

19.1.25 pm: A Theology of mistakes

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Preacher: Reverend Thomas Davies

[0 : 0 0] Well, good evening and a very warm welcome to our service this evening. It's lovely to see you all and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to be with you again for this evening's service.

For anyone who I've not met, my name is Thomas Davis and I'm the Minister in Carloway. And David very kindly agreed to swap for the evening services this week. We were both away in Edinburgh for most of the week, so he is in Carloway.

I'm here. It's a great deal for them. A terrible deal for you. I am delighted to be here. So thank you so much for coming and I'm delighted that we can gather to worship our amazing risen Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And so we're going to begin singing together from Psalm 36 in the Scottish Psalter. And we're going to sing from verse 5 to verse 10. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds.

Thy justice is like mountains great. Thy judgments deep as floods. And these are beautiful words just expressing so vividly just the awesomeness of God in his mercy, his love, his goodness and grace.

[1 : 1 0] And so we can sing these words with great joy as we stand and worship God together. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds.

Thy justice is like mountains great. Thy justice deep as floods.

Lord, how precious is thy grace.

Therefore, in shadow of thy wings, men's sons their trust shall place.

Live with the factness of thy house shall be well satisfied.

[2 : 5 2] From rivers of thy pleasures thou wilt drink to them from high.

Because of life the fountain pure. Because of life the fountain pure. Remains alone with thee.

And in that purest light of thy, we clearly life shall see.

Thy lovingkindness unto them. Continue that they know.

And still on men of brightened heart. Thy righteousness bestow.

[4 : 2 3] Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.

Let's pray together.

And it made it■, made it■ through the■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■
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a llébhigh agus a sain agus a chasin agonn
gyn mi glóraith saith chulachal eir scathri isd. Amen.

[7 : 33] So we'll stand and sing these wonderful words together. Amen. More sure for sins they
are many His mercy is more.

Lord nations would wait as we constantly roam what Father so tender is calling us home
He welcomes the weakest the vilest the poor our sins they are many His mercy His mercy
is more.

Lord Riches of kindness He lavished on us His blood was the payment His life was the cost We stood beneath our debt we could never afford Our sins they are many His mercy is more Praise the Lord His mercy is more Stronger than darkness New and me more Our sins they are many His mercy is more Lord, His mercy is more Stronger than darkness

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He deceives himself But let each one test his own work And then his reason to boast Will be in himself alone And not in his neighbor For each will have to bear his own load Let the one who is taught Share all good things With the one who teaches Do not be deceived God is not mocked For whatever one sows That will he also reap For the one who sows to his own flesh Will from the flesh reap corruption But the one who sows to the spirit Will from the spirit reap eternal life And let us not grow weary Of doing good For in due season We will reap If we do not give up So then As we have opportunity Let us do good to everyone And especially to those Who are of the household of faith See with what large letters I am writing to you With my own hand It is those who would want To make a good showing in the flesh Who would force you To be circumcised And only in order That they may not be persecuted

For the cross of Christ For even those who are circumcised Do not themselves keep the law But they desire to have you circumcised That they may boast in your flesh But far be it from me to boast Except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ By which the world has been crucified to me And I to the world For neither circumcision counts for anything Nor uncircumcision But a new creation And as for all who walk by this rule Peace and mercy be upon them And upon the Israel of God From now on Let no one cause me trouble For I bear on my body The marks of Jesus The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ Be with your spirit, brothers Amen Amen May the Lord bless that reading of his word Let's pray together again Father we thank you That we can come before you this evening

And as we come to worship you We do so Confessing our sins before you And We come We don't want to hide anything We don't want to pretend to be something That we are not As we come to you We know that you can see Right to the depths of our hearts We are We are We are open before you And so we come confessing our sin And we confess our sins With sorrow And with regret And with frustration And we're sorry for the way That we've spoken And thought And behaved In our lives But as we confess our sins before you We do so We do so Rejoicing in the promise of the gospel That That your mercy is more And that Your grace is stronger That where our sin abounds Grace does much more abound And The blood of Jesus Cleanses us And we are united to you In your death and resurrection And we thank you for that So so much And we pray that all of us here

Either for the very first time Or maybe Maybe Maybe just anew As we've followed you for many years May we all just Rest in the healing Cleansing And renewing power Of the gospel We thank you so much For your promises For your faithfulness And for your amazing love And grace We want to pray For everybody here That as we Turn to your word Shortly That you'll be preparing All our hearts To hear your voice And we pray that Your word would shape Every part of our lives Please help us To hear your voice Speaking In your word And by your spirit May we be able to Apply that word To our lives Help us As we go into A new week With school And work And our lives At home And our lives In the community May every part Of those lives Be shaped by the gospel That we'd live for you And honour you We want to pray For the work Of the gospel Here in In Tarbert In Harris And across Our islands And indeed Our nation

[15 : 35] We pray that the gospel Would advance With great power And we pray That we would see Many many people Come to trust In Jesus And what we pray For our own nation We pray for all the nations Of the world We want to remember Before you Those who are in need And we pray for those In the midst of conflict And suffering We again Pray for Stability And healing In the Middle East Thank you so much For a ceasefire May that Ceasefire hold And may lives Be rebuilt And please comfort And help those Who mourn Please help all those Caught up in conflict In Ukraine And in other parts Of the world Please help those Who are in the grip Of addiction Please help those Who are trapped In poverty Please help those Who struggle With their physical Or mental health Or whatever other Struggles we may have We pray for those In need But the greatest need Of all Lord Is for people To come to trust In you And we pray That even if There's any here Tonight Who do not yet know you Or who are not sure

Where they stand Or who feel Like they've messed up Their lives Or even those Who maybe feel Like they've slipped Back in their faith May they all Just hear your voice Speaking to them May they all Feel your arms Wrapping around them And holding them And may your word Just speak comfort And truth To us all As we gather here Tonight So we just want to Thank you Father For all that you've Done for us We thank you Lord Jesus For everything That you have done For our salvation And we thank you Holy Spirit For your ongoing Ministry and presence Within us And among us And oh God We just pray That as we gather This evening And as we go Into this new week That we would Worship, serve And honour you In every part Of our lives We ask it all In the name of Jesus Our amazing saviour Amen Well before we turn Back to Galatians We're going to sing Together in Gaelic From Psalm 107 Psalm 107 And we're going to sing Two stanzas

From verse 28 This is using all the Imagery of a ship At sea In a storm Coming into the shelter And safety Of a harbour And so all that imagery Is just speaking to us So beautifully Of the protection And security That we have In Jesus They cried to God In their trouble And from their straits He set them free So two stanzas Psalm 107 From verse 28 To 30 To God's praise 28 And so all that

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

[21 : 04] Thank you.

And I'm going to read again verses 1 to 2. Galatians 6, 1 to 2. So my title for this evening's sermon is A Theology of Mistakes.

And that maybe sounds like a little bit of a controversial title. And it's definitely a title that would be very easy to misunderstand. It might sound like that I'm going to talk about all the different theological opinions that I think are wrong.

You might think that this is going to be a sermon that is going to highlight all the mistakes in other churches. And I'm sure if I did that that it would get a ton of hits on YouTube.

But it's definitely not what I want to do. And that's not what I mean. When I talk about a theology of mistakes, that's not about highlighting other people's theological errors.

[22 : 40] It's all about the fact that we make mistakes. And I guess the key question I want us to think about tonight is what does the theology of the gospel teach us about our mistakes?

And so we're going to look at three things together. We're going to think about understanding our mistakes, addressing our mistakes, and responding to the mistakes in others.

And we're going to be using the teaching of Galatians 6 and some other broader principles to help us think about these three things. Understanding our mistakes, addressing our mistakes, responding to the mistakes in others.

So first of all, I want us to think a little bit about understanding our mistakes. And the first thing I want to say, in many ways, the key thing I want to say about understanding our mistakes, is that we need to recognize that mistakes are mistakes.

In other words, they're not good things. They're not what we want. They're not positive. Mistakes are mistakes. And that's captured in the language that Paul uses here.

[23 : 53] In verse 1, he talks about being caught in a transgression. And that's a Greek word. The Greek word is paraptoma. And it's sometimes translated trespass as well.

And it literally means to fall beside. So paraptoma, fall beside something. And it conveys the idea of like a misstep or a false step or a deviation from the right path.

So you have in your mind a road or maybe a path, a narrow path. And a paraptoma is to slip off that path. And when you do that, you're making a mistake.

And I think it's really, really important at the outset to say that we mustn't dilute this whole issue. And sometimes we're very tempted to do that.

Sometimes we want to kind of play down the whole concept of sin. Sometimes we want to minimize its implications. We want to be very lenient on ourselves in terms of our behavior or our attitudes. And very, very often in life, we just really don't want to face up to the fact that some things are a mistake.

[25 : 03] And when we do those things, we're making a mistake. Mistakes are mistakes. Mistakes are mistakes.

In our thinking. And this is actually maybe the most important area for us to consider. Because we quickly discover that it's incredibly easy to make mistakes in the way that we think.

And those mistaken thoughts can cause a whole pile of problems and difficulties for us. There's an interesting example in verses 3 and 4 where Paul talks about boasting.

And as he talks about boasting, you can see that in verses 3 and 4. He said, If anyone thinks he's something when he's nothing, he deceives himself.

Let's each one test his own work. Then his reason to be boast will be in himself and not in his neighbor. But as he talks about boasting, he presents us with what we can call the something that's nothing principle. And so you see it there in verse 3.

[26 : 29] Somebody thinks he's something when he's actually nothing. This is what I want to call tonight the something that's nothing principle. And in regard to boasting, Paul is saying that can very easily happen.

We can have a very inflated view of ourselves. We can be kind of captivated by our own self-importance. And we think that everything kind of revolves around us.

And we're oblivious to the fact that we're actually really quite small and insignificant. Now, when Paul uses that language of something and nothing, he's not being literal.

That's obvious because he's talking about people who are boasting. He's not saying that they don't exist. They clearly exist. He's not being literal. But instead, he's making a crucial point.

And that language of something and nothing is where we are making something much, much bigger than it actually is. And the mindset of the boaster is to make ourselves far more important and far more significant than we really are.

[27 : 30] And to think like that is a mistake. But I want us just to spend a couple of minutes expanding on this. Because I think that the something that's nothing principle applies in lots of different ways.

I think there's probably very few people here who have a problem with boasting. Boasting is not really a big thing in our culture. Children maybe struggle with it more than grown-ups do. But most of us grown-ups, boasting is not a massive thing in our culture as it might be in other cultures.

But the something that's nothing principle exposes lots of ways in which our thinking can be mistaken. And I want to give three examples of this.

Example number one is idolatry. And so when we talk about idolatry, we're not talking about sort of setting up a statue and bowing down before. What we're talking about more is when we take something and we make it the most important thing in our lives.

And we give to that idol the devotion and the honor that should only ever be given to God. And when we do that, we immediately fall into this something that's nothing trap.

[28 : 37] So we think that this idol, whether it's our looks or whether it's wealth or whether it's success in our career or whether it's status or power or whatever it might be, we think that that idol is going to give us something.

So we think that money will give us security. We think that a better car will give us greater self-esteem. We think that sexual intimacy will make us feel complete. We think that a successful career is going to give us purpose.

We think that good grades are going to give us satisfaction. Now all of these things in the right place can be positive blessings in our lives. But if we make them the thing that we live for, if we put these things before Jesus, and if we pour our energy and our commitment and our hopes into anything other than him, then the something that we think that we're going to get is never going to come.

And instead it leaves us empty. And it leaves us with nothing. There are so many people who've made the mistake of thinking that some kind of idol is going to give them that something that they desperately need, and it's left them empty because the idol that they thought was something has turned out to be nothing.

And that kind of thinking is a mistake. Example number two of this something that's nothing principle in our thinking is negativity. And so that's when we maybe look at people or look at our circumstances and we judge them in a negative way and we view people or circumstances or ourselves in the worst possible light.

[30 : 25] In other words, another way of saying this is that it's all about those moments in life when we are paranoid. And when we are being paranoid, we think that there's something that's going to harm us.

And so you might be at work and you see your colleagues as a threat, or maybe you see your classmates as a threat. You might view your friends with suspicion or jealousy.

You might be on guard about letting anybody get too close to you in your life and finding out what you're really like. And we might look at people who are different from us as though they're a threat and they're dangerous.

And it's so, so easy to do this. We think that people are talking about us. We think that they're out to get us. We think that they don't really like us or that something is going to go wrong.

And there's no doubt that sometimes that can be true. But very, very often it's not true. And it's not like that. And in our paranoia and our negativity, we're convinced that people and circumstances are against us when all the time it's not true.

[31 : 32] And really, our theology should teach us two great truths that will guard us against this kind of negative paranoid thinking.

Two great truths that are maybe hard to hear. Well, one of them is hard to hear because the two great truths are this. Other people aren't as bad as you think and you're not as important as you think. Other people aren't as bad as you think and you're not as important as you think.

So yes, sin has affected everything. Every part of life is affected by sin. But it's not left people utterly depraved. We believe in common grace and that common grace has left many positive characteristics in people.

And so they're not out to get you. And part of the reason they're not out to get you is because they're probably not even thinking about you because we're not as important as we think we are. And a paranoid mindset so often makes ourselves the center of the universe.

And I hope that it's actually incredibly reassuring to discover that you're not actually that important. It's so easy to be negative and paranoid and when that happens we become obsessed with a something that's actually nothing.

[32 : 42] Because the opposition, the threat that we see in the people around us is not actually there. We're falling into the something that's nothing trap and that kind of thinking is a mistake.

And then the third example of the something that's nothing principle is probably the one that you all do the most and that I do the most. The something that's nothing principle applies to anxiety.

And again, that's making a something out of a nothing. Because anxiety feeds off what-ifs. What if this happens? What if that happens?

What will I do? How will I cope? And all of that is to panic over a something that hasn't yet happened. And that's not to say that we don't worry about ourselves or about the people that we love.

That's a right and good thing to do, to care about them. But anxiety becomes crippling when it becomes irrational. We're paralyzed, absolutely paralyzed, by a fear of what might happen.

[33 : 42] And when we think like that, we are being crushed by a something that's actually nothing. A something that's not happened that probably won't happen.

And even if it does happen, it's not going to be anywhere near as bad as you think it's going to be. And yet we're being crushed by a something that's a nothing. And that kind of thinking is a mistake.

And so in all of these ways, and in lots of other ways, we can see that it's so, so easy for our thinking to be mistaken. And this is especially true when you're tired.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever heard in my life, and I've never forgotten, is never trust your thoughts when you're tired. I was told that as a teenager, and I've never forgotten it, it has helped me so much in my life.

Especially when you're lying in bed at night, you're worrying, you're anxious, and things seem so big. And I have told myself, and reminded myself so many times, never trust your thoughts when you're tired.

[34 : 42] So often, our thinking can be mistaken. We can be plagued or misled by something that's actually nothing. The second kind of mistake that gets hinted at in these passages is mistakes in our speech.

And again, we saw that Paul is addressing the example of boasting, that speech that is mistaken. And it's a really easy trap to fall into. And as I said a wee while ago, it's especially common amongst children.

Very often, it comes out in relation to sports. So you talk about, people talk about a race. I'm going to win. I'm going to come first. I'm going to hammer you. I'm going to this. And often, that doesn't happen.

And yet, often, you'll see children boast in this kind of way. And when children do boast in that kind of way, two things happen. One, you look stupid if you're wrong. Or two, you get on everyone's nerves if you're right.

And so it's a trap either way. And boasting is a mistake in our speech. There's hundreds of other ways that we can make mistakes in our speech.

[35 : 42] Taking the Lord's name in vain, gossiping, being dishonest, over-promising, being critical, snapping at somebody, mocking somebody, moaning, bullying. You can add many more examples yourselves.

They're all incredibly easy things to do. They're all mistakes. And then thirdly, this passage speaks, points us towards mistakes in our actions. Paul speaks about works. And again, that connects to his overall message about boasting.

But I just want to expand the wider principle behind this, that so often in our actions, they can either be positive or they can be mistaken.

And there's a very good example of this earlier in Paul's letter to the Galatians, where he talks about Peter. You'll remember that maybe, or some of you will remember, that the controversy behind the letter of the Galatians was the whole issue of circumcision.

Gentiles who weren't circumcised had become Christians. And some of the Jewish people who'd begun to follow Jesus were saying, oh, if you want to really be saved, you've got to be circumcised as well.

[36 : 47] And there was this big controversy. And Peter had made the mistake whereby to begin with, he'd been happy to sit and eat with all of the Galatian Christians. But then when these stickered Jewish, Judaizers as they were called, came, Peter withdrew himself and wouldn't eat with the Gentiles.

And Paul says, that's a mistake. His actions were wrong. And he shouldn't have done that. And you can read about that in chapter two.

We can do the same. We can make loads of mistakes in their actions. We can make mistakes in what we watch on TV. We can make mistakes with what we read. We can make mistakes with what we look at on our phone, with how much alcohol we drink, with how much time we spend with our families, with how much money we're willing to give away to others, with how often we pray and read the Bible, with how much we come to church.

There's hundreds more examples in our thoughts and our words and our actions. We make mistakes. And the big point I want us to recognize in all of this is that these mistakes are mistakes.

So they're not a good idea. They're not what we're trying to do. They're not what God wants for us. They're not good for us, for our families, for our friendships, for our health, for our church, for our community.

[38 : 12] There are many, many things that if we think them, or if we say them, or if we do them, we are making a mistake. And so we mustn't dilute mistakes.

We want to face up to them, and we want to recognize them for what they are. But at the same time, you must not let mistakes define you.

And you must not let them rule over you. And that's because mistakes are mistakes. They're not the melody of your life.

They're mistakes. So I want you to imagine a tune written for the piano, or written for the pipes. You go and you play that tune, everyone's listening, and you make a mistake.

What does that tell you? Well, the mistake's a mistake. It's not part of the tune. It's not meant to be there. You didn't mean to do it. You didn't want to do it. You didn't intend to do it. That mistake is not part of the tune, but it doesn't actually change the tune that was written.

[39 : 23] All it does is it highlights what the tune was meant to be. And it's so crucial to remember that, that in building our theology of mistakes, we recognize that mistakes are real, and they are serious, but they are not the final story.

They are not the main event, and they are not what defines you. And that's why the whole image of that paraptoma that I said at the start, that misstep, that falling beside, is so, so helpful.

Because that imagery of falling off a path, it's so helpful to recognize, so important to recognize, because it's telling you that to come off the path is a mistake because you were made for the path.

The path is where you belong. The fact that mistakes are mistakes is not telling you that you were made to fall into the ditch.

It's telling you that you were made to walk the path. And that means that if we understand that mistakes are mistakes, we realize that they are not our master.

[40 : 28] They don't define us, and so do not exalt them. And that's such an easy thing to do, that actually very, very often, very, very often, we can go through our lives, and a mistake that we have made is just, it's ruling over everything.

And we can't go through a week or a month or a year of our lives without the shadow of that mistake spoiling our lives and our experiences.

And that mistake can seem so huge in our lives. But that mistake is just a mistake.

It does not define you. And so we do not want to exalt our mistakes so that they cast a long shadow over us. Instead, we want to deal with them.

Or more accurately, we want to let the gospel deal with them. And that takes us to our second point, addressing our mistakes. In many ways, the whole of the gospel is about God dealing with our mistakes.

[41 : 40] And what is revealed in Scripture throughout the great narrative of redemptive history is displaying to us how God has implemented a magnificent plan to deal with our mistakes.

Back in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve made a massive mistake. And humanity fell, and we've been making big mistakes ever since. And those mistakes loom large over us.

When I think back to my childhood, if you ask me, think back to your childhood, my mind instantly goes to the mistakes that I made, to the moments when I got around, when I did something where I thought, I wish I hadn't done that.

That's what, can I just, those are the memories that sink into my head and stand out. It's the things that I regret that my mind drifts towards.

The culture around us addresses mistakes in two ways. One is to try and sweep them under the carpet. So we try to pretend that, well, these aren't really mistakes, these kind of things aren't really a problem, and so we just want to kind of play down the idea of sin, dilute this whole concept of mistakes, and we absolutely do not want to face up to any kind of concept of guilt.

[42 : 43] That's one of the ways in which the culture around us deals with sin. Puts it under there, hides it. The other way our culture deals with sin is that sometimes people make a mistake and everybody shines a massive spotlight on it and says, look at what they've done.

The whole world is told to look and to see this massive mistake and there is no mercy at all. And so we live in a world and social media has massively emphasized this issue, whereby our culture will either sweep mistakes under the carpet or it will delight in displaying them for everyone to see.

The gospel does neither of those things. In the gospel, Jesus comes as our substitute. He comes to die on the cross in our place, to take our sins upon himself, to give us his perfect righteousness as a gift.

and all of that is possible because everyone who trusts in Jesus is united to him and we receive the benefits of everything that he has done for us.

Paul speaks about this. In fact, he describes it really vividly. At the very end of chapter 5 in verse 24, he talks about being crucified with Christ.

[44 : 09] He says the same thing again in chapter 5 verse 14. Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

And what that means is something so unbelievably important. It means that if you are a Christian or if you become a Christian, your mistakes are dead and buried. If you are a Christian or if you become a Christian, your mistakes are dead and buried.

And this is so, so important because so often our mistakes torment us. And even if we've done our very best to try and bury them and hide them under the carpet, they still niggles at us.

We still worry that they're going to come out from under the carpet again. And sometimes that happens and sometimes people discover that we make mistakes, it gets exposed and we feel humiliated and crushed.

In the gospel, your sins are dead and buried. And that means that in God's eyes they are totally dealt with. They're gone. That means that they cannot do anything to you.

[45 : 20] And the amazing thing about the gospel is that it doesn't just deal with your past mistakes, it actually deals with all your future mistakes as well. They are dead and buried as well. And this is where our union with Christ is such an important doctrine for us to remember.

It means that if Jesus was crucified then so were your mistakes. In fact, the debt of all your mistakes was nailed to the cross with him.

As Paul tells us in Colossians chapter 2. This is part of what baptism symbolises. And please always, every morning you, as a Christian, you should wake up and think of your baptism.

Because baptism is symbolising that washing and cleansing and renewing power of the Holy Spirit. Our sin is washed away, swept off us completely, because Jesus died in our place.

So often we make mistakes and we feel like we have slipped off the path that Jesus has made us to walk and we feel like we are stuck in the ditch. But Jesus says, I will never leave you in the ditch.

[46 : 27] Instead, he forgives us and restores us and he sets us on the path of discipleship again. That's why in our theology of the gospel, justification always leads on to sanctification.

We are forgiven, we are declared righteous and then we are renewed by this process by day by day the Holy Spirit helps us to become more and more like Jesus. That's not a straight line, there's loads of ups and downs on that path, but he is always working in us to renew us and restore us.

So as Christians, we don't get out of the ditch just to jump back in again. Instead, by his grace, we walk in a new direction, following Jesus, led by his Spirit. Along the way we will stumble, but all the mistakes that you've made and all the mistakes that you will make are dealt with.

Our union with Christ is unbreakable. I want you to imagine that you can walk into heaven and have a conversation with Jesus.

And I first of all want you to imagine that you're doing that as an unbeliever. And so you're making your way up to Jesus as an unbeliever and you say to him, how many mistakes have I made?

[47 : 48] And Jesus will reply, far more than you realise. And that's actually true, that our sin, even if we have a really big consciousness of our sin, it's not big enough.

There are so many ways, in so many ways we have sinned against God, so many ways that we have messed up, and some of it we don't even realise. So you're standing before Jesus and you're asking him the question, as an unbeliever, you're asking the question, how many mistakes have I made?

He says, far more than you realise. Now I want you to imagine that you go away, you become a Christian, you hear the gospel and put your faith in Jesus, and you go back into the same journey into heaven, and you ask Jesus the same question again, and you're able to walk up to him and say to him, how many mistakes have I made?

And he replies, I'm not counting. they're dead and buried. And the key point is this, if you're a Christian or if you become a Christian, when it comes to your mistakes, you need to view them how Jesus views them.

You need to view your mistakes how Jesus views them. And in Jesus' eyes, your mistakes are serious enough for him to die for, and they are dealt with enough for him to forget about.

[49 : 20] They are serious enough for him to die for, they are dealt with enough for him to forget about. I heard, you've maybe heard this, I've used this a few times, it wasn't from me, it was Kenny Ferguson I heard tell this story, in fact it was my mother who heard Kenny Ferguson tell this story, and she told me this story, and I've told it lots of times.

If you've heard it before, just pretend you haven't. He spoke about two people, I can't remember if it was men or women, let's say they were men, two older men speaking, and one of them was speaking about his consciousness of his sin, and how he felt so guilty, and so full of his sin, and the other person he was speaking to was a wise, old, godly Christian, and as they were departing, the one who was so conscious of his sin, he was a Christian, said, I want you to ask God what's the worst sin I've committed?

And then when we meet again you can tell me. And so that was fine, off he went, and he came back to the wise, godly, old bodhak or kayoch, and said, did you ask God what's the worst sin I committed?

He says, yes I did. And did God answer you? Yes he did. What did God say? I can't remember. God said, I can't remember.

I can't remember. God said, because through Jesus our sins are dead and buried. In Jesus' eyes your mistakes are serious enough for him to die for, they're dealt with enough for him to forget about.

[50 : 52] And if you're here today and if you're plagued with regret over mistakes that you have made, then you can just come to Jesus again, or you can come to Jesus for the first time and you do not need to stay in that horrible ditch of regret and frustration.

the gospel addresses all of our mistakes. Last of all, this passage has a lot to teach us about responding to the mistakes in others.

When it comes to following Jesus, a lot of people are plagued by the question, what if I make a mistake? And I think a lot of people feel like that. Sometimes that can be the thing that holds somebody back.

And I don't know, if this congregation is anything like my congregation, there will be lots of people in the congregation who are believers but who just cannot take that step to profess their faith or to let others know or to move forward in the faith.

And one of the big reasons why they can't do it is because they think, what if I make a mistake? Or maybe you're here today and you're plagued with the realisation, I have made a mistake and I'm so conscious of it.

[51 : 58] How should the church respond to that? How do we respond to the mistakes in others? But that's what Paul is addressing here in Galatians 6. And it's such an important thing for us to think about because we've often got this badly wrong.

We can very easily create a culture where mistakes aren't really allowed to happen. So often people will come to church and they'll think well I'm coming to church if I'm feeling good or I'm coming to church if I'm feeling that I can put on the impression that I'm feeling good.

And that leads us to feel like we have to put on our best outward presentation. We hide our insecurities and we definitely don't let people see our mistakes.

I've grown up on the island here. I've seen that and done that so many times. things. And it's a very difficult thing because it is very often and very easily creates a culture in our churches where you can be a Christian and you can be a member of the church but only if you don't make mistakes.

And that kind of culture is reinforced when people who do make mistakes have been kept at arm's length. And I hope that you can see that that kind of mindset goes right against the teaching that we have here in Galatians 6.

[53 : 25] And the reason that this teaching here is here in Galatians 6 is because if we don't listen to what this is saying we'll end up in the situation where Jesus and his church have got two completely different approaches to dealing with mistakes.

mistakes. Jesus says I know your mistakes and I have forgiven all of them and I will never give up on you and I will restore you and help you.

There have been many times in the last 2,000 years of church history where people have made mistakes and we've said get out and stay out. And that's so wrong.

And as Christians we must never receive the grace of Jesus for ourselves and then deny it to the people who are around us. The pattern of the gospel is that as we are forgiven we freely and openly forgive others.

And this is where we see that the culture that the gospel creates is so beautifully different to the mindset that we humans on our own will create.

[54 : 35] The gospel culture is so different because Jesus knows that mistakes are going to happen. Jesus knows that mistakes are going to happen in the life of the Christian and in the life of the church.

That's why Paul addresses it. And that's why in verse 1 he gives us one of the most important lessons that we can ever learn in church. He talks about being caught in a transgression. Now that word caught is a really interesting word because when you first hear it you think well does it mean caught up like you just sort of get tangled up in a crowd that leads you in a bad way and you make a mistake?

Or does it mean caught as in being found out that actually you've done something you're trying to get away with it and you got found out? That's actually what the word means. It's the second one that you've been caught in sin.

Sin has been discovered. Somebody has failed. A massive mistake has been made. What response does the gospel expect? Is it a post on social media? Is it a wildfire of gossip? Is it a heavy and decisive act of punishment?

No. It is gentle restoration. If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

[55 : 47] In other words, if someone falls into the ditch, the church's job is to help them up again. we are to do to one another exactly what Jesus did to us.

And at one level, we want the church to be the place where we are learning and growing in godliness and in holiness and where we're leaving behind the mistakes that are so easily made when we let sin dominate in our lives.

And so at one level, the church is the place where mistakes in our thinking and in our speaking and our actions are all that's left behind.

That's one aspect of what the church is meant to be. But at the very same time, the church should be the place, the church should be the safest place in the whole world to make a mistake.

mistake. And that's not because mistakes are okay or unimportant. It's because the people who make them are so precious.

[57 : 07] One of the reasons why we need a theology of mistakes is because mistakes are going to happen. So we need to recognise them and understand them. This week, our thoughts, our words, our actions, are all areas, all a breeding ground for mistakes.

We need the healing and forgiving power of the gospel to address them. And then we need to apply the same theology to one another when mistakes are made.

One final lesson as we close. We're talking all about a theology of mistakes. mistakes. What's the biggest mistake that anybody can ever make?

The biggest mistake that you can make is to think that Jesus can't deal with your mistakes. And it's so easy to do that.

It's so easy to think, I've messed up too much. I've fallen too far. My chance has gone.

[58 : 17] The biggest mistake you can make is to think that Jesus cannot deal with your mistakes. He absolutely can. And you can come to him tonight and lay it all before him and say, Lord, I've made loads of mistakes.

Please heal me. Please help me. And he absolutely will. Amen. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you so, so much just for the fact that the gospel is so big and wise and beautiful and how it shapes every aspect of our lives.

And we thank you so much that in calling us to yourself, you don't ask us to fix ourselves, but we can come to you as we are with all our mistakes. And we thank you also that as we follow you, we follow you and you know that we will make mistakes along the way and yet your commitment to us is unbreakable.

And we just thank you so, so much for that amazing mercy and love that you've shown towards us. And we pray, Lord Jesus, that every one of us would know that healing power of the gospel.

And we pray too that when we see mistakes in one another that we'd always, always, always be ready to show the same grace to one another as you have shown towards us, that we'd restore one another in that spirit of gentleness and that our love for one another and that our love for you would deepen with every step that we take.

[59 : 48] we are sorry for the mistakes that we make but we are so, so thankful that you have washed them away. Amen.

We're going to close with the hymn In Christ Alone, which is just such a beautiful hymn and speaks so powerfully of the healing and hope that we have through our Saviour Jesus.

So we'll stand and sing In Christ Alone as we close. In Christ alone my hope is found He is my light, my strength, my song This cornerstone This solid ground firm to the fiercest dread and storm What heights of love What depths of peace When fears are stilled When strivings ceased My comforter My all in all Here in the love of Christ I stand In Christ alone

In Christ alone In God In God flesh fullness of God In hell blessed This gift of love This gift of love And righteousness Scorned by the ones He came to save Till on that cross As Jesus died The wrath of God Was satisfied For every sin On Him On Him was laid Here in the death Of Christ I live Where in the ground His body lay Light of the world By darkness Slain Then bursting forth

In glorious day And from the grave He rose again And as He stands In victory Sin's curse Has lost Its grip on me For I am His And He is mine Bought with the Precious blood Of Christ No guilt in life No fear in death This is the power Of Christ In me From life's first cry To final breath Jesus commands My destiny No power of hell No scheme of man

[63 : 26] Can ever pluck me From His hand Till He returns Or calls me home Here in the power Of Christ I stand As you go into a new week May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The love of God And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all And all God's people say Amen