

3.10.25 Friday Evening Preparatory Service

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Date: 03 October 2025

Preacher: Rev Malcolm Maclean

[0 : 00] Good evening everyone. A warm welcome to the service this evening. Good to see all of you who have braved it out in this weather that's not quite as bad as it was forecast to be.

It's good to see people from different congregations and it's excellent to see Malcolm and Katie with us as well. There was much prayer. The bellies would sail and so it's good to have you with us this evening. We look forward to God's word through you over this weekend.

One or two notices. First to say that the session opened this morning or this afternoon after the Gallic service and we'd be very happy to meet with any of you know the Lord, who have trust in the Lord, who haven't yet come forward to profess faith in Jesus.

If you know that you're a great sinner, if you trust in Jesus as your great saviour, then be encouraged to respond to his command to come and take the bread and wine and remember him and his death for us.

Service is tomorrow at 7 o'clock service and also a time of prayer in that service and then on Sunday usual times 11 o'clock for the communion service and 6 o'clock for the Thanksgiving service and there'll be a fellowship after that.

[1 : 18] It's also an open invitation to the mass after the service this evening. It would be good to see some coming up to have a time of fellowship there also. These I think are all the notices so I hand over to Malcolm. Thank you.

Thank you.

Psalms 36 and sing psalms and verses 7 to 12. How precious is your steadfast love what confidence it brings both high and low find shelter in the shadow of your wings.

We'll sing verses 7 to 12. How precious is your steadfast love what confidence it brings both high and low find shelter in the shadow of your wings.

The shadow of your wings. It fits within your house and drink from streams of your delight.

[3 : 18] For with you is the source of light. In your light we see light.

To those who know you as their Lord. Your steadfast love impart.

Maintain your righteousness to those of pure and upright heart.

Let not the ruthless foot of pride approach and threaten me.

Nor let the heart of wickedness force me to turn on free.

[4 : 38] See where deceiver doers lie. Who righteousness is mine. Who righteousness is mine.

Throne down our way. And there they stay. A name will to arise.

A name will to arise. A name will to arise. We'll engage in prayer.

Lord we give you thanks so we can draw near to yourself.

We realize that we cannot see you nor can we touch you.

[5 : 46] But that does not mean that we cannot draw near to you. We realize that we realize that we realize that the proximity is not one of yards or miles.

But it's a nearness of heart. And we thank you Lord. And we thank you Lord. When we do draw near to you in that way.

That our hearts can be enlarged. And we can find ourselves enabled. To do and experience things that we might not have imagined we could have done.

It is extraordinary what can be in our hearts. There can be wrong things there.

And they may seem to have a very strong hold upon us. And we might imagine that nothing could take their place.

[7 : 02] But yet the extraordinary thing is that you can fill our heart. And that our hearts can be a dwelling place for you.

And that each one of us can have you within us. As if we were the only one that you indwell. Because in some sense everything about you can be in our hearts. We cannot have you in your fullness.

We cannot have you in your reality. And we can know you the God who is holy. The God who is love.

The God who is wise. All your attributes. None of them need be outside our hearts.

[8 : 06] Because where you are. All of you is there. And we thank you Lord for that.

It's an awesome thing. It's an awesome thing. To be in the presence of God. As we are in your presence.

You are searching our hearts. Not necessarily from the outside. But from the inside. But from the inside.

And you can see things about us. That no one else can see. And that we might not even be aware of ourselves.

And we ask you Lord. That you would search us. And see if there be within us. Any wicked way.

[9 : 06] And we thank you that. Our hearts can be cleansed. That the defilement.

And the various biases. That sin causes. That they can be dealt with.

Immediately and effectively. By the blood of Christ. We don't understand how that operates.

As your word tells us. If we confess our sins. You are faithful and just. To forgive us our sins.

And to cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. So as we gather around your word. Again tonight.

[10 : 10] We do ask that your word. Would speak powerfully to us. And your word tells us. About itself. That it can even.

Penetrate to such an extent. That it divides. Between soul and spirit. The very depth of our being. We thank you Lord.

Therefore that you would. Come and help us. And help us. As we endeavor. To worship you. We remember.

What the Savior said. To the woman of Samaria. That you were seeking. Worshippers. That she was. Welcome to be one of them.

And therefore. We pray that. As she was told. That we would worship you. And in truth. That all our hearts.

[11 : 10] All that is within us. Would bless your name. And we have many reasons. For doing that. But most of all. There's the reason for.

This communion weekend. That we are. To come into your presence. Conscious. Of what Jesus did. Of what he suffered. As he paid the penalty.

And. As we think about that. It's not just. Paying the penalty. For sin. In some kind of. Abstract way. To pay the penalty. For our sin.

Each can say. My sin. And. And. And. Especially. And. Especially. Of what he suffered. As he paid the penalty. For sin.

And. As we think about that. It's not just. Paying the penalty. For sin. In some kind of. Abstract way. But. Paying the penalty. For our sin.

[12 : 09] Each can say. My sin. So. Lord. That. As we think about. Later. And.

About. Someone. Discovered. Things. About himself. That he didn't realize. Before. That you would. Help us.

To see ourselves. In that individual. And to learn. What he learned. Learned. Lord. That you would. Remember. Each of us. According to our. Circumstances. They can vary. We can be. Going through. That nobody else.

Is going through. We may be going through. Things. That people. Have gone through. Before us. Whatever they are. That we.

[13 : 05] That you would. Enable us. To cast. Our burdens. Upon you. We confess. Lord. That sometimes.

When we do. Try. To cast them. We have a problem. Letting them go. And. We need. Your grace. To teach us. How to let them go.

And. Therefore. We ask. Lord. That you would. Remember us. In our. Our burdens. We thank you.

That your word. Reminds us. That you're able. To work. All things for good. That love God. God.

We confess. That we find. Hard. To understand. There are things. Happening. That.

[14:03] We cannot. See. How that would be. The case. We pray. Lord. That you would just. Give us. The assurance.

That you know. What you're doing. And that you are. Working. All things. For good. Not that. Somehow. In the future. You will start.

To work. Then. But even now. You are working. And you. Work. In all things.

Our assessment. Of them are. Whether. We think. They're good. Or. Whether. We think. They could be better. Or. Or.

They're bad. And. They couldn't. Get any worse. We just. Ask you. That you would. Assure us. That you can work.

[14:59] In our lives. So. We pray. That you would. Be with us. By your Holy Spirit. Remember. Any. Who are not able. To be here tonight. Wanted to be here.

We commit them. To you. To. Pray for the congregation. As well. For David. That you would bless. His labors. And that. Your good hand.

Would be on them. For good. So. To be with us. Through each part. Of our service. And just bless us. We pray. For Christ's sake.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll sing again. This time. From. Psalm. 27. The Scottish. Psalter. And. We'll sing. Verses. One. To five. The Lord's. My light. And saving health.

[15:55] Who shall make me dismayed. My life strength. Is the Lord. Of whom then. Shall I be afraid. Verses. One. To five.

The Lord's. My light. And saving. Who shall make me dismayed.

My life strength. And. The Lord. The Lord. Of whom. Then shall I be afraid.

Then shall I be afraid. When does my enemies. My enemies.

And foes. Most wicked. Persons. All. To. In. My. The. The. The. The.

[17:01] The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The. The.

The. The. The. The. The. Against me, O one host and come, my heart yet fearless is.

Though water gets me rise, I will be confident in this.

One thing I know the Lord desire, and will seek to obtain.

That all day sought, my life I gave, within God's hands created.

[18:29] That died the beauty of the Lord, before me at the fire.

I'm glad I am, the Holy Christ, my brethren, be in choir.

For he in this, our ill God, behind in evil days.

In secret all it stands behind, and on our own be raised.

We can turn to the Gospel of Luke and chapter 5.

[19:54] Luke chapter 5, and we can read verses 1 to 11. On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him, it was Jesus to hear the word of God.

He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land.

And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.

And Simon answered, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing, but at your word I will let down the nets. And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.

They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

[21:39] For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken. And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you'll be catching men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

And may God bless that reading to us. We'll sing again this time from Psalm 63 and sing Psalms.

And we can sing verses 1 to 8. O God, you are my God alone. I seek your face with eagerness. My soul and body thirst for you in this dry, weary wilderness.

Verses 1 to 8. O God, you are my God alone.

[30 : 34] But Jesus said he would make him a rock and therefore whenever we see Peter in the Gospels we see a person in process.

Jesus is in the process of making him into a rock. And of course a rock in the Middle East was covered many things.

A rock could be a place of security. A rock could be a place of protection from the sun. A rock could be somewhere to stand on high ground when floods were happening.

So when Jesus said to Peter I'll make you a rock he was saying something incredible to him wasn't he. He was indicating he could change him completely make him into a new man as it were.

that's the first time Peter met Jesus. Then the second time it's not recorded in Luke but it's recorded in Matthew and Mark.

[31 : 48] He Jesus came along to the Sea of Galilee and there were the Peter and Andrew and James and John at the seaside.

and Jesus said to them follow me. And they did so. Maybe he had told them before that that he would come and get them because he had previously gone on a small tour with Jesus as we find in the early chapters of the Gospel of John.

But this is they've gone back to fishing for a short time and then Jesus appears again and maybe he had arranged that with them saying that I'll come and we'll take you again on another tour or whatever word we want to use to describe it.

And he did that. and here we have them back again at fishing once more. And here's the third time that Jesus has called them.

And of course that tells us something quite important, doesn't it? Often the path that Jesus takes his people down is intermittent. that is it's not just one ongoing continual sameness about it.

[33 : 33] But Jesus taught them little by little. And then eventually he went with them for his three years public ministry. ministry. But it's good to know that Jesus teaches us in stages because there's so much for him to teach us.

And if it was all given to us in one go, well, who would take it all in? But anyway, here's Peter on the third time.

There's somebody missing from this chapter, isn't there, this passage. But he may be there, and the person that's missing from the passage is Andrew.

But I don't know if you noticed as we read the description of Peter's boat, that the reference to the number of people in it is plural. They.

And it may have been that Andrew was there all the time. but it is intriguing that his name is not mentioned. I wonder what lesson does that teach us?

[34 : 56] Well, I'll tell you the one that comes to my mind, and that is, do we mind when our name is not mentioned? Andrew was an apostle.

He had the same calling as Peter. We would expect him to be surely mentioned with him. but here, if he was here, he's not mentioned.

I think that's one of the challenges that comes our way, isn't it? Do we mind not being mentioned? happened? But anyway, that's the, just some comments of introduction.

Peter's in a process, and what do we see from here about this process? I just wanted to think about three things.

Jesus uses what Peter has. That's the first point. We'll think about that. And then secondly, there's the response of Peter on this occasion.

[36 : 20] How did he react to Jesus using the things he has? And then lastly, the comfort that Jesus gave to him.

So first of all, Jesus uses what Peter has. And what he chose to use was his boat. There are two boats there, at least.

There's Peter's boat, and there's the boat of James and John. But when Jesus chooses to use Peter's boat, what's he doing?

I think he is publicly identifying himself with Peter, isn't he? If anybody happened to walk by at that moment, they would say, who's that in Peter's boat?

boat? And the answer is obvious. It's Jesus in Peter's boat. And by this simple action, Jesus forces Peter into making a public admittance of his connection to Jesus.

[37 : 43] Jesus And that's what Jesus does all the time, isn't it? Whenever he uses anything that we have, whether it's our minds, or our hands, or our tongues, or even our processions, he does it

in such a way that people see that we are connected to him.

And initially, he gets Peter to do something small. He just says to him, pull your boat out a little bit. And that's a fairly simple thing for the owner of the boat to do, isn't it? How many times would Peter have pushed his boat out? He probably did it most days of his life.

Something that would be simple for him. And sometimes Jesus is that for us, doesn't he?

He just gets us to do something simple for him. Something straightforward. Something well within our competence. Something we feel at ease with.

[39 : 21] And there's Peter and he probably felt quite pleased with this. God and maybe he was just thinking, isn't it wonderful for Jesus to use me?

And it is good when Jesus uses us to help in the progress of his kingdom. him. As Jesus was teaching the people, Peter could say, well, I've helped him and just pushing out the boat a little. people. But then, almost seamlessly, Jesus moves from the simple to the difficult.

Because he says to him there, after getting him to, after he had finished teaching the people, there in verse 4, put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch.

Now, normally, if I had been any other day of Peter's career, this kind of instruction would have been elementary.

[40 : 59] I mean, how often had Peter put out his nets? for a catch. It was his daily activity. But on this particular day, it was different, of course.

Because the night before, he had tried to and caught nothing. fished, it was a fished, it was very dangerous to speak about fishing in this part of the world.

But if I had been fishing and caught nothing, I would just have assumed there was no fish there. water. So, when Jesus comes up with this next request, and it's a command, put out into the deep and lay down your nets for a catch.

catch. This simple everyday request is actually asked in the light of Peter's failure.

Peter, the experienced fisherman, who probably knew the lake of Galilee at the back of his hand. And here's this carpenter from Nazareth.

[42 : 33] What does he know about fishing? Well, it would turn out it wouldn't it. He knew a lot more about it than Peter did. But anyway, he asked him in light of a failure.

And that raises another question. How do we react when we fail? How do we fail? I mean, how often do we fail?

Well, we all fail all the time. Never a day goes by without us failing somewhere in a Christian life. And how do we react when that happens?

things. Because quite often that's the very moment when Jesus will ask us to do something impossible.

Or something that seems impossible. Indeed, something that seems pointless. What was the point of saying to Peter, the experienced fisherman, who after a night of catching nothing, what's the point of saying to him, just go out there and throw your nets out.

[44 : 10] net. And of course, Jesus says to him, doesn't he, let down your nets for a catch.

Jesus tells him beforehand what he'll get if he puts down his nets. That he'll get a catch. And I suppose we could say here, that Jesus is testing Peter whether or not he's got faith in the instructions of Christ.

At that moment, Peter's got a choice. The choice is this for Peter. Does he believe what he thinks he knows?

or does he believe what Jesus tells him? And we can see that Peter is not wholehearted in his response, is he?

Because the failure is obviously niggling at him. master, he says there in verse 5, we toiled all night and took nothing.

[45 : 46] But who's he going to believe? His own feelings? His own experience? or the instruction of Christ?

The instruction of Jesus that promises him a blessing. If you do, I tell you, Jesus basically says, you'll get a catch.

I suppose we could say providentially, Jesus says, who is the God of providence, of course, I mean, he's the one who caused Peter to catch nothing.

I mean, nothing is happening to Peter outside of Christ's control. And he's got the timing perfect. Although I'm sure Peter didn't think the timing was perfect.

But the timing is perfect. Because if he does what Jesus tells him, he'll find that out. And he did do it.

[47 : 01] Although he wasn't wholehearted about it, yet he had also learned enough in the short time, the year or so, that he has been in connection with Jesus, he's always learned enough that if someone does what Jesus says, the blessing will come.

So he just says to him there, your word, I will let down the nets. and as we can see, they got a large number of fish and their nets were breaking.

And of course, here we have another reminder that obedience is the path of blessing. However unlikely, or however ridiculous it might seem, obedience is the path of blessing.

You know, I don't know all of you, and some of you may be thinking in your own hearts, that you should be at the Lord's table.

And you may think you're a failure. And you may be a failure. Because everybody failed.

[48 : 56] And in the middle of your failure, here comes this command of Jesus. just to remember him. And not to remember him by yourself.

Because anybody can do that. That's quite simple. It's like Peter putting out his boat. You can remember Jesus anywhere.

he comes to us and says, do it in this way. Remember me and the rest of my people.

And you'll get a blessing. God's And at that moment, you've got to decide. Do I believe his word more than the effect of my circumstances?

Whatever they have been. So that's Jesus uses what Peter has. And then we have the response of Peter.

[50 : 30] I suppose the question that comes to mind is, what should somebody do in a sinking boat? Because the boat is sinking.

It says that there is verse 7. They filled both the boats and they began to sink.

Well, if I was in the boat, I know what I would have done. I'd have got out of it. Or I might have thrown the fish out.

What did Peter do? Well, he just fell on his knees. And there he is confessing Jesus.

And he's having to do it before others. And he's having to do it before others. Who knows what Peter had said to the community in which he lived about where he had been when he was absent from the Bethsaida following Jesus.

[52 : 06] People may not have known what he was doing. But here he is outside his village on his knees before Jesus.

Jesus' action on his behalf has forced him into the situation where he has to confess him before others.

surrounded by the bountiful provision that Jesus gave him.

He's on his knees and everybody can see it. And we don't know how many people were there but there had been a crowd listening to Jesus.

And going by the likely time schedule that it took for Peter to get his big catch the crowd would still be there.

[53 : 30] Because it doesn't seem to be more than a few minutes for Jesus to provide all this. And Peter has been forced to confess him.

There's something beautiful about the way Peter does this. It's just spontaneous. When he saw it he just fell down at Jesus' knees saying depart from me for I am a sinful man O Lord.

Peter was very impulsive but this is not an expression of his impulsiveness.

He's actually made a self-discovery and he's made it in light of the bounty that Jesus has provided for him.

in a very strange way this astonishing miracle hasn't just told Peter that Jesus is capable it's also told Peter that he's a sinner because that's what he says isn't it depart from me for I am a sinful man there's different ways of of individuals discovering that they're sinners I mean one way is well just to take the ten commandments and just run your mind down them and as we do that and ask ourselves which one of them have I kept of course the answer is none of them and we can be we can just sense that we are sinners by doing that and

[56 : 05] God's law does that often but good as it is to have conviction by God's law law there's something missing from it sometimes we can be God's law can shine into our hearts like a torch and as it shines there we see one sin after the other the whole ten commandments and all of their

ramifications can just appear before our eyes and that can happen with no sign of

God's mercy all we are is convicted and while it's good to be convicted it's not enough to be convicted we need something more and in Peter's case here he saw something more didn't he I mean he saw the bountiful mercy of Jesus in the very area of his experience where he had caught nothing where his inadequacy was obvious Jesus had given him a wonderful catch of fish he had seen in the beauty of Jesus how imperfect he was he didn't just see that he was an imperfect fisherman in contrast to Jesus who gave him this great catch he actually saw he was an imperfect man a sinner and this astonishing display of Christ's power had shown to Peter the uniqueness of Jesus that he can control the seas he can't control the fish he knows the exact spot where to lay to put down the net he realized in a way he hadn't realized before that

Jesus was great and that he was unworthy to be in his presence in comparison to him and that's a good discovery to make isn't it that Jesus is far greater than us that there's an infinite distance between us Christ is perfect in every way Peter is imperfect but Jesus the savior even in the mundane things of life shows he's very different from us and

Peter just feels it's hard to be with this man it's easy to be with Peter and John after all they've caught nothing as well but Jesus he's so different and as I look at him I see my sin he saw the beauty of the Lord and initially he made the wrong reaction but we can understand that can't we what would you and I have done if we had been in Peter's shoes and we had seen this incredible display of his power we would say to ourselves how do we cope with this this extraordinary man Peter's question was wrong of course he made a wrong deduction for some reason he had concluded that the proper response of discovery in the greatness of Jesus was somehow for Jesus and him to be separate it he sensed that his own potentiality to fail meant that it was inappropriate for him to be in the presence of Christ but that was wrong Jesus had come not just to help Peter catch some fish he had come to help

[62 : 33] Peter and to change him to tell Peter that he could use him because he goes on to say to him fear not do not be afraid there in verse 10 from now on you will be catching men!

it's only a suggestion but what have been going through Peter's mind since he had met Jesus from the two instances that we know about the first time Jesus said to him I'm going to make you a rock and then the second time he had said to him follow me and I make you a fisher of men do you think Peter was afraid what's Jesus going to demand of me where is he going to take me as a fisher of men how can

I possibly do that Peter would have said to himself and it may be the case that when Jesus says to him here do not be afraid he's not just referring to that moment but perhaps to Peter's thought processes that the challenge of Jesus in his life that so far he had heard well the possibilities terrified him and we can feel that too can't we you can just feel inadequate some or other this path of discipleship that Jesus has before us well how can we do it whether

Peter felt that or not the reality of course is that it's not us to do it Paul says on one occasion that the life that he now lives in the flesh he lives by faith in the son of God he had found the secret of Christian living that every day every moment of every day Christ's power was available for him and here's Peter and Jesus says to him from now on you'll catch men and the word there that's translated catch means to catch them alive the fish they've been fishing for up until now they were catches that were meant to die but the catches he was going to get in the future

I mean they were going to live and Jesus who did that for him but it was essential in order for Peter to be successful in that sense it was essential for him to discover that he was a sinner to discover that without Christ he couldn't do anything with Christ he could do all things he had an object lesson of it without Jesus in the boat he had caught nothing with

[67 : 35] Jesus in the boat he was given a great catch and Jesus was telling them wasn't he to live for me you have to know who you are as well as know who I am that's what Jesus said to him wasn't it you have to know who you are as well as who I am and we have to hold them both together some days we can forget who we are and then things go wrong and other days we forget who Jesus is and then these days things go wrong but if we hold these two things in tension at the same time remembering who we are failure

Peter the failure at fishing remember who we are because we all fail there's no Christian who doesn't fail there's no Christian in the world today who didn't fail today somewhere along the line he or she has failed but the fact that they have failed is no evidence that Jesus will not use them today except when we go to Jesus after our failures we might feel like saying depart from me for I am a

sinful man but we shouldn't say that instead we should say to

Jesus after we fail I have learned what your word tells me that it's sinners that you use sinners who fail and therefore you can use me and as we come to a close I suppose we could say as we come to the Lord's table in a couple of days time whether we are people who have been Christians and have done it many times or whether we are those who are thinking about doing it either way what we see is our failure and we might say to ourselves well my failure whatever it is is a sufficient reason for me not to remember

Jesus but in this life the only people who can remember Jesus are failures and we should just learn from Peter's experience as he is in this classroom of Christ because he is Peter in process and Jesus is teaching him a very important lesson that our inadequacies are no reason for not serving Jesus that right after our failure he can still use us in ways beyond our imagination this was a defining moment for

Peter as far as we know after this he left his nets and his board and spent the next three years following Jesus and hopefully the Lord's table on the coming Lord's day will be a defining moment moment it may not be the first defining moment But whatever our experience is at present that it will be a defining moment for where we are that helped this incident helped clarify Peter and his role for serving Jesus and it may be the Lord's Supper this weekend will be a defining moment in our journey with

[73 : 29] Jesus and may he do so for his name's sake shall we pray Lord we give you thanks that as you help Peter you can help us as you gently led him through the process of discovering who he was and discovering who you were so we pray you lead us to discover who we are and to discover who you are and just how exactly your competence deals with our incompetence we thank you Lord that our sins cause our incompetence in a very marvellous way you have provided for you have provided the remedy for our incompetence that your perfection deals with our imperfection that your power deals with our lack of power love that everything about you covers everything about us so help us

Lord to follow Peter in the sense that he fell at your knees and to realize that acknowledging the greatness of Jesus and the weakness of ourselves is a good combination so bless us Lord we pray for your own name's sake amen holy