

1.3.26 am

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Date: 01 March 2026

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. A warm welcome to the service this morning, and if there's any visitors with us, you're especially welcome. Tea and coffee at the end, as you know, and please be encouraged to stay if you're able.

So the evening service will be taken at six o'clock tonight, as usual, and it'll be taken by Scott. We've missed Scott the last while, so Scott will be taking the evening service this evening. Don't think he's been sitting about. He's been preaching here, there and everywhere, but it's nice to have him here for a change. So that's this evening, and there's a prayer meeting at half past five before that for those who are able.

So YF will meet tonight as well, after the evening service, half past seven, and you can note also elders, that there's an elders prayer meeting tomorrow at 6pm.

Prayer meeting on Wednesday, Scott will take that also, and the communion weekend, which is coming up this coming weekend, we have the details of that, or you've had it on the screen and on the email.

[1 : 09] The galaic service will be on Thursday night at 7pm, rather than the usual Friday morning at 12pm.

So Thursday at 7pm, the galaic service and the Reverend Donald MacDonald will take that. The other services on Friday through to Sunday will be taken by Neil Lachie from Aleppo, and if you're able to come to these services, it'll be good to see you.

There's a fellowship in the Mans on the Friday night, fellowship in the church on the Sunday night, and it's team two, I'm told, that are on duty. It's not on the screen, but team two, you're the guys who are on duty this coming Sunday evening.

I've left a sheet out in the foyer with a list for, if you're able to give donations or trade baker or whatever, please put your name and your donation just so those who are organizing know what we have.

And for any who know the Lord, who are trusting the Lord, but have not yet professed faith in Jesus, please be encouraged to do so.

[2 : 24] It's a command, it's not an optional. Jesus said, if you're trusting me, then do this in remembrance of me. And so, if you would like to take communion for the first time, please come and speak to me or any of the elders before the weekend.

These, I think, are all the notices, so let's sing together now to God's praise, and we'll sing from Psalm 116. Psalm 116, and we'll sing verses 1 to verse 6, which I think is four stanzas of the psalm. I love the Lord, because my voice and prayers heeded here, I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear. Of death the cords and sorrow stood about me compassed round, the pains of hell took hold of me.

I grief and trouble find upon the name of God the Lord. Then did I call and say, deliver thy my soul, O Lord, I do thee humbly pray. God merciful and righteous is, yea gracious is our God.

God saves the meek, I was brought low, he did me help afford. We'll sing these verses and we'll stand to sing to God's praise. Amen. I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear.

[3 : 53] I, while I live, will call on him who bowed to me his ear.

Of death the cords and sorrows did about me compassed round, the pains of hell took hold on me. I give my trouble found. Upon the name of God the Lord, then did I call and say, deliver thy my soul, O Lord, I do thee humbly pray.

I do thee humbly pray. For merciful and righteous is, yea, gracious is the Lord.

God saves the meek, I was brought low, he did me help afford.

[5 : 55] Lord, let's call upon the name of the Lord now in prayer.

Let's pray. Our heavenly Father, we thank you that we are able to come this morning and that we are able to unite our hearts and raise our voices in praise and in prayer to you, the God who is worthy of all our praise and the God who is willing and who is ready to hear and to answer our prayers.

Lord, we ask, Lord, that you would be working in each of our hearts at this time. Lord, we pray that we pray that we pray that we may be able to thank you for bringing us to a position where we feel low.

God saves the meek. I was brought low. We confess, Lord, that in our sinful state, we don't like to be in that position where we feel low.

we would rather be lifted up we would rather be high but we thank you that in your love you're the God who has shown us that we are sinners and we thank you that you have not left us with that statement that we are sinners but we thank you that you have told us that there is a saviour that Christ is the saviour and we ask Lord that every one of us this morning would be able to look to Jesus and call upon the name of Jesus and yet we know that before we'll do that we need to see our need of Jesus and that's why we have to be low so if there are any of us this morning who don't see our sin and who don't see our need of Christ if there are any of us this morning who are allowing pride to find a harbour in our hearts we pray Holy Spirit that you would bring us low so that we would look up and see Jesus the one who promises that all who look to him will be saved and we thank you that you are the God who is gracious the God who is merciful we thank you that you are the God who doesn't close your ears to our cries but who hears the prayer of the one who says have mercy upon me the sinner so we confess our sins even now as we think back over the last few days maybe even over the last few hours as we think back over a week as we maybe think back over the span of a lifetime we confess that we are sinners and we ask Lord that you would cleanse us from our sin and we thank you that as we look to Calvary we see the place where it was made possible for our sins to be cleansed without the the shedding of blood there's no forgiveness of sin but we thank you that Jesus shed his blood so that we could be forgiven there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from

[9 : 39] Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains so cleanse us Lord we pray as we come to you save us we pray from our sin save us from death save us from the pains of hell and save us we pray into a relationship with you where we can come to you as children come to our Father save us into that relationship where we can say that we have a friend in Jesus who sticks closer than a brother save us into that relationship where we know that God the Holy Spirit lives within us and gives us strength for each day and help us Lord we pray to live lives which are not lived for self but are lived for Jesus that we would make our chief end to glorify God and we thank you that as we do so there is joy not just for time but for ever we pray Lord that you would bless all of us who are here today those who are in the building those who are watching online we are conscious some are ill some are housebound some may watch from hospital beds some are struggling

Lord and we ask that whether we are here or whether we are in our homes that you would bless us and that you would meet us at the point of our need pray for those who are sick we ask for your healing touch we pray for those who are grieving we pray for your comfort we pray for those who are anxious and we ask Lord for your peace we pray for those who feel the years going on and the body becoming infirm and we pray that they would know the reality of that promise that though we waste physically as year goes on to year we thank you that there is inward renewal as we take time to be with you and we pray not just for the old we pray for the middle age those in lives that are busy with many responsibilities help us we pray to seek first your kingdom and we pray for the young even for the very young we are encouraged to hear their voices every Sunday and we ask Lord that you would bless them and that they would grow up to know you

Lord Jesus and to trust you we pray for our nation asking Lord that you would draw us back to yourself we pray for those in leadership over us asking that you would bring them low that they may seek the Lord's help and we pray for all nations we pray for a world so troubled and so conflicted and as we sense that apprehension and fear as we see attacks in Iran we thank you Lord that you are the God who is in control and though the nations rage and kingdoms rise and fall there is still one king reigning over all and we bow before you and ask Lord that your will would be done so hear our prayers and lead us in worship this day we pray in Jesus name Amen boys and girls would you like to come out please how's everyone today good any more coming no all good good stuff you're

getting closer every week it's a good thing got something to show you today don't know if you'll ever have seen one of these things before what's this it's a what it's a Harris strip and who wears these well let's get we'll leave that well let's start general and we'll go who wears these well who Andrew Brownie okay let's just go you Callum Price Andrew Brownie Martin and who are they Dol McRae is he here today yeah this looks like it's your size doll isn't it I wish it was mine so who wears this it's the Harris football it's a football team so whose whose top is this you know Callum it's your top would you wear it yeah of course you would wear it because where are you from and which football team are you supporting when you go down to the the Raleigh Park and you're seeing a game maybe all these Leo Socks on Westside have come over and Harris are playing who are you supporting who Harris and so if you were watching the game would you be ashamed to put this top on no not at all you would put it on and say

I'm from Harris and I'm supporting Harris and I'm not ashamed to tell anybody that I belong to Harris now next week do you know what is happening next week I said it in the notices but you probably wouldn't have heard next Sunday do you know what's going to be happening it's communion Sunday so when it's communion Sunday what do we see in the church that looks different there's another table isn't there and on the table what do we see Johnny we see bread and we see wine and what does the bread and the wine remind us of it's supposed to help us to remember something and someone so what does the bread first of all help us to remember

[16:11] Olivia Jesus' body excellent answer Jesus' body the bread helps us to remember Jesus' body and he gave his body for who for us and and then there's the the wine it's not actually wine it's it's a great juice but what does the wine remind us of come on Sean you put your hand up first Jesus' blood and why did Jesus go to the well where where do we see Jesus' body being given and where do we see Jesus' blood being shed on the cross and why did he go to the cross to wash away our sins so that we could be saved and next

Sunday in the church there will be people who take the bread and they eat it and they take the wine and they drink it and what they're saying when they do that is I'm not ashamed to own Jesus as my Lord and my Saviour so you'll see people sitting in the centre and when the bread and the wine is offered they'll take it and they'll eat it and they'll drink it and they're saying it's a bit like what you're saying when you put the strip on they're saying I'm not ashamed to say that Jesus is my Lord and my Saviour and I'm trusting him so boys and girls can I ask you a question are you trusting in Jesus yes well if you're trusting in Jesus don't be ashamed to tell people that you're trusting in Jesus don't be ashamed to tell people that he's your Saviour well we pray now

Lord God we thank you that you love us and we thank you Lord Jesus that you gave your body that you shed your blood so that we could have our sins forgiven and we pray that we would be trusting you to have our sins forgiven and we pray that when we're at school or when we're at work or when we're at home that we wouldn't be ashamed to say that we're trusting the Lord Jesus and we pray for anybody who might be sitting here this morning who has trusted Jesus but has never actually told anybody that and we ask Lord that you would give them the courage to say that they're not ashamed of Jesus but that they're trusting in Jesus as their Saviour so thank you Lord that you look after us we thank you for we thank you for all the boys and girls we thank you especially for baby Brendan and as we hear his loud voice this morning we're thankful for his loud voice we're thankful for the fact that having been in hospital this week with his breathing difficulties that he's better and we ask

Lord that you would bless him and bless all the boys and girls as they go to Sunday school and as they go through to creche and we ask that they would know your presence and your love in Jesus name we pray Amen We're going to sing now about the cross Mission Praise 755 when I survey the wondrous cross cross on pace of pace O Lord, He died.

My gracious name, I crown the cross, and pour content on all my pride.

[20:41] Forbidden, Lord, that I should hold, still in the death of Christ my God.

All love in which God's charm He mourns, I sacrifice them to His blood.

He promised there, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love no name will die.

May there such love and sorrow meet, for thorns of gold so rich shall grow.

Where the whole realm of nature blind, and where a holy heart is called.

[22:09] Love so amazing, so divine, He burns my soul, my life, my love.

Okay boys and girls, if you head through to Sunday school and creche, remember to pray for them as they go. Amen.

If we could turn to Matthew chapter 19 please. I think it's encouraging to see that there's almost as many people who left as who stayed.

Matthew chapter 19. And we're reading from verse 27. And we were looking last week at the rich young ruler who hears the call of Jesus but who will not follow because he loved his money and his riches more than he loved Jesus.

And then we pick up at verse 27 and Peter, we can see him in our mind's eye as he watches the rich young ruler walk away.

[24 : 00] Today, Peter is speaking to Jesus and Peter said to Jesus in reply, verse 27, See, we have left everything and followed you.

What then will we have? Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

The many who are first will be last and the last first. For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house. He went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going about the third, and going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace.

[25 : 09] And to them he said, You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right, I will give you. So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same.

And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, Why do you stand here idle all day? They said to him, Because no one has hired us. He said to them, You go into the vineyard too.

And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to the foreman, Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last up to the first. And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius.

Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it, they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, These last worked only for one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day in the scorching heat.

But he replied to them, Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you.

[26 : 25] Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? So the last will be first, and the first last. And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took his twelve disciples aside.

And on the way he said to them, See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified.

And he will rise. He will be raised on the third day. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

We'll sing again now to God's praise. The last two stanzas of Psalm 116. Thank offerings I to thee will give, and on God's name will call.

I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before his people all, within the courts of God's own house, within the midst of thee, O city of Jerusalem. Praise to the Lord give ye.

[27 : 34] These two stanzas of Psalm 116, and we'll remain seated as we sing to God's praise in Gaelic. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[30 : 43] Thank you. CONG desde desde If you could turn back please with me to Matthew chapter 19.

And let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for this account that we have as we are allowed to listen in to conversations between Jesus, your son, our saviour and his disciples.

We thank you Lord for these lessons that we are taught. We thank you for the stories that Jesus told to teach us how we are to live as your disciples.

And we pray that you would help us now as we take a few minutes to study this passage. We pray for the help of the Holy Spirit that he would be our teacher.

And Lord God that our minds would be illuminated. That our concentration would be held. That our hearts would be touched. Speak, we pray, into our lives.

[32 : 31] Help us, each one of us, to see and to hear the call of Jesus. The gospel of Jesus.

And if we've never come to Jesus, we pray that even this morning somebody may come for the first time. And for those of us who are following and may have been following for some years, we pray that you would help us to follow you Lord Jesus closer.

And that you would help us to give you more and more of the lives that we owe to you. So be at work, Holy Spirit, we pray.

Because we acknowledge that without the work of the Holy Spirit, nothing will penetrate our hearts. Nothing will change. But when you are at work, Holy Spirit, we thank you.

That the word does its work and shapes us more and more into the image of Jesus. And that's what we are praying for. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

[33 : 42] Amen. There are some texts in the Bible which have personal significance for us.

We go to them and we are transported back to maybe times in our lives, decisions that we had to make, experiences that we've gone through.

And this passage here is one of these passages for me. So I thought I would just begin with giving you a little bit of personal testimony, I suppose.

Because this text here is the text that actually God used to bring us to Harris.

Scott was speaking at the men's prayer, not prayer, but breakfast yesterday morning.

[34 : 49] And Scott and Fiona are at that difficult stage just now where actually from today, Scott could get a call. And he could be asked, will you go to Calanish or Graver or Crosspost or Tain and Fern or the Gorbals or whatever.

And Scott was sharing yesterday that it can be really difficult to know when you're in that situation and you have congregations coming and approaching you.

It can be really difficult to know where God wants you to go. You need a word. There can be a sense of draw, but there needs to be a text to anchor that call, that confirmation of your call.

And this text was actually my confirmation. Peter says to Jesus, see, we have left everything and followed you.

And I remember going back 11 years, is it? And being approached by maybe four congregations, I think it was.

[36 : 07] And three of the four congregations had buildings and manses and money and permission to call.

And then I got a letter from Tarbert saying, we have no buildings. We have no mans. We have no money. We don't even have permission to call, but we would still like you to come. And as I prayed about it, and as I came to the point that I had to make a decision, this text jumped off the page at me.

And it made sense to me as I was wrestling, where do I go? So, this was the congregation to come to, because 11 years ago, before my time, you left everything.

Buildings and money and everything, because you wanted to follow Jesus and to remain obedient to the word of God.

So, that's just a little personal note to begin with. I've never really properly shared it, and I could go into much more detail, but I thought I'd underline this text as a text that takes me back in time to the beginning.

[37 : 31] And that text also takes us to our first point, as we think about what it means to follow Jesus. Jesus is teaching his disciples what it means, what it looks like to follow him.

And there's three points for today's message. The first thing we see is that there's a great cost in following Jesus. And if we don't feel any sense of cost, either we're not following, or we're not following very closely.

The second thing we'll see is that there's a great reward that is promised to those who are following Jesus. And the last thing we'll see is that the reward that we receive is on the basis, not of how well we follow, but it's on the basis of the great grace of God.

So, first of all, great cost. And as you look back at the passage, verse 22, we see Peter and the rest of the disciples, and they're gathered together and they're with Jesus.

And they have just watched the man that we know as the rich young ruler walk away from Jesus. Why did he walk away?

[39 : 00] Well, he walked away because the cost of following Jesus was just too great. He had riches, he had possessions, he had things that he wanted to hang on to.

And Jesus said, if you're going to follow me, you're going to have to leave all that stuff behind. And the cost was too great. So he kept all his stuff, but he walked away sorrowful, it says.

He walked away sad. And Peter and the disciples are watching this rich young ruler, who looks such a promising potential convert. And he's walking away with his head down, a sense of heaviness about it.

And then Peter, verse 27, said in reply, See, we have left everything and followed you.

And for Peter, what he said was true. And Peter, when he spoke, and as he spoke on this occasion, he spoke on behalf of all the disciples. Peter says, notice he didn't say in verse 27, see Jesus, I've left everything.

[40 : 16] To follow you. He says, we have left everything. And followed you. And they had left everything.

To follow Jesus. For Peter, if we isolate Peter for a moment. Peter, what was it that he left in order to follow Jesus? Well, Peter would have left what would have been a lucrative fishing business.

To follow Jesus. Because Jesus said to him, leave your nets. Tie up your boats. Follow me. And for Peter, he also left a comfortable family home.

To follow Jesus. Peter was leaving his wife for long periods as he went out on mission. As he was led by Jesus.

And then we think about Matthew, whose gospel we're following here. Matthew had left behind. Remember, if we go back to the day that he began to follow Jesus. Matthew left behind his tax collector's job.

[41 : 24] He comes out of the tax collector's booth. He leaves behind that career. Which was a career that gave huge profits to the tax collectors.

They weren't well liked men. But they were men who had a luxury lifestyle. Because of the job that they had. And Matthew, see here's the call of Jesus.

He leaves it all behind. That big fat salary. That annual bonus. All the trappings of being one of the richest people in that region.

And he leaves it all behind to follow Jesus. And so, there was a great cost for these disciples as they followed Jesus.

And for some here. And for some maybe who are watching at home.

[42 : 31] I believe that Jesus is calling you. To follow him. For some, you may have been hearing the call of Jesus for many years.

He's calling you. To follow him. And you hear his call. But you know that if you're going to respond to that call.

It's going to be costly. Costly in terms of reputation. Because you're thinking quite reasonably. Some people will laugh at me. Forgetting the kurim. Some people will think less of me. If I follow Jesus.

So, the cost of following Jesus can be reputational cost. There's a cost in terms of our lifestyle. There are sins.

[43 : 37] There are habits. That we, as fallen creatures, we hate them. But at the same time, we love them. And Jesus calls us to leave them behind.

If we're going to follow him. There can be cost in terms of our time. And our freedom.

Because Jesus calls us to be committed to him. If you think about these disciples. Jesus says, follow me.

And if we fast forward a week, a month, a year. After the point that Jesus said, follow me. You wouldn't be looking at any of these disciples. Saying, I wonder, are they still following?

Their lives were different. Their time, their commitment, was seen so clearly as they followed Jesus. And there is that cost.

[44 : 47] We are to give of our time. We are to give of our talents. We are to give of our strength. We are to give of our energy. We are to give of our stuff. If we are going to follow Jesus.

Jesus. There is always a cost to following Jesus. There is always a cost to professing our faith in Jesus.

But if the cost of following Jesus seems too high. Then maybe what we should do is compare the cost that we have to pay.

And following. To the cost that Jesus paid. To make it possible for us to follow him. Into eternal life. If we are sitting this morning. And we are doing the cost benefit calculations. And the cost seems too high.

[45 : 56] Then go again. As we stand and survey. The wondrous cross. On which the Prince of Glory died. And keep looking there.

Until you and I are able to say. Love so amazing. So divine.

Demands my soul. My life. My all. Christian. Are you giving your all?

Am I giving my all? To Jesus? Or is he just getting the scraps?

That are left over. In terms of the time that we have left over. After we've dealt with our work. And our leisure interests. And our family. And every other thing.

[46 : 54] What's left for Jesus? Just a wee bit. Well let's give him that. It's not what it looks like. To follow Jesus. There is.

A great cost. It's more than one hour on a Sunday morning. If that's the extent of our following Jesus. There's a big problem. Great cost.

Secondly. Great reward. Verse 27. Peter. He's just said to Jesus.

See we have left everything. And followed you. And then Peter. Follows up with this question. What then will we have? And.

You have to love Peter. Just for a straightforward. Kind of. Crass. Honesty. We. We. We. We cringe a little bit. When we. Hear Peter ask that.

[47 : 54] Kind of. Question. It's very transactional. It just. It seems a bit inappropriate. I was thinking. When I was reading. And preparing. Of. When you're a. A little person. When you're a child.

And you know. You've always got a generous auntie or two. And when they come to visit. You know. That they're. They're always going to bring you a present. So they arrive. And you welcome them.

And they're having a cup of tea. And all that kind of stuff. And they've got their bag there. And you're looking at their bag. And you're thinking. I wonder what presents in there for me. I wonder what presents in there for me. But you're not allowed to ask the question.

What did you bring me? If they bring it out of the bag. You say thank you. And you're overjoyed.

But. It's. Cheeky. It's inappropriate to say. Where's my present?

What will I get? And yet. That's what Peter. Seems to say to. To Jesus. We've left everything to follow you. What am I going to get? What are we going to get?

[48 : 54] What? Seems a bit crass. But actually. It's a very helpful question. And notice that Jesus. Doesn't scold Peter. For asking it.

Jesus is ready. And willing. To give a. A very clear answer. Jesus answers in verse 28. And said to them. Truly. I say to you. In the new world. When the son of man.

Will sit on his glorious throne. You who have followed me. Will also sit on twelve thrones. Judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left.

Houses or brothers. Or sisters. Or father or mother. Or children. Or lands. For my name's sake. Will receive a hundredfold. And will receive. Will inherit eternal life.

But many. Who are first. Will be last. And the last. First. First. So that's Jesus' answer. To Peter's question.

[49 : 49] Of what will we get. So what's Jesus actually saying here. Well. If I. Just take it in the broadest. Possible sense.

Jesus is saying to Peter. Peter. Don't worry about being shortchanged. Don't worry about. The cost that you're.

Having to bear. Being more. Than the reward. That you're going to get. Don't. Don't have any concerns. About that. I remember when.

I was a teenager. In Sky. And. My parents. My dad was a minister. In Sky. I can remember one day. A financial consultant. Came to our house. And. He was advising my folks. On pensions. And. You know. What to do with your money now.

[50 : 45] In order to have some security. Later in life. And I can. Vividly remember this guy. He's a kind of. Small. Squawk kind of guy. And he had.

Remember Dennis Taylor. The snooker player. With the big glasses. He had big glasses. With thick frames. And they were multicolored. And I just remember thinking. You don't look trustworthy. And it became clear. Over quite a short period of time. That he wasn't trustworthy. And if. My parents had followed his advice. On what to do.

With. Their. Their money. That would have led to ruin. In retirement. And. Peter's. Asking that kind of question.

He's. He's saying to Jesus. If we. If we leave all our stuff. And follow you. Are we going to. Are we. On a road to ruin. What.

[51 : 45] What will we get. To ruin. To ruin. And the short answer from Jesus was, you'll get eternal life. And there's details in these verses which I've got no time or inclination to go into at this point.

But the big picture answer, Jesus says to Peter and the disciples, if you follow me, you will get eternal life. In this world, Jesus makes clear that the disciples would often be rejected as the last. They would be bottom of the pile. But in the new world, Jesus makes clear that the disciples would be rewarded as those who were first.

Hale, the commentator, says, in this world, they, the disciples, would be abased. In the next world, they will be exalted.

And so Peter and the disciples took Jesus at his word. And they lived a simple life. They didn't have much in the way of this world's treasure.

[53 : 03] They didn't have much in the way of this world's security. They didn't know from day to day where they were going, where they were going to sleep.

They didn't know what they were going to be asked to do from day to day. All they knew day by day was that they were following Jesus. And to follow Jesus was the only way that led to the great reward of eternal life.

So let me ask the question of myself and all of us. Is this how we're living? As we look at these disciples and look at the way they're following Jesus, the simplicity of life even.

Is this how we're living? Are we day by day determining that we will follow Jesus? Even when it's costly in terms of this world?

Even when our reputation or our bottom line may take a hit to follow Jesus down the right road. Are we living that way?

[54 : 29] Are we living following Jesus day by day even when it's costly in this world? Because we know that in the new world there's a great reward.

And let me ask a second follow-up question. If somebody was to come into your house and mine and have full access to our diaries, our calendars, the record of how we spent our time over the last week and month and year, would they be able to see from our diaries and our commitments and our appointments, this is a person who's following Jesus.

This is a person who is following Jesus and who is setting aside time to be with Jesus. Or would our diaries be so cluttered with work and football and this and that and the next thing that you can hardly see Jesus at all?

What would people think if they were looking at our calendars? Would they see anything? Of our commitment to Christ in the way that we prioritize and order our time? And if they were to have full access to our bank accounts, our internet history, the way we use our apps, would they be able to see that we are living not for time and for this world's rewards, but rather we're living for eternity and the great reward that is promised to those who are following Jesus.

Great cost, but great reward. And finally, great grace. great grace. So just to recap, and we're going to move fast through this parable, so don't be alarmed.

[57 : 01] just to recap, verse 27, if we paraphrase it, Jesus, Peter, he says to Jesus, look how much we've left to follow you.

The rich man's walking away. Peter's still with Jesus and so are the disciples. And Peter says, Jesus, look how much we've left to follow you. And Jesus says to Peter in verses 28 to 30, don't worry Peter, if you're following me, you're not going to lose out.

You're going to gain eternal life. So that's the kind of, the summary of how this conversation has gone so far. But there's a danger at this point. And the danger is that Peter misunderstands.

The danger is that Peter starts to do the maths, the spiritual maths here, and starts to think that gaining eternal life is about how much he does. There's a danger that Peter might start to think that if he gives up enough, if he follows Jesus closely enough, then that's the way that he's going to have access to this great reward.

And Jesus has to deal with that, potential misunderstanding. Don Carson, the commentator, says, here was Peter asking in effect what he would receive in exchange for his sacrifices.

[58 : 18] And here was Jesus saying that although there would indeed be a special role for Peter, he must understand that the kingdom of God does not operate on the basis of exchange or merit, but on the basis of grace.

And so Jesus tells a parable to make crystal clear that eternal life, the great reward of eternal life, is the gift of God received through the great grace of God.

So let's just read the verses again. Jesus says, verse 1 of chapter 20, for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

So we have to figure out in a parable who's who. Who's the master? Well, the master is God. Who are the laborers who are out in the courtyard who are looking for work?

Well, that's us. Verse 2, So the master is God.

[59 : 38] The laborers, that's us. What is the denarius? Well, the denarius is the picture of eternal life. Verse 3, And going about, and going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace.

And to them, he said, You go into the vineyard too. And whatever is right, I will give you. So they went. So now we have the master, and we have laborers in the vineyard.

Some who started early in the morning. Early in the morning usually was 6 a.m. And then the second group who've now been recruited, and they started work, not at 6.

They've had their breakfast. They've had their coffee. They've watched a little bit of television.

They're starting at 9. More respectable hour to start work. Verse 5, Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same.

And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, Why do you stand here idle all day? They said to him, Because no one has hired us. He said to them, You too go into the vineyard.

[60 : 57] So now in the vineyard, we have more workers. The first group that started early in the morning, the 6 a.m. starts. And then we have a second group who started three hours after that, at 9.

Then we have a third group who started work six hours after the first group. So they're the 12 o'clock starters. And then we've got others who started nine hours after the first group. That's the 3 p.m. starters.

And now we have some who started work 11 hours after the first group. So they're the 5 p.m. starters. And they're all in the vineyard working together. Verse 8, That too was unusual.

That wouldn't be the normal order, but it's reversed in this parable. Beginning with the last and up to the first. Verse 9, And when those hired about the 11th hour came, each of them received a denarius.

So we can imagine all these workers, and especially the 6 a.m. starters, who have their contract of employment and their daily rate underlined, and they're looking in, and they're seeing the 5 p.m. starters before the master receiving the wage, and they're saying to each other, these guys only worked one hour for the master.

[62 : 29] And he's given them a denarius. I thought that's what we were going to get paid. Verse 10, Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more.

More than the denarius. And we'd expect that, wouldn't we? Because they've worked much longer hours. But, verse 10, each of them, 6 a.m., 9 a.m., 12 p.m., 3 p.m., each of them also received a denarius.

And on receiving it, they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, These last worked only for one hour, and you've made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.

But he replied to one of them, Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go.

I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?

[63 : 43] So the last will be first and the first last. So what's the main message of this parable?

Well, the main message is that eternal life, the denarius, is not earned by how hard or how long we work for God.

eternal life is the gift of God. And some, like Peter and James and John and these disciples, they would spend many years.

They would follow Jesus through many dangers, toils and snares. Some would have that experience. That's what following Jesus would look like for them.

And then there would be others like the thief on the cross who would come to Jesus in the last few hours of their lives.

[64 : 56] But both will get the same reward. And it's eternal life. And we might say, that's not fair.

That's not fair. That the disciples work all that time and they go through all that suffering. And you've got the thief on the cross who in the last minutes of his life says, remember me.

And they both get eternal life. That's not fair. But God does not give us what's fair. If you were to do that, we would all be lost.

God gives us grace. Great, humbling grace. God is generous to those who respond to his call to come to him and to serve him.

And what is grace? Well, you know what grace is. It's the G-R-A-C-E thing. God's riches. God's eternal life. God's riches at Christ's expense.

[66 : 24] Not paid for by us. Not earned by us. But received because of Christ. And so to finish this parable, Christ tells them about the expense that he will incur for them.

the expense that he will incur for us at Calvary. Jesus says in verse 17, as he was going to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and on the way he said to them, see, we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. and he will be raised on the third day. And what we need to see as I finish is that our salvation, the eternal life that is offered to us, grace, it's all of grace.

It's the generous gift of our generous God. And that gift of grace, if you're hearing this, it's offered to you today.

So will we receive it as we follow Jesus? And then next Sunday, will we remember the cost of that grace that Jesus paid for as his body was broken and his blood was shed and he died so that we could have eternal life.

[69 : 01] Great cost of following Jesus. We need to factor that in. And if we're Christians, we need to assess to what extent are we actually absorbing a cost?

Great reward, eternal life, for that reward is unlocked to the great grace of God, not the works and merits of self.

let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for the teaching of your son. We thank you for the work of your son, the work of salvation that he has done on our behalf so that we can have eternal life.

so open our ears, we pray. Create a desire in our hearts, we pray, that we may want Jesus, that we may want more than this world can offer, eternal life, and that in following Jesus, as those who have received grace, that we may be committed to following him closely, even when there is a cost.

[70 : 45] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude Mission Praise 31, amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

Amen. Amen.!

I was, was, was, was, but now I see. grace, grace, that taught my heart to fear, and this I fear to believe, how precious did the grace appear, the outright word believed.

Through many dangers, foils, and stairs, I have already died.

Let me come. This grace that brought me safe thus far, our grace will lead me home.

[72 : 56] And we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun.

We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore. Amen.