

10.3.24 Communion Sunday Evening Service

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Date: 10 March 2024

Preacher: Reverend Kenny I Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Good evening, a warm welcome to the service this evening and it's good to see those from different places as well, some from Lough, some from South Harris and it's good for us to be able to come together to worship God. After the service this evening there's a fellowship and at that fellowship we'll hear a little of a word of testimony from Kenny and from Ronnie so please if you're able to stay behind, stay behind for the fellowship after the service tonight.

The only other thing I want to say, I know some will disappear before the fellowship so just on behalf of the congregation a word of thanks both to Ronnie and to Kenny, we've very much been blessed through your ministry as we have in the past, again we've enjoyed the Lord's blessing as we've sat under the word over these last few days and sat around the table and so thank you for your ministry and we will hopefully see you back soon. I said to both of them, not everybody gets an open return but they've both got an open return, so thank you again and I'll hand over now to you as you lead us in worship.

Thank you very much David for your kind words and for the warm welcome. We're going to begin our service singing in Gaelic in Psalm 25.

Psalm 25 at verse 4. And after we sing the Reverend Ronnie Morrison will lead us in prayer.

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CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SNING CHONING Oh, Father in Heaven, we come to you again this evening, offering praise from our lips.

May all our praise and all our words be acceptable to you, our Lord and our Redeemer. Father, we thank you for your word, we thank you for the privilege of sitting with your people this morning around your table and remembering what you have done to redeem us.

Remembering the way in which your salvation is procured, remembering that you have commanded us to remember your death until you return.

[5 : 4 3] We thank you that your people are people who live in the hope of better things, in the hope of attaining to that which we can never attain to in this world, that state of sinlessness.

And that you be ultimately presented faultless before your throne with exceeding joy. We thank you for the hope of your church.

We pray that this would be the hope of all of us here tonight. Perhaps we come with different views, with different expectations.

Perhaps we come with little thought of you. Our minds taken up by so much of the things of this time, of this year, of this earth in which we dwell.

We pray that we are in the busyness of our lives, in the busyness of our lives, a forgetfulness of you who gives life, who breathes life into us, and who takes life back to yourself.

[7 : 0 0] Help us, Lord, to remember that we are only here as sojourners. We are only here as soon as the wind will pass over us.

And the place that knows us so well will know us no more forever. But we thank you that you give us that great hope of which we have just spoken.

We pray that every one of us here would have that hope. We remember, especially young people here tonight. Some of them perhaps say, with so many different thoughts in their hearts and minds.

And we'll say, like ourselves, so many distractions that take them away from you. When they're coming to God. We ask, Lord, that you would help them.

And as they grow up, help them to begin to see and understand something of Jesus. Something of the relevance and the importance of the cross.

[8 : 0 6] Remember your people gathered throughout the island. Remember the community services in Scalpy and in other parts throughout this Presbytery. Remember your people who gathered throughout the land and throughout the world.

Some who have gathered through the land and have come to an end. Gathering to worship you, the living God. We thank you for those who have witnessed this for you.

We remember those who are gathering in fear. Gathering because of the conflict that continues between the world and your church.

We ask that you would help them. And those who persecute them. Those who abuse them. Those who deny them. Even the things that we wake up to every day and expect to take for granted.

So many of these things. And those without these things. And we with so many of these things. We pray that you would help them, Lord. We know that you know them all.

[9 : 1 6] Throughout the world. We pray that you would help us locally and nationally. Remember those whose hearts are heavy. Those who have a sense of sadness.

For whatever reason. Perhaps being cast down in their hearts and minds. We are reminded that the sons of old pose that question.

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And the great response. The response we would give ourselves tonight. Trust God. For I shall get here.

I shall get praise him. With Kenny as he speaks your word to us tonight. We thank you for his ministry over many years. We pray that you would be with David.

And the office bearers. Members and adherents. Who come and go from week to week from this building. We thank you, Lord, that you have a witness. And that there is that witness.

[1 0 : 1 3] It continues. Bless us, Lord. Be near to us. Keep us in your care. Help us to be mindful of you. And go before us. And pardon all our sins.

In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing again from Psalm 34. And sing psalms. Psalm 34. Sing psalms.

And we're going to sing verses 1 to 9. Psalm 34, verses 1 to 9. At all times I will bless the Lord. I'll praise him with my voice.

Because I glory in the Lord. Let troubled souls rejoice. Together let us praise the Lord. Exalt his name with me. I sought the Lord. His answer came.

From fear she set me free. They look to him and shine with joy. They are not put to shame. The suffering man cried to the Lord. From him deliverance came.

[11 : 10] The angel of the Lord surrounds and guards continually. All those who fear and honor him. He sets his people free. To verse 9. Five stanzas.

Psalms 34, verses 1 to 9. At all times I will bless the Lord. At all times I will bless the Lord. I'll praise him with my voice. Because I know the end of the Lord.

Let trouble soar. At all times I will bless the Lord. At all times I will bless the Lord. I'll praise him with my voice.

Because I know the end of the Lord. Because I know the end of the Lord. Let troubled souls rejoice.

Together let us praise the Lord. Exalt his name with me.

[12 : 20] I saw the Lord. His answer came. From fear she set me free.

He looked to him. He looked to him. And shine with joy. They are not good to share.

This suffering man. Cry to the Lord. From him deliverance came.

The angel of the Lord surrounds. And guards continually.

All those who fear. And honor him.

[13 : 36] He sets his people free. Come, gaze and see.

The Lord is good. Who trusts in him is blessed.

Oh, fear the Lord. You sit with me. You will not be oppressed.

Let us turn now to read God's word. In the book of the Acts of the Apostles. The Acts of the Apostles. In chapter 16.

And we pick up a reading at verse 6 of that chapter. Acts 16. And at verse 6. And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia.

[14 : 46] Galatia. Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia.

But the spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So passing by, they went down to throw us. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night.

A man of Macedonia was standing there. Urging him and saying, come over to Macedonia and help us. And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia.

Concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. So setting sail from throw us, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace and the following day to Neapolis.

And from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.

[15 : 49] And on the Sabbath day, we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer. And we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

One who heard us was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God.

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.

And she prevailed upon us. As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination. And brought her owners much gain by fortune telling.

She followed Paul and us, crying out, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation. And this she kept doing for many days.

[16 : 56] Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

And when our owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.

They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept our practice. The crowd joined in attacking them. And the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. And when they had received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. And the prisoners were listening to them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken.

[18 : 13] And immediately all the doors were opened. And everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here. And the jailer called for lights and rushed in.

And trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, Sir, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. And he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

[19 : 22] And the jailer reported these words to Paul saying, The magistrates have sent to let you go.

Therefore, come out now and go in peace. But Paul said to them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned men who are Roman citizens.

And have thrown us into prison. And do they now throw us out secretly? No, let them come themselves and take us out. The police reported these words to the magistrates.

And they were afraid when they heard they were Roman citizens. So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia.

And when they had seen the brothers, he encouraged them and departed. Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. I'm going to sing again from Psalm 27.

[20 : 24] And this is in Sing Psalms. We sing from the beginning to verses 1 to 4. Psalm 27. The Lord's my Savior and my light.

Children are always asking why, how, where, when it seems to be and sometimes they just can go on and on but it is the way that we learn and of course it's not just us children we're always asking questions in everyday life. Sometimes when you're in a place you're not familiar with you will stop and ask them this week or this last week a couple stopped me and stormed me and they asked where can we find something to eat? It was around lunchtime so I told them two or three places and they asked for directions. We do that all the time where life is full of asking questions and getting answers.

[26 : 09] Very often we ask how does this work? You get something and you're trying to get it to work and it doesn't, it's not working for you and frequently. So all the time in life we're always asking questions and it's good to ask questions but of all the questions that have ever been asked this is the most vital, it's the most important question. What must I do to be saved? Because at the end of the day there is nothing more important than the saving of your soul. I don't know what all the wealth of the world is worth. I can't even, I don't know, could they calculate that out if you were to take all the wealth of all the billionaires and to take all the wealth and to try and assess all the oil and all the gas and all the coal and all the gold and all the silver and all these things and try and put a value on everything and mount it all up. I don't think we could be able to come to a figure that we could in any way really understand and yet Jesus tells us that our soul is worth more than the whole world, than everything together and that really brings home to us the importance of having our souls saved because of everything and anything that we possess or have in this world this is what is going to live forever. Our bodies will die, our bodies will go to the grave, our bodies will rise again at the resurrection, some to honor and some to dishonor, but our souls never die, our souls continue and so it is vital that we face up to this question. Now so many people live as if this world is all that there is and if tonight you are living like that, that this world is all that there is, you know that there is perpetual disappointment. The world promises so much and the world gives but it always takes back.

It can never give you permanently. The world will give you for a time but the thing is that even what it does give, very often you find that the dreams that you harbored, the longings that you had and you thought if I get this or if I achieve that or if this happens or that happens then I will be fully satisfied.

But no, we never come to that point from anything in the world of complete satisfaction. And you'll see many of the rich and the famous, they have bodyguards, they might appear to live the most lavish lifestyle but they have high-walled security around them, they have guards around them, their whole lives are governed in the sense that if you were to look in you would see there's so much uncertainty and fear that goes along with what they have. It's in Jesus Christ that we find the peace that everybody ultimately is looking for. The only problem is that a lot of people don't look there, they look everywhere else. We're told if you remember your catechism, the very first catechism is what is the chief end, what's our chief end, the chief purpose in life. We're told man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. And you know this is what happens if we come to discover and to know the Lord, come to faith in Jesus Christ. We will come more and more to enjoy God and our purpose in life will be to seek to glorify God. And you know the more that that happens in our lives the greater the level of peace and the level of satisfaction that we will find. Because God has made us in this way. God has made us for himself, for his glory.

And we will never find the fulfillment in life if we're going in the opposite direction. Well here we have as we said this man who asks this all supreme question. And we find Paul and Silas here on their missionary journeys. And it's interesting how often you find in the New Testament that the the apostles and when the Lord was involving the new church and work that they tended to be in twos.

You had Paul and Silas here. We had Paul and Barnabas on another occasion. You find Peter and John. When Jesus sent out the disciples, he sent them out in twos.

[31 : 05] And I often think that there's something worth looking into that. I was fortunate in spending a large part of my ministry as an assistant. And I must say that there is a great blessing in sharing in the work.

Because the ministry is an incredibly isolated place. And people might find that strange. Particularly when you're dealing with people all the time. But the thing is that often, yes you deal with people in various ways. But often you deal with people at their most vulnerable. You deal with people in situations and people will open out to you. And you often end up bearing your own soul. And there's so much you have to carry yourself. You cannot share with anybody else. And so there is often, in the midst of being very public with people, there is often quite a sense of isolation. So I believe there was wisdom in the early church of sending them out in twos. So we find that Paul and Silas are here and they are heading off on this particular missionary journey. Now they had been keen to move, we see that to Asia, but God stopped them at this point and redirected them to move west to Macedonia. God had plans for

Asia, but not just now. At this stage, he was directing them towards Macedonia. And you know, that's one of the things that we've always got to be ready. If we are Christians, we are in the service of the Lord. That's one of the things we often hear, we're saved to serve. And you might say to yourself, well, what can I do? Well, everybody has an ability. Everybody has a gift. We all have different abilities, different gifts. And some people, their work for the Lord, their service for the Lord will be much maybe more public and more in the open. But there's a lot of people who do an immense amount of work and it's more hidden. It's more private. There's nothing private with the Lord. The Lord sees absolutely everything you ever do for him. And as we say, the word says, not even a cup. If you gave a cup of cold water to somebody in his name, the Lord takes note of that and it will receive its reward.

So we should always be looking when we become Christians of what can we do and what we, and that's the beauty of it because we all have different abilities, different gifts, different capacities. And the Lord uses all these things in his service. So whatever the Lord asks us to do, we're to do. Wherever the Lord asks us to go, we're to go. And sometimes the Lord, we believe the Lord is leading us in a particular way and then doors close. And sometimes we're not too sure what's going on.

But we've also got to realize that God has an appointed time. That the idea might be right, the plan might be right, but it's not the right time. And so that's what we find here with regard to Paul and Silas. They were wanting to go in another direction. Lord is really saying, yeah, that's going to happen, but not just now. And so they head over to Philippi. They would go over to Macedonia. And so Paul and Silas, they come to Philippi. And of course, this was a leading city in that district. Philippi was a Roman colony. And what the Roman Empire tended to do was they would take strategic cities that were in an ideal location and they would make them colonies within the Roman Empire. And so this place, Philippi, was such. And the beauty of if you belong to a place like that is that you came under Roman law. And that meant that you had all the privileges and all the protection of Roman law. And that's why the beating and the imprisonment of Paul was, at every front, was wrong. But it was particularly wrong because Paul and Silas were, in fact, Roman citizens. And he points that out to them later on. Now, before we come to look at this, it's worth just a sermon and itself in that. It's contrasting a woman that we find, this woman Lydia. And we read very simply of how the Lord worked in her. The Lord opened her heart. And it couldn't be more gentle. It couldn't be more different to the way the Lord had worked in the jailer. It just says the Lord opened her heart.

[36 : 15] It couldn't have been quieter. It couldn't have been gentler. It was so simple. And you know, sometimes that's the way the Lord works. And particularly if you come to faith when you're young, which is the greatest time to come to faith. It's the best time ever to give as many years as you can to the Lord Jesus. But sometimes people come to faith when they're young. The Lord opens your heart when you're young. But you know, then as you go on, you're waiting. This happens quite often.

You keep waiting for some great experience. You hear people talk of how they were converted. And you keep waiting for something great or dramatic to happen in your life. But all the time you have in your heart, I love for Jesus, and you're praying to the Lord, and you're asking the Lord, the thing is, you're already there. It's coming to realize that the Lord would give you that assurance that you belong to him. Because the Lord, the Lord does that. And there's sometimes people have gone through years searching and striving and trying to find, and then come to the realization, the Lord has already worked in my heart and in my life. Sometimes the Lord works like that so gently. And that's one of the things about testimonies. If you were to hear 10, if you were to pick 10 people here tonight to give their testimony, there would be such a variety of experiences. There's only one way of coming to faith. That's coming to accept the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. But the roads leading up to it are so varied and so different.

In fact, as we say here, here are the two extremes, and probably everything else falls in between. Maybe for you, some of you tonight, you know what it's like. For some people, it's just a very slow, dawning experience. You know like how it is if you're ever out at night, if you're out in the moor or out for whatever, I suppose you had a night fishing out and you were coming in. And you're actually aware very, very gradually of the dawn breaking. The day is very, very slowly and gradually. The light is getting a little stronger all the time. Sometimes that's the way, the experience in people, that there is this awareness. And you can never pinpoint.

If somebody said, when did you become a Christian? You say, I can't really tell you. But the one thing I do know is this, like the blind man said, I was blind, but now I see.

And that you're able to say, well, there was a point in my life where I know I didn't have faith. And now I have at this point, but it was just, it was like a very slow, gradual coming to this awareness, to this point that Jesus Christ is my Savior. So the way God deals with us is very different. For other people, they go through a fearful time of conviction where the Lord really convicts them of their sin. They see something of hell and their condemnation and they're filled with fear. And it's an awful time. We've got to remember that not all conviction of sin leads to conversion. Conviction of sin is an important thing. But you know, people can be so moved under God's providence and under the preaching of the word that they can be really convicted, but it never goes any further. Never allow that to happen in your life. Some people are converted very suddenly.

[40 : 01] One day, no great thought of the Lord. And before the day's out, they've come to faith. But it's as we say, at the end of the day, it's always by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Anyway, we find that Paul and Silas, they've come to Philippi. And as they're going around, there's this girl who starts following them. And every day she's calling out after them. And she's shouting out that these men that these are servants of the Most High God who proclaim to you the way of salvation.

Now, this young girl had an evil spirit within her. And because of the evil spirit, a power was given to her to be a fortune teller. And she was making a fortune. That's a fortune. She was making a lot of money for people who were exploiting her. They were using her. And Paul, one day, he had had enough of it. And he turned around and he rebuked the evil spirit and commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. And of course, when the evil spirit came out, the fortune telling stopped. And those who were exploiting the girl, they were absolutely incensed because this way of making money was gone.

And straight away, they went to the authorities. And they said, these men, and straight away, they went into the sort of the racist angle. They're Jews. They've come here and see what they've done. They've turned this city upside down, bringing in things that don't belong to us. And there was no trial.

There was nothing. And of course, they didn't realize that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. And that's why the magistrates were really worried afterwards, because they could get into big, big trouble for dealing with Paul and Silas the way that they did. But of course, then a crowd came. They were incensed.

And the long and the short of it was that Paul and Silas were taken, and they were beaten up badly. And then they were thrust, as we see, into the inner prison, you'd say really into the maximum security wing of the prison. And what I love here is the attitude of Paul and Silas. Because can you imagine this happening to you? You wanted to go in another direction. You think, well, I think this is where God wants me to go. God makes it clear, no, no, I want you to go there. You say, okay, I'll go there.

[42 : 33] So you come to the place, and you're not long there when you get severely beaten up and thrown into the maximum security wing of the prison. And you'll be saying to yourself, what's going on? I thought I was obeying God. And it would be very, very easy for Paul and Silas to have become downcast, to become depressed, to become bitter, to become resentful, to be complaining against God. Not at all. It's a very reverse. It's really quite extraordinary what we find their attitude. Because we find here that they are actually, in verse 25, we find them about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. And the prisoners were listening to them. I love that bit that's added. The prisoners were listening. They were evangelizing.

They were using the opportunity to tell people through word and song all about the Lord Jesus Christ. But it tells us that at that moment, suddenly, there was a great earthquake so that the foundation of the prisons was shaken. The doors were flung open. You know, it's very interesting how often God responds to the praise of his people. And praise, I read a quote somewhere, and it's true.

Praise changes things. Yes, prayer changes things. But praise also changes things. And you look sometimes at the examples in scripture. Take Jonah, for instance. Remember how Jonah ended up in the belly of the great fish? Down he was. And he was praying. Chapter 2 in Jonah, we find him praying. And he's there going down into the depths. And he's pouring out his soul in the depths to the Lord. But then it changes. And he says, I will offer the voice of thanksgiving to the Lord. And when he did that, the Lord caused the fish to vomit Jonah out onto the land. It seems to be that when God's people are in a predicament, when they're able to praise God, it is showing the ultimate sense of faith. And God responds to that. It was like when the huge army, remember this massive army that came up against Judah?

Was it Jehoshaphat was the king? And he was saying, what are we going to do? Because they, they hadn't, in any way, they couldn't match. What did he do? He took the temple choir.

And he put them at the front. And he sent them out in front of the army. Praising the Lord. And extolling his greatness, his might and his power. And that his mercy endures forever. What happened? The enemy that they were going to fight, they were, they had come from various nations, turned on each other. And they didn't, they began to slaughter each other. Rather than Judah that they had come up against. And here again, we find God responding to the faithful praise of his people when they're in a predicament. Here's Paul and Silas. And as we said, if any people had a reason for being bitter and angry before God, they'd be bitter and angry before God, but no, in their straits, what do they do? They praise God. And as they begin to praise God, what does God do?

[46 : 20] He sends an earthquake that shakes the whole foundations of the prison. And the doors burst open. That's why it said praise changes, changes things. Don't forget that. When, when we praise God, God responds. Now, the prison warden was absolutely beside himself with fear. Because when he saw the prison doors open, he assumed everybody had gone. And that's why he pulled out the sword to kill himself. Because if you as a Roman guard let a prisoner escape, you were put to death. It's a, you know, today when we look at it, it's just, it sounds fearful. But that was a law. Remember when Peter was released from prison? When the angel released prison, released Peter from prison and took him out wonderfully in Acts chapter 12? Herod, when he found that Peter wasn't there, he examined the guards and they, of course, they couldn't explain. Because he had been miraculously delivered by the angel. What did Herod do? He put all the guards to death. Because they had allowed a prisoner to escape. So this man knew his doom. He knew he was a, he knew he was a dead man walking. So he pulled out the sword. And he thought, well, I might as well kill myself. And Paul shouts out, do yourself no harm.

Don't do it. We're all here. Nobody's escaped. And that seemed to have had a huge impact upon him. Because the lack of that had never happened before. Prisoners wanted to escape. They did everything to try to escape. The doors are open and nobody's gone. So he calls for a light. And at that moment, the fact that he had just been going to kill himself and all of a sudden, things started to come together. Because you've got to remember, for a few hours, Paul and Silas were singing hymns, praising God. They were witnessing through prayer. He, this Roman prison officer would have been as hard and brutal and tough a man as ever you would meet. Probably void of all human feeling or compassion.

But he'd be saying to himself, I never come across guys like that. Despite everything that's happened to them and the beating that they've had and the whole lot. Because he was used to people cursing him and shouting and raging at him. This is different. So they also, he would say, what were they in person for? Oh, well, that servant, that slave girl was shouting, these men are the servants of the most high God. All these wee bits would have come together. God was speaking to him.

And you see, this is what God does. And it's amazing how there's so many strands that come together in the way that God works. And all of a sudden, he sees himself in a terrible situation.

And he cries out and he says, Sir, what must I do to be saved? And we know the answer. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved. Now I don't know, I know some of the people here, I don't know everybody here at all. There might be some tonight who aren't Christians. But I believe that every single one of you, if somebody passed you on the street and said, excuse me, what must I do to be saved? You know this verse and you'd say, well, what I can tell you is, the Bible says, believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. You know the verse. But the question is, do you know for yourself really what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, first and foremost means that we accept in our mind the truth that Jesus is the Savior. Our mind must be open to fully be persuaded and believe everything that the Bible tells us of

[50 : 42] Jesus is absolutely true. And you say to yourself, I am convinced of the truth of this. The next thing is that your heart has to believe. Your heart has to accept. Your mind has to accept, but your heart has to accept. You have to embrace and say, Lord, come into my heart. Come into my life. And the next thing is that, as we mentioned this morning, when we say, Lord, your will has to be subdued. You have to, your will has to be broken. And that is the hard part, isn't it? To give over ourselves.

I remember when I was here many a time under the, under the preaching. And I would say, I need to be, I need to be, I need to get, I need to get converted. I would say to the Lord, Lord, I need, and you know, this as soon as you would say that, then a thought would come to your mind. Oh yeah, you need to be converted, but hold on. Not, not, not quite yet. Sort that out later. This is of course a temptation from the evil one, which you often don't recognize. And you sort of, the delay tactics come in straight away. And say, yeah, I, I do need to be converted, but I'll leave it, I'll leave it a bit yet. Because there's this, you're kind of saying to yourself, I'm not ready to give myself lock, stock and barrel to the Lord. What will the Lord do? How is it going? We were talking about it last night.

The impact, and particularly in a small community. What will people think? What will people say? Will I be the talk of the place? Will people turn their back on me? Will people mock me?

And all these kind of thoughts go through and the devil will take mileage out of it. And we'll say, oh, I'm not ready for that. But in order to believe in the Lord Jesus, our will must be broken. And it's God alone who can do that. And if you haven't had your will broken, ask the Lord to do it. Because as we said, your soul is more important than the whole wide world.

Ask the Lord, Lord, make me willing. Right up till now, I haven't been willing. I believe in you in my mind. I do that. There's something in my heart that says I love you, but I'm still holding back.

[53 : 15] I want to keep this bit myself. We're all like that. This is my Lord. You can have most of it, but this is my bit. Because we don't want to give ourselves up to the Lord. But we have to.

So that Jesus becomes our Lord and our Savior. And so we find that that's what the man did. He, by God's grace, was enabled to believe there and then. And they also said something very interesting.

And your household. Now, that doesn't mean that the moment that somebody in a house becomes a Christian, that everybody automatically becomes a Christian as well. But the salvation that you have, the salvation coming to faith in Jesus Christ that you have, is there for your whole household as well? And you know what's amazing? See, when a person gets converted, suppose he hears your home and there are no Christians in it. And then someone is converted. That changes everything.

A light has gone on in that home. And prayer has started in that home. And God's word is in that home. And God's presence is in that home. And you know, very often, when the Lord begins a work, remember the late Kenny MacDonald, remember his daughter, Alison, was missing. He used to say, you know, when the Lord comes to a house, he loves to linger. I love that expression. He loves to linger.

When he comes, what he meant by that, when the Lord comes into a home, he very often continues to work in that home. And it's a lovely thought. And we've seen that so often, that the Lord begins a work in a home. Sometimes it's a young person. And it's sometimes their influence will affect a mum and a dad and a brother and a sister or something. But so often we see it. Sometimes it's difficult at first. And we find here that it seems that this whole household, we're accepting of what was the message that was taught. I'm sure you've heard dozens of sermons in this text. But whatever you do or don't remember, remember what it says. Believe in the Lord Jesus. Believe in your mind.

[55 : 48] Believe in your heart. Believe in your will. Give everything over to the Lord. And if tonight you're unwilling, say, Lord, please, tonight, make me willing. Let us pray. Lord, we pray to bless us. And we give thanks for the simplicity of the gospel. In many ways, it seems sometimes we can see it bamboozling. Sometimes we can not able to figure things out. But Lord, in its simplicity, it is to believe. Grant the faith to believe. We pray for any who might be struggling tonight and saying, well, I really do need to become a Christian. Lord, take them over whatever obstacles, whatever hindrances have been in the way. Whatever it is that's holding back, Lord, take that away so that they will get a clear sight of you. That the way of salvation will become plain. Maybe up till now, it's foggy. Lord, take that fog away so that they will see you as a saviour who is there for them.

Bless us then, we pray, and take away from us our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. We conclude singing in the well-known words of Psalm 130. Psalm 130 from the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 130.

NINGNINGNING hear, unto my supplication's voice, if I'm not tempted to be ill.

Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, should mark iniquity?

[58 : 47] But yet with thee forgiveness is, that fear thou mayest be.

I wait for God, my soul doth wait, my hope is in his word.

More than they have for morning watch, my soul waits for the Lord.

I say, more than they have to watch, the morning light to see.

Let Israel open the Lord, for with him mercies be.

[60 : 13] And plentious redemption is ever found within.

And from all his iniquities, the Israel shall redeem.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen.