the picture and you're looking for your face and sometimes it's there sometimes you're maybe just out frame or you're tucked in behind somebody because of a stature and you're hidden but in this parable we are all here in this parable!

there isn't one person in this room or in any room that is missing this parable gives us a high definition image of every heart in room and we should pray even just now pause to pray that the spirit of God will show us our hearts as we listen here to the word of Jesus there's four hard times first of all is the hard heart and the hard heart is pictured by the path verse 18 and 19 Jesus says here in the path of the sword when anyone hears the word of the king and does not understand it the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart this is what was sown along the path the hard part when a heart is hard the words of

[64 : 08] Jesus when they're going forward in a service like this or when they're going forward through a conversation with something who loves you when a heart is hard the words of Jesus will just bounce off it look like seed brings us off the surface of a what I call a heart and when a heart is hard you might go into church or open the Bible but the word of God doesn't go in the years at all or it goes in one year and out the other I can recall once I preaching in a service and as I was preaching a message I could see under the air of a person in the congregation air bodies so down the room nothing that's been said has been heard because the ears are blocked literally blocked which remember isn't the case in the heart is hard but the ears might be exposed and wide open and the word of

God just goes in one ear and stretch on the other and that too is an illustration of the heart that's hard and nothing is attained When the heart is hard there's no desire to understand it there's no effort to understand there's no sense of excitement or expectation that we're here to listen to the voice of God we're just here because we have to be here someone's dragged us here it's just a duty it's part of the team that's a hard heart and Jesus says it's as easy for Satan to snatch the seed of the word of God away from a hard heart as it is for the birds to snatch seed away from the path it's that picture of your heart the second picture of

Jesus shares with us his shadow heart which is represented by rocky ground as for what was so in the rocky ground this is the one who hears the word of God immediately receives it with joy yet he has no root in himself but it shows for a while and when tribulation or restitution arises in the kind of the word immediately he falls away in the commentators if you read them they'll tell you the ground in the area that Jesus was speaking at that time it was a bit like the page of Harris there was a shallow layer of soil that sat on top of layers of hard rock and that might not go seed but when seed would fall on the layer of soil there would very bit growth but it was very short term because the soil was so shallow there could be no root there was no life no longevity and so with the shallow heart there's often a very good response to the word of

God in the first instance like the crowds so often demonstrate there can be excitement there can be enthusiasm in response to Jesus in the moment it but it fades away quickly that's the shallow heart we see this often with our camps or conventions or community camps there can be great zeal and exciting for as long as the event lasts but once life goes back to normal interest in enthusiasm and it fades the first sign of trouble or opposition this is hard work this Christianity the first time a friend laughs at for being a bishop or gone there's no root at hand of the commentator it says time reveals false converts they seem to embrace

Jesus but with time find something more attractive time reveals their lostness the shallow heart third category third scan that Jesus shares with us is the cluttered heart which is pictured in verse 22 as the seed which is mixed in thorns and like the shallow heart the cluttered heart the busy heart compromise heart you could use any of these words that heart may respond very positively to Jesus in the first instance that kind of heart will hear the call of Jesus and the promises of Jesus and they'll want what Jesus offers there's a desire to receive the blessings that Jesus can bring who would want forgiveness of sin who would want a place in heaven so there's some kind of desire for these things but the problem is that they want the things of this world a bit more so friends the family and work and pleasure and extra shifts of work and champions league matches and walks on the beach and family dinners and any matter of things all these things come before Jesus all these sins fill the heart up there's no space for Christ who's seeking first the kingdom of God which is called the disciple is choked out by the cares of this world that's a cluttered life what the commentator then it says we must not this is a serious word actually take note of it we must not make the mistake of thinking that this decluttered heart simply refers to inferior

[71 : 15] Christian life Jesus says that such choked hearing renders it unfaithful they bear no fruit at all this means there is no fruit there is no faith there is no salvation so I've got three categories three scales on the table there's no life in any of them there's no hope there's no salvation in any of it and finally there's the believing heart which is a picture of the good soil that's for what verse 23 was sown on the good soil this is the one who hears the word and understands it he and he bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold in another sixty and in another thirty the final scan is the picture of the heart of the believer and the believer hears the word and understands it the word understands there literally means there's an action there's a response there's obedience that accompanies that understand it and he bears free like the commentator says he understands the gospel the warning about taking up the cross in the night itself so he responds by repenting not just believing and goes on to bear freed by the

Lord himself so as we come to finish what is the best indication in fact what's the only indication that a person has a believing heart and is saved well the only indication that Jesus gives of the believing saved heart is growth at Yale progress you know we can have the most powerful dramatic story about how we first encountered Jesus but our assurance of salvation is not measured in the drama of a testimony thankfully the assurance of salvation is evidence in steady growth steady

Christian life perseverance and of the commentator says evidence of receiving the word rightly is not joy or enthusiasm but endurance of food it's not to say joy and enthusiasm are bad things they're great things but the evidence is not in the levels of excitement it's not in a big white cheesy Christian smile it's in the steady endurance of the discipline of discipleship I was telling those who come from the pyramid recently about a guy that I used to work with in sky when I was a teenager he was a few years old and he was a wild man who would fight with a shadow and fought with anybody that touched his path on a

Friday night and I heard from him for 20 years probably I got a message out of the blue I was asking how I was and telling me that he started going to church and he had become Christian so I was really pleased to hear that and I came back to him and I said well I'm going to go through till the rest of Christmas I met him at Christmas and he was in the coffee shop with a guy big smile on his face and he was full of zeal just could not contain the excitement of what it meant to be a Christian he could not get over the wonder of the message of the gospel and it was hugely encouraging to see and it was a little challenging actually to see and convicting to see because his enthusiasm was probably much higher than mine was he was a baby Christian but this week when I was preparing the message I thought it's been too much coming to reach up to him and see how he's doing so with a degree of trepidation

I did I said everything's going how are you getting on now and this is what he replied he said I was at men's breakfast at church this morning I read a part of the bible every day and pray every day I was at the gym on Wednesday listening to the bible that heart sounds like good soil it sounds like a believing heart because there's perseverance and there's change there's fruit the believing heart will produce a life where the fruit of the spirit of God is increasingly seen and the fruit of the spirit Galatians 5 is love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness gentleness and self control or to put another way if we have believing in hearts we will have lives that would more and more like

[78 : 15] Jesus so there's the there's the scans on the table and thumb books Jesus has shared these four pictures these four heart types the hard heart the shadow the cluttered heart all lost hearts and the believing heart and Jesus is asking me as he's asking you which heart do you think is yours that's great Heavenly Father we thank you for your word and for the penetrating truth of the words of Jesus sometimes unsettling orders searching orders and we pray for the help of the Holy Spirit as we go from here we ask that the word of us be not snatched from a seed, snatched from a hard path that we ask

Lord God that he would show us our hearts and that we would leave here knowing that we are believers in Jesus and that our hearts are our saved hearts and we pray that others will be able to see as time progresses that we are believers in Jesus from the sting perseverance and the fruits of the spirit which are cultivated in a heart and that is given a word to trust so help us we pray in Jesus name Amen we sing to from Psalm 51 Psalm 51 from verse 7 to verse 13 choose to go if possible Psalm 51 verses 7 to 13 do that with this verse 13 verse 13 to God's praise

I And then I shall be whiter than the snow.

Of the death and of joyfulness, Make me to hear the noise.

As for His early horns, They slow, as broken, They rejoice.

[82 : 18] O'er my inequities brought at Thy face I draw from my sin, The ends are clean, Our Lord bring you The rights left me within.

Cast me not from Thy sight, Nor did Thy Holy Spirit die of Him, With the story in the life's salvation's joy, With Thy peace let me stay.

Then will I teach Thy ways unto Those that trust yesterday, And those that sinners are shall Then be turned unto Thee.

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