

us as we seek to worship you.

[11:19] And we ask all this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? Now, boys and girls, I've got a question for you.

Do any of you have pets? Pet animals? What pet animals do you have?

Benjamin? You've got a dog. What's the dog's name? Sheilas. A good dog? No. Okay. What else? Anyone else got a pet? Katie? You've got a dog as well. What's his name again? Milo. And what's your dog's name, Cal?

Milo. That's right. Who else has got a pet? Fraser? You've got a cat. What's the cat called? Millie. Millie and two Milos.

[12:34] Does Millie behave herself well? Yeah. Yeah? Good. Good. Any other pets? No? No?

You guys have got a cat as well over in Calus, but I know that. I heard this week that one of you guys have got a new pet.

Well, not just one new pet, but a few new pets. And it's not a cat. It's not a dog. But it's some...

What is it, Joseph? Hens. Let's look at the screen. Look at that. How many hens did Joseph and Isabel get?

Ten hens. Do they all have names? Any names for the hens? No names yet?

[13:38] Maybe you can think about names for the hens. Do you like the hens? Very, very good creatures, the hens. Great pets to have. Great pets to have.

They wake you up every morning with a cock-a-doodle-doo. No alarm clocks needed anymore. And every morning... You know one of the best things about having hens?

Every morning they make your breakfast. Do you like eggs, Joseph? We'll just take silence and say yes. So we've got a few pictures of the hens.

There's the ten hens in the hen house. There's Joseph surveying his kingdom. Just giving a lecture to the hens saying, Behave yourself or there'll be trouble.

What is that in the middle, Joseph? Is that for feeding them? Yeah, that's for feeding them. That's where they get their breakfast. Okay.

[14:41] Now here's a question. Do you think the Bible says anything about hens? What do you think?

Put your hand up if you think, Yes, the Bible says something about hens. Not sure. Not sure.

There's a sort of couple of wee half hands.

Just a finger up. Can you remember where it says anything about hens? Cal? Cal? It's a tricky question.

I think we've got an answer over there. We've always got an answer over there. There was a day.

The Bible does say something about hens.

There was one day, okay, and Jesus, he was coming to a big city called Jerusalem, and he looked over the city and he saw all these people and he could see that they were lost and they weren't safe.

[15:42] And Jesus, he loved the people and he wanted to save them. He wanted them to come to him. And this is what Jesus said. Listen to this.

Matthew chapter 23, verse 37. Jesus said, How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you were not willing.

See, when a hen, Joseph, has babies, then all the chicks, bestie on a wild night, they'll hide under the wing and they're safe and they're cozy and they're warm there.

That's the safest place they can be. And Jesus was seeing all these people and he was saying, You're not safe because you're all that way away from me. He says, I want to gather you up like a hen gathers up her chickens.

And then Jesus, that's the sense that Jesus, he shed tears, he was crying. He said, You weren't willing. You won't come.

[16:54] And boys and girls, you know, Jesus is still here today. And when we read the Bible, he speaks to us.

And do you know what he says to us week after week? He says, I want you to come to me. And if we come to Jesus, he promises he'll take our sin away and he'll make us safe in our hearts forever.

So boys and girls, I hope we're not like the people in that big city who Jesus said, You're not willing to come to me. I hope we're willing to come to Jesus and ask that he'll make us safe.

Will we pray? Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for the fact that you love us. We thank you, Jesus, that you call us to come to you.

And we thank you that when we come, you promise to make us safe in our hearts forever. We pray that you'd forgive us for the times that we're not willing and we want to go our own way and do our own thing.

[18 : 04] Help us today to come to you, Jesus, and to find all the rest and the joy and the peace and the safety that you promised to give us.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing the words on the screen. What gift of grace is Jesus, my Redeemer?

There is no more for heaven glad to give.

He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom. I steadfast love, my deep and blimeless feet.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus, for my life is holy and to live.

[19 : 19] Oh, how strange and divine I can sing, all is mine, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

The night is dark, but I am not forsaken, for by my side the Saviour he will stay.

I labour on in weakness and rejoicing, for in my need his power is displayed.

To this I hold, my shepherd will defend me, through the deepest valley he will lead.

Oh, the night has been won and I shall overcome, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

[20 : 22] O'er the night I've been, I know I am forgiven, the future's sure, the price it has been paid, for Jesus bled and suffered for my Father, and he was raised to overthrow the grave.

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated, Jesus now, and ever is my feet.

All the chains are released, I can say I am free, I am free, I am free, but through Christ in me.

With every breath, I long to follow Jesus, for he has said that he will bring me home, and day by day, I know he will renew me, until I stand with joy before the throne.

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus, all the glory evermore to live.

[21 : 50] When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat, yet not I, but through Christ in me.

Okay boys and girls, if you have a bag to drink to Sunday school, remember to pray for them as they go. I should say remember to pray for their teachers as they go too.

And if we could turn in our Bibles please, to Matthew chapter 21. Matthew chapter 21.

For those visiting, we've been going through Matthew's gospel over the last while, and we've reached a section where Jesus comes back into the temple, and he is confronted by the religious police, we could say.

He is challenged about the authority that he has. So Matthew chapter 21, verses 23, down to the end of verse 32.

[23 : 28] This is God's word. And when Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him, as he was teaching, and said, By what authority are you doing these things?

And who gave you this authority? Jesus answered them, I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man? And they discussed it among themselves, saying, If we say from heaven, he will say to us, Why then did you not believe in him?

But if we say from man, we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, We do not know. And he said to them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

What do you think? A man had two sons, and he went to the first, and said, Son, go and work in the vineyard today. And he answered, I will not.

[24 : 40] But afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son, and said the same. And he answered, I go, sir, but did not go. Which of the two did the will of the father?

They said, The first. Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him.

But the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him. Amen.

And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again now to God's praise, this time from Psalm 25, a prayer, verses 4 and 5 of the psalm.

We confess Lord that as a country we have strayed from you in so many different ways and we ask Lord that you would draw us back. That as we humble ourselves and cry out to you that you would hear our prayers and heal our land.

And we pray for a world that is broken in many ways as we see turmoil, as we see warfare, as we see political instability. We see much suffering in this world every time we switch on our TVs.

[33 : 31] And we ask Lord God that you would comfort the grieving, that you would give relief, help to those who suffer.

We pray for your people, those who meet as we meet but without the security that we enjoy. We can think of places in this world where coming together in Jesus' name as a life threatening decision that they make.

And so we pray that as we think of the persecuted church that you would protect them. And that brothers and sisters that we may never meet in this world, we'd know your blessing today.

We thank you that so often in the places where suffering, we see the most powerful fruit and the brightest of faith.

So bless them we pray as we ask that you would bless us. And we pray all these things together, again with the forgiveness of our sins. In the name of Jesus.

[34 : 43] All the way through our lives, it doesn't matter what stage of life we are in.

We encounter people, we encounter organizations that have authority. We're always having to deal with the issue of authority.

Stornoway on Monday. I went to park the car. And so I parked the car in a space and I was walking away to go and get a coffee somewhere. I spied over just in the distance something I hadn't seen for a long time in Stornoway.

I think it was a traffic warden. And so that's a figure who was given authority to manage where we park. So I went to move the car. Tuesday, in the evening, I went to watch the under 18s Harris playing football.

And in the match, and in every match, there's a referee. And the referee is the person who is given authority for that 90 minutes to manage the game well.

[35 : 55] Some of us will meet with authority in school and in university. As teachers supervise classes. Others are conscious of authority.

Even when we drive on the roads and we see the marked car, it causes us to think about how we're driving and how our speed is. The point is, we continually encounter authority.

But the question I want to think about today is how we react. How we respond to authority. And specifically, how do we respond to the one to whom all authority has been given?

How do we respond to Jesus? If you open your Bibles at Matthew 21, we can see in the section that we read, in verses 23 down to verse 27, the word authority is used four times in these, in this short section.

So, the theme of authority is a theme that stands out clearly. And we see the authority of Jesus very clearly in the earlier part of the chapter.

[37 : 16] In the first few verses of the chapter, the section that's known as the triumphal entry, Jesus enters Jerusalem and the whole city is stirred. There seems to be a measure of recognition that the one who is entering the city is one who has authority.

And then as we see Jesus entering the temple in verse 12, and as we observe the way that Jesus behaves in the temple, he drives out that says all who sold and bought in the temple, he overturns the tables of the money changers.

There's quite a scene. And the actions of Jesus are very clearly the actions of one who has authority. And what I want to look at today is how different people in the passage that we read responded to the authority of Jesus.

And as we observe them, we can be thinking about ourselves. How are we responding in our lives to the authority of Jesus? Three responses that we'll look at in the time that we have.

The first response to the authority of Jesus is the response of the prophet John, John the Baptist. Jesus brings him into the conversation as he is in discussion.

[38 : 46] The second response we'll look at is the response of the Pharisees or the Pharisees and the chief priests, the elders of the people, the religious officials will think about how they are responding to the authority of Jesus.

That's the second point. And the last point is the response of the prostitutes and the tax collectors. We'll observe how they respond to the authority of Jesus.

So first of all, the response of John the Baptist. And just to get the context clear here again, we see that the religious leaders, they're furious after Jesus has cleared the temple.

So when Jesus returns to the temple, they fly at Jesus full of questions and accusations. Look at verse 23.

And when Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, By what authority are you doing these things?

[39 : 58] And who gave you this authority? This was their domain as far as they were concerned. They bossed the temple. How did he have the authority to come in and challenge their practices?

So that's how they fly at Jesus. Jesus answered them, verse 24. I also will ask you one question. And if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John. The baptism of John. From where did it come? From heaven or from man? So let's think about this e-section just for a moment.

The presenting question, the question that the religious leaders fly at Jesus with, is the question that concerns that concerns the authority of Jesus. But the real question that was underlying that was a question about the identity of Jesus.

What they're saying to Jesus is, Who do you think you are? Coming in and behaving like this? The religious leaders are actually asking the same question that the crowds were asking in verse 10.

[41 : 22] The crowds were asking as Jesus comes into the city, who is this? Who is this? Who is this? That was their question. So Jesus says to the the religious leaders, well, let's talk about John the Baptist.

Where did he get his authority from? If you answer that question, says Jesus, I'll answer your question. J.C. Ryle, the commentator, says, We must distinctly understand that in this answer of our Lord's there was no evasion.

He's not being like a politician on Newsnight, trying to avoid the question. There's no evasion. The counter question which he asked was in reality an answer to his enemies' inquiry.

He knew they dared not deny that John the Baptist was a man sent from God. He knew that this being granted, he needed only to remind them of John's testimony to himself.

So what was John's testimony? What did John say about Jesus? Well, turn for a moment to John chapter 1.

[42 : 47] It's good to hear the noise of the Bible's pages being turned.

You'll always get much more help from the pages of the Bible if your eyes are on that than on my ugly face. What did John say about Jesus?

What was John's testimony about Jesus? That's what Jesus is bringing them to. Well, in John chapter 1, John spoke very clearly about Jesus.

John, in verse 27 of chapter 1, John described Jesus as one, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie. So John says, this Jesus is highly exalted above me.

In fact, the strap of his sandal, I'm not worthy to untie that. Verse 29, the next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and he said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[44 : 10] And in verse 34, John says very plainly and very clearly, this Jesus is the Son of God.

So John answers the question of who is Jesus with crystal clarity.

John testified that Jesus was the Savior, he was the Lamb of God. He testified that Jesus was the Son of God.

who came to this world to take the sin of the world away from us and into his body on the tree. He died as the sacrifice, the Lamb of God in our place.

So John, he gives crystal clarity on the identity of Jesus and John responds to the authority of Jesus in that great verse, John chapter 3, verse 30.

[45 : 19] Remember, John's disciples are becoming alarmed. John's congregation is shrinking. Jesus' congregation is increasing. John, who used to be the man of the moment, everybody coming to him, is finding that there's very few people coming to him.

Everyone's going to Jesus. So the disciples of John come and say, what do you got to say about this? This is terrible, isn't it? And John says, no, this is not terrible. John says in John chapter 3, verse 30, as he responds to the authority of Jesus, John says, he, Jesus, must increase.

He, Jesus, must increase. I must decrease. And John is a great example for every Christian on how we should respond to the authority of Jesus.

Day by day, if we are Christians, we should be saying, I must decrease.

Self must shrink. Christ must increase. We're living in a culture that is so dominated by the self.

[46 : 48] How do I feel? How do I look? What am I entitled to? What are my rights? We're taught to think so much about our self.

And as we look at John, his life and his witness are a necessary challenge and correction for us if we are Christians.

My life says John, it's not about me. It's all about Jesus. My life says John, it is not about being in authority.

It's about bowing to the authority of Jesus. I think John would have enjoyed singing the second hymn that we sang and the refrain in that hymn that says, yet not I, not I, but through Christ in me. So that's response number one to the authority of Jesus. a wonderful example, on how we are to respond to the authority of Christ.

[48 : 10] he must increase, he must be lifted up, we must decrease. Response number two is the response of the Pharisees and the chief priests Some here will be fans of wrestling.

I remember watching wrestling when I was younger. In my day, wrestling was a Saturday morning, Big Daddy versus Giant Haystacks.

That ages me significantly. But today, wrestling is a big thing. There's UFC, there's big budgets, and high profile fights. But wrestling at whatever level you're talking about, it's simply a contest between two sides.

And it continues until one side submits. And the question at this point is, will the Pharisees and the chief priests and the elders of the people, will they submit to the authority of Jesus?

And if we think, even still about the illustration of wrestling, Jesus, in a sense, he's got them pinned down with this question about where John got his authority from, and they're struggling to answer this question.

[49 : 31] So Jesus has put the question and said, you answer my question, I'll answer your question. And they're pinned down, they're on the ropes, and they say, can we just have a minute to talk about this?

So it says in verse 25, and they, the Pharisees and all the religious chiefs, they discussed it among themselves, if we say that John got his authority from heaven, Jesus will say to us, why then did you not believe him?

But if we say from man, we're afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet. So they're in a corner, and they have to answer in verse 27, we don't know.

The truth is, they did know. They knew that John was a prophet, but they didn't like what John said about Jesus.

That was the problem. That was the problem. So they would not answer Jesus' question. Instead, they say, no comment. We do not know.

[50 : 55] And so Jesus ends the part of the conversation in verse 27 by saying, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

So what's going on here? the religious leaders, they do not want to submit to the authority of Jesus. They do not want to accept that Jesus is Lord, that he is Messiah. Why was that?

Was that because there wasn't enough evidence to show them that Jesus was the Messiah? No, that wasn't the reason. The evidence of Jesus being the Messiah was overwhelming.

Jesus came preaching. When the Pharisees preached, people fell asleep. When Jesus preached, people said, where did this man get this authority from?

[52 : 06] He's preaching like someone who has the authority of heaven. Because he did have the authority of heaven. So, as they listened to sermons, they had evidence that Jesus was the Messiah.

As they observed the miracles of Jesus, there were so many exhibits of evidence that pointed to the fact that he was the Messiah. He healed the sick. He opened the eyes of the blind.

He unblocked the ears of the deaf. He stilled the sea with a word. He fed 5,000 with a little boys packed lunch. He brought life to those who were dead.

There was ample evidence to persuade anybody that Jesus was the Messiah.

So, why would the Pharisees not accept Jesus? Why would they not submit, bow to the authority of Jesus? Well, it's because Jesus was not the kind of Messiah that they wanted.

[53 : 12] They wanted a Messiah, a Lord that would do what they told him to do.

He would fit in with their religious systems. He would bow to them, rather than him, rather than them bowing to him.

That was the problem. That was the problem. That's where the Pharisees were at. And you know, that still happens today.

That will be happening, more than likely in this room just now. Why? There are some people in this room who believe in Jesus, who have trusted him as Savior and Lord.

Others likely not. Why don't most people believe in Jesus? The reason most people don't believe in Jesus is not because they can't believe for lack of evidence.

[54 : 32] It's because they don't want to believe. Because Jesus challenges the way that we live. He won't do what we say.

Jesus won't let me live with my girlfriend. He won't let me do the things that I want to do with my girlfriend at this stage in my life. I don't want him as my Lord. Jesus won't let me hold on to this idol. He keeps trying to pull it out of my grasp. I don't like that. Jesus keeps telling me to turn away from my sin, but I enjoy doing it.

Jesus is asking me to give him more than an hour on a Sunday morning. But I don't want to give him more than an hour. Jesus is asking me to put him before my work, before my sport, before myself.

And I don't like that. He's too demanding. He won't let me do what I want to do.

[55 : 54] So I don't want him as Lord over my life. That's where the Pharisees were at.

All dressed up in their religion. But that's what was going on in their hearts. Very religious people. But at heart they were rebels against Jesus.

Response three. We see the prostitutes and the tax collectors. Remember on the old TV sets.

There was the buttons for changing the channel. And then there was a dial that was used for the brightness. And there was a dial that was used for contrast.

You had to fiddle about the dials to make sure you had them at the right level. And as I was reading the guide, the sort of speck of one of these old TVs, there was an instruction that says, make sure you have the contrast right because, quote, optimal contrast makes images pop.

[57 : 18] That's what contrast is for. It's making the images pop. And that's what Jesus does next. He uses the contrast setting to make the story pop.

So that they, so that we will understand what he's saying. Jesus tells a story about two sons. And in that son, in that story, Jesus contrasts the response of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law with the response of the prostitutes and the tax collectors.

He sets the two alongside each other. Pharisees and the teachers of the law over here, tax collectors, prostitutes over here.

Jesus sets them alongside each other in terms of the responses. And he tells a story. What do you think, says Jesus? A man had two sons and he went to the first and said, Son, go to work in the vineyard today.

And he answered, I will not. But afterwards he changed his mind and went. And he went to another son and said the same. And he answered, I go, sir.

[58 : 38] But did not go. So that's the story. Not a complicated story. It's the story of two sons. The father wants them to work for him in the vineyard.

The first son says, no chance. I'm not doing it. And in that culture, you did not say that to your father. Your father had huge, immense authority.

You did not stand up to your father. If he said, do it, you did it. But in this instance, the son just says to his father, I'm not doing it.

I will not. I will not. And that was designed to illustrate how bad a son this was in his response.

Out you go to the vineyard, no chance. And then the son presumably feels guilt, remorse.

[59 : 49] He regrets his response to the father. And he repents. Changes his mind. And he went out to work for his father.

That's son number one. The second son, he hears the same command from his father, go out and work for me. And he says, no problem. I'll be there in five minutes.

Happy to help. You can count on me. I'll be out in the vineyard. And he says all the right things, but he didn't go. And he doesn't do any work for the father.

Two contrasting sons. Who's who in this parable? Well, the prostitutes and the tax collectors, they're son number one.

We might ask the question, well, why does Jesus isolate these two groups? And the reason he does that is quite simply because they were the vilest defenders of that day. So he takes the example of a woman who was considered to be most disgraceful.

[61 : 05] And he takes the example of a man who was considered to be most disgraceful. These were the most notorious sinners. Through their lifestyle, they were saying to God what the first son said to the father.

I will not work for you. I will not live the way that you want me to live. I will be a prostitute. I will be a tax collector. That's my decision. But what we observe as the gospels develop is that some of these tax collectors, like Matthew, and some prostitutes, encounter Jesus.

And how do they respond to Jesus? Well, they listen to him. And as Jesus calls them, they turn from their sin, and they come to Jesus, they follow him, they believe in him, and ultimately, they do the will of the father.

One commentator, just to crystallize this, the first son represents the tax collectors and prostitutes. They considered themselves unrighteous. Such people gave no promise of being religious. They say no. But then they repent and turn to God.

[62 : 29] And God will consider repentant sinners righteous, because in the end, they do as well. So that's the first son. Who do we see in the picture of the second son?

Well, we see by contrast, the Pharisees. One commentator says the second son represents the Jewish leaders.

They said, we are righteous. We are obedient. We will certainly obey God. But then they did not. God said through John the Baptist, repent, but they did not repent. They did not love God. They loved themselves. Thus, in the end, they did not obey God.

two contrasting responses to authority. Which of the two says Jesus, did the will of his father?

[63 : 45] They said the first. And then just in case anyone hadn't got the message, Jesus, he names names, and he drives the message of the story home.

He tells everyone what the story means. truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you Pharisees.

for John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him.

believe him. So, as we conclude, is Jesus turning to the Pharisees, looking them in the eye, and he says to them, you did not believe John when he told you about me.

and you do not believe me. And unless that changes, unless you repent, religious leaders, you will be locked out of the kingdom of God.

[65 : 03] you will be locked out of the kingdom of God. That's what Jesus said. And Jesus can still be saying that.

Jesus may be looking some of us in the eye. Because we can be like the Pharisee. We can say the right things.

We can appear to be good living. We can have a respectable slice of religion in our lives. But no faith in Jesus.

No relationship with Jesus. And the Pharisees show us that our religion, our good works, will not get us a place in the kingdom of heaven.

We need to do the will of the Father. And what's the will of the Father? It's very straightforward. It's to believe in the Son. So that's the message that Jesus drove home to the Pharisees.

[66 : 31] And then there's the contrasting message as Jesus turns and looks in the direction of the tax collector and the prostitute. And he assures them that there is room in the kingdom of heaven for them.

And for all who come to Jesus as Savior, Jesus makes clear, no matter what they've done, where they've been, how putrid their reputations may have been, may have been, Jesus assures them that there is room in the kingdom of heaven for them and for all who come to Jesus as Savior and who submit to him as Lord.

Essentially, Jesus is saying in this parable, what we sang in the first praise, is the vilest offender, tax collector, prostitute, the vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Or we could put it the way that we'll sing it in the last praise, our sins, they are many. But his mercy is more.

And that mercy is promised, that forgiveness is promised, that place in the kingdom of heaven is promised to all who believe in Jesus.

[68 : 20] All who ask Jesus to take our sin away and be our Savior. All who submit to the authority of Jesus and ask him to be our Lord.

The one who rules and reigns over our lives. Will we do that today?

That's the question. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for the clarity of these stories that Jesus told, which are held up to us like a mirror, to show us where we are before you.

We ask, Holy Spirit, that you would search our hearts and know us. Help us to see if the Pharisee is in us.

[69 : 33] Help us to see if we are those who are putting our faith in religion and good works and resisting Jesus.

Help us to see, we pray, that we are sinners, none are righteous, but that there is mercy and grace promised to all who will come to Jesus, turning from sin, repenting, as we are taught to in this passage.

And for those of us who are Christians, we pray that you would help us to live lives like John the Baptist taught us to. We confess that we are all too quick to revert back to wanting to please ourself. We're all too quick to want to live with self on the throne. Forgive us, we pray, and help us day by day to say, self must decrease, Christ must increase.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We sing to conclude the hymn on the screen, Our Sins, Our Sins They Are Many, as the chorus goes, His Mercy Is More.

[71 : 10] My name is Joseph who has performed is is is stronger is

His blood was the payment, his life was the cost He still knew the debt he could never afford But as soon as he is ready, his mercy is born Praise the Lord, his mercy is born Strong and unliked, there's new and reborn Our sins there are many, his mercy is born Praise the Lord, his mercy is born Strong and unliked, there's new and reborn Our sins there are many, his mercy is born

I ask the Reverend Rory Rankin to lead us from the benediction please The living God, we want to respond with joy and with embrace to what we've been taught this morning And we thank you Lord for this closing hymn that takes us back Lord, I think it was John Newton who wrote those words There are sins there are many, his mercy is more A great sinner, a tax collector, a prostitute as it were A man who did not live under your authority And yet Father embraced it And went to the vineyard and worked Heavenly Father, we pray today you'll help each one of us As we respond to what we've been taught Lord, just to say Yes Lord, we want to go and work for you and your vineyard And then to go Lord And to go with a hearty embrace Of your mercy, your gospel, your lordship

Your divine power And to go in faith and hope and love And to be a rich blessing Whether in Harris, Kyle or whatever we are To the glory and the praise of your name So may your grace, your mercy, your peace now Rest richly upon each one of us Man, woman, young person, child And now and throughout this Lord's Day And the rest of the week ahead And always Amen Amen Thank you Rory Thank you