

5.9.21 am

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Date: 05 September 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] Well, good morning, and a warm welcome to the service this morning, and a special welcome to any who are visiting or who are back for the first time in a while.
- It's good to see a number of us gathering today. One or two intimations just to highlight. Some have been on the screen before the service began, and I was given a couple just at the last minute.
- So, first of all, to remind you, the evening service is on at six tonight, so be encouraged to attend there. Tomorrow night, there is a deacons' court meeting at six p.m. also, so please note that, office bearers.
- And the ladies' fellowship will once again meet this Monday evening, that's tomorrow, you've got the intimation on the screen there, for a time of informal fellowship, praise, and short study and prayer.
- And as always, every lady in the congregation is extremely welcome to come along, with no pressure or expectation on anyone attending. For more information, speak to Lucy Tour.
- [1 : 0 5] Prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven. Now, I was approached a few weeks ago about Martin Dudgeon from Platform 67, which was Asia Link, who had wanted to come and speak with us.
- But nothing was confirmed until last night, about half past nine, I got another phone call just to say, can he come? So he'll be joining us on Zoom on the prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven.
- So Platform 67, you can Google them and you can see that their mission is to try and reach the unreached people in particular. So he'll speak a little about that.
- The clubs for the young folks, you can see JAM Connect and Rooted at the appropriate times there. Young folks, be encouraged to come. Those who are less young, let's be encouraged to pray.
- And if you want to volunteer for any of these still, we could do with more people to help in these clubs at the different times on Friday. The service is next Sunday at 11 and 6.
- [2 : 1 0] And the evening service, I need to just confirm this, but I'm hoping that we might have a testimony as part of the evening service next Sunday evening. But we'll give more details on that next week.
- But I'll lead both these services, God willing, next Sunday. There is a new Tea Rota, I think. Oh, there is. It's on the sheet. It's on the intimations there. The Tea Rota will resume next Sunday.
- If you used to help with the tea and coffee after Sunday morning services and would no longer like to be on the Rota, please speak to Fiona Tour. If you'd like to be added, please also speak to Fiona Tour to help with the teas going forward and coffees.
- The final thing, I think, is to say that we hope, God willing, to have a communion weekend as would have been the normal timing on the 19th of September.

So that would be the Friday through to the Sunday, I think, would have a shortened communion weekend. So that's the Friday to the Sunday, 17th to the 19th of September.

[3 : 17] And that's something to note, put in your diary. It will obviously be subject to COVID stuff if things spike. If there's advice that we shouldn't, then we'll take that.

But we're hopeful that we'll be able to have that communion weekend. And I'll give you more details in due course. If there are those who know the Lord, who trust the Lord, who have never yet come forward to the Lord's table and professed faith in Christ, be encouraged to come forward and speak to me or one of the elders and take the bread and the wine when we're given opportunity.

Remember what Jesus said to those who know him, those who trust him, those who love him. He said, don't think about this. He said, do this. Do this to remember me.

So these, I think, are all the intimations. Women for Mission Conference will be on the 18th of September. You've got one more intimation there from 11 to half past 12 on the live stream.

And you can get more information on that from Mary, I think, if you need to. These, I think, are all the intimations. So let's now sing to God's praise.

[4 : 32] Let's worship God. And we sing to God's praise from Mission Praise 755. The words on the screen. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride.

A hymn that we are called to look to, to survey the wondrous cross and to remember the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus.

When I surveyed the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my Lord.

All the living things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

[6 : 25] See from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love promingle down.

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, A thorns compose so rich account.

Where the whole realm of nature mine, That where an offering heart is more, Love so amissing, so divine, A man's my soul, My life, my own.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that on this, Your day, we are able to gather together in this way.

[8 : 08] We're able to come together as your people in this building, in the name of Jesus. And we thank you also for those who aren't here with us, but who are able to connect through technology.

And we come together, Lord, with that desire to worship you. And we come together with that sense of expectation.

You have told us in your word that those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. And so we thank you that at the beginning of a new week, We can wait with expectation upon you, Knowing in our minds that you have promised that you will be here In the power of the Holy Spirit.

And we pray, Lord, that we would not just know that in our minds, But that our hearts would be touched. And that we would sense and feel that you are here with us.

We think of those on the Emmaus Road in Scripture Who walked along with Jesus and whose hearts burned within them As he opened the Scriptures to them.

- [9 : 23] And we pray that we would know something of that today. That as we come together in this place, In the name of Jesus, we pray that as we open the Scriptures, As we meditate upon them, As we sing the praise of Jesus, As we open the word of life, We pray that our hearts would burn within us.
- That our minds would be opened to understand, That our eyes would be opened to see Jesus, And to see our desperate need of Jesus. And that our hearts would be stirred, That they would burn within us.
- And that we would be able to be here, And then leave here saying it was good for us. To have been in this place, Because we met with the Lord. So we ask, Lord, that you would meet with us.
- And that we would know that in our being. That you are close. Pray that we would have that sense of your presence with us. We pray for that hush, That comes over a place, When you are speaking into our hearts.
- We pray for that sense of passion, That comes through the sung praise of God. That we would sing with our mouths, But from our hearts, Sincerely, in spirit, And in truth.
- [10 : 46] So bless us, Lord, As we come together and worship. We thank you for each other, And those who are connected. We thank you for the little ones in the creche as well.
- We thank you for these three young lives, Who gather next door just now. And we pray that from their very earliest years, They would grow up knowing, That you are the one who made them.
- That you are the one who loves them. And you are the one who calls them, And who calls each of us to come to you. We think of the little fishes group, That meets here on a Tuesday, And so many little ones, Who run around the building.
- And we thank you for them, We commit them to you in prayer. And we ask that they would remember you, That they would trust you. That each of them would be drawn to you, In the days of their youth, And that they would walk with you.
- We pray for the kids clubs on Friday afternoon. We thank you for the restarting of that, And for so many young ones, Who came through on Friday. And we pray for each of them, That we see them in our mind's eye.
- [11 : 55] Many of whom don't go to any church. And we ask, Lord, That you would touch their hearts, That they would see and hear and understand, The simple truth of the gospel.
- That they would hear Jesus saying, Come to me, And find rest for your souls. And we pray, Lord, For those who are a little further up in years.
- We pray for young people in school. We pray for some who have gone from school, To university and to jobs. We pray for others who have gone from school, And who are still here with us in the community.
- And as we think of them, Lord, We commit them to you. You are the God who directs our path, As we acknowledge you. And we pray for them, And ask that you would guide them, And direct them.
- That they would walk with you, And know your presence with them. And that their lives would be lives lived for your glory. And we pray for those in middle years.
- [12 : 58] Those who are working. Those who have perhaps many demands in their time. Some who are here. Others who are not here because of demands in their time. Help them, help us, Lord, We pray to seek first your kingdom, And your righteousness.
- And not to be so distracted by the urgent things, The pressing things in this world, That we lose sight of what is truly important. And that is to have you first in our lives.
- And we pray for the elderly. Some who are here. Others who are at home. Some who are in Harris House. In Leverborough.

In different places. And we ask that you would be near to them. We thank you that you are the God who is with us always, To the end of time. We thank you that you are the God who can draw near to us in our room, When we are on our own.

And so as we pray for those who may be listening at a distance, Or who may listen in future days, We ask that they would know your presence and your peace.

[14 : 07] And for those who are walking with you, We pray that you would enable them to press on, And to run the race with perseverance. We thank you for so many of them, And how they are prayer warriors.

And we ask, Lord, that you would help them to keep on praying. And help us, Lord, to keep on praying. Because we know that our labour must be in the Lord, In his strength.

Or it's all in vain. So help us, Lord, we pray. We pray for the community. We pray on for those who are sad and grieving. We pray on for those who are sick and struggling.

We pray on for those who are sad, Who are downcast, Who feel hopeless. And we ask, Lord Jesus, That you would meet with each one. We pray on for our nation, And those that you're allowed to be in leadership over us.

And we ask, Lord, That you would humble them, And enable them and us to look to Christ. To open the book that once was so open in this land, And now is firmly closed.

[15 : 11] Lord, have mercy on us, we pray as a nation. And across the nations, As we see the world in such a state of turmoil. As we see violence, As we see wars, As we see so much suffering.

We thank you that we pray to the God Who knows the reality of suffering, Who entered into the suffering of this world, So that we can know peace. And so we pray, Lord, For places where the suffering is most acute, That your light would shine into the darkness, That your compassion would be felt By those who are struggling.

And Lord, that your people would be given All that they need to reach out in Jesus' name. So hear our prayers. Lord, cleanse us, Lord, from our sin. We confess it freely. As we look back over the last week, We see how much we fall.

And yet we only see a little of how we fall. You see so much more. And we, Lord, confess our sin, Asking that you would cleanse us from all sin. Purify us from all unrighteousness.

And make us clean through the blood of Christ. And we pray all these things in the name of Jesus. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

[16 : 27] Amen. How are you all this week?

All good. Come on. Come on, Finley. That's it. Good. Have you had a good week? Yeah.

Busy week? Not too busy. Okay. Two things that I wanted to show you this week. And they're both going to be on the screen.

One of the things, actually, Is not just on the screen, But it's also in the building. But the first thing I want to show you is that. Can anybody tell me, What is that?

Any ideas? Can you see it? Can you all see it? Yeah, on the screens. Yeah. Is it like a taser? It's not a taser.

[17 : 27] You know what, Michael? I saw somebody almost falling asleep during the first singing. And I was thinking, If that was a taser, That would be a good use. I could just zap people When their eyes are starting to do the rolling in their heads.

No, it's not a taser, But that's a good idea. Looks about like one. Do you know? It's not a thermometer either, But again, It looks a bit like one. Yeah?

Another guess? Protometer, is it? Protometer. Yeah, okay. It's a protometer.

Well done. What's a protometer? What does it measure, do you think? John Roddy? Or John, Alistair? It doesn't measure electricity. Good guess.

Doesn't measure how hot the air is, no? You're quite close though. What about you, John Roddy? What do you think? Somebody's given an answer over there. Who is it? Yeah?

[18 : 29] Pardon? Voltage. No, not voltage. We'll have to have the benediction in a minute, so. John Roddy, I'll give you the last guess.

You're quite good at these sort of things. Any idea? Okay. No, no, don't know. Anyone else behind there that I can't see? Cameron, good to see you back.

Any ideas? Charger, not a charger. I'll tell you what happened. I'll give you the story. We've had a few leaks in the bathroom over the last while.

There's been some floods and things in the bathroom. And so we had to get some different people to come in and look at it. And there was one guy who came in, and he was looking at the floor, and he pulled back the line, and he says, Oh, that floor around that shower is very, very wet.

That floor definitely has water. And then he said, I wonder about the walls. And he starts looking at the walls. And he says, They don't look too bad. And then, he got out that.

[19 : 42] Somebody over there is talking. What do you think? Dampness. Thank you very much. One of our children always has an answer over here on my left. It's dampness.

He took the thing, there's two little spikes at the end of it. Can you see? And he just stabbed it into the wall, and it went up to the red. He says, Oh, it's wet.

Then he went over there, and over here, and over the next place, and he was able to measure which walls were wet, and which walls were dry. So that's a handy kind of tool. We can't see behind walls.

We don't know if they're dry or wet, but he could take the thing, and it would tell him what was behind a wall. So, that's the first thing. The second thing, the second person actually, that we're going to see here, is, can you see that?

Any ideas what that is? Or where that is? Or who that is? It's not me. Do you know where that is?

[20 : 50] Hugh Brownie's laughing. He sees this. I don't know why. Andrew Brownie's just going under the chair. I don't know why. Alistair? Is that, besides that, when you drive up, to, where, when you drive into, you turn off.

Don't anyone ask Alistair for directions. Okay? Keep going, yeah? It's past your house. If you go down, there. That's right. It's past our house.

You go around a wee bit, you get to Loch, Jerichoed. And that's exactly where that is. There's that wee shed beside the flank. And that's a guy. He's sitting there at the side of the shed.

Just, that's the main road you can see there. And see if you look right down beside the shed. Can you see something? What is it? It's an animal.

It is an animal, yeah. Do you know what it is? It's a dog. And the dog's got a name. The dog's name is Heidi. And the man, at the end of the, the lead, also has a name.

[22 : 06] And his name is, where is he? I can't see him just now. Oh, there he is. He is there. His name's Andrew. And here's the story, okay. Hugh told me this story.

Hugh sent me the picture, all his fault. One day, in the library, when Hugh was bored in Aberdeen, and feeling a bit homesick, he decided he would Google, around the Harris area.

So he went to his house, and he looked at his house, and he went along Mill Road, and he went round here, and round there. And then he got to Loch, Chirichok, and he saw a figure. He thought, that looks a bit familiar.

And the thing that gave it away, was the bright blue trainers. Because when Andrew was, aged 12 or something, he had a bright blue pair of trainers. And he thought, what's that red thing? It looks like a lead.

Followed it down, along to the end of the lead, and there's a poor dog, that's out for a walk, except he's not really out for a walk. It's sitting at the end, of a lead, as a boy sits on a stone.

[23 : 09] And what used to happen, maybe it only happened once, Andrew. Maybe it was just once. But Andrew would have to take, Heidi the dog, off for a walk to Tarbert, and he would head off, out of view, of the brownie house.

And once you were round the corner, nobody from the brownie house, could see if you were walking, or sitting on a stone. And sometimes, apparently, Heidi the dog would come back, not too tired from a walk.

And Hugh thought, maybe it had something to do, with this picture. Now the point of this is, we can't see around corners, but Google Earth, on the day that they were taking photographs, in Harris, allowed us to see around corners.

So, we had the first two, that allowed us to see, behind walls, if they're wet or dry. And the second thing, Google Earth, it helps us in a way, to see around corners, when we can't see around corners, from our house.

Sorry, Andrew. Tell me this, boys and girls, what can God see? Everything. Everything.

[24 : 26] Our God, he can see behind walls, we can't see the wee ones just now, he can see them. Our God, he can see around corners, to places that we can't see.

And our God, where else can he see, as he looks at our lives? We can only see our trainers, and our clothes, and our faces, and our glasses. We can't see beyond that.

What can God see, in us? Man looks at the outward appearance, people look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks, at the hearts.

And what does he see, when he sees into our hearts? I'll tell you what he sees, when he looks into my heart. He sees sin. But when he sees sin, in my heart, and in your hearts, does he say, these people, I'm finished with them.

They're always sinning, because sin grieves the Holy Spirit, and makes the Holy Spirit sad. And, does God say, these people, the things they do, and they say anything, make me sad, I'm finished with them, I don't want any more to do with them.

[25 : 41] Is that what he says? So, what did he say? He said, I love them. And, I need to save them. I want to save them, from their sin.

And, what did God the Father do, to save us, from our sin? Who did he send? And, Jesus, where did Jesus go, for us?

He went to the cross, that's why we were singing, about that. And, his blood was shed, his body, it was broken, so that we, can have our sins, washed away, our hearts made clean, if we trust in him.

So, I wonder, boys and girls, what God sees, as he looks at our hearts today. Does he, see hearts, that are stained with sin, and the stain is still there? Or, does he see hearts, that have, been washed?

In the blood, of Jesus. I hope, that's what he sees in us. Hearts that are washed, in the blood of Jesus. Let's pray now. Lord God, we thank you, that you love us.

[26 : 49] We thank you, Father, that you sent Jesus, to die for us. We thank you, that when we, confess our sin, you wash them away. So, we ask Lord, that you would, wash our sins away.

As you look at our lives, we, know that we, do grieve you, in the way that we act, in the way that we think, in the things that we say. But we thank you, that we are able, to be made clean, through Jesus.

So, wash our hearts clean, we pray. And we ask it, in Jesus name. Amen. Thanks for listening, boys and girls. We're going to sing now, and we're going to sing that hymn, What Can Wash Away My Sin?

Nothing But The Blood of Jesus. Stephen ý what can wash away my sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus What can make me whole again Nothing but the blood of Jesus O precious is the throne That makes me white as snow No other kind I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus For my pardonness I see Nothing but the blood of Jesus For my cleansing this might be Nothing but the blood of Jesus O precious is the throne That makes me white as snow

[28 : 47] No other kind I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus Nothing can force in my soul Nothing but the blood of Jesus Not of good that I have done Nothing but the blood of Jesus Oh precious is the throne That makes me white as snow No other kind I know Nothing but the blood of Jesus This is all my hope and peace Nothing but the blood of Jesus This is all my righteousness

Nothing but the blood of Jesus Oh precious is the blood of Jesus Oh precious is the blood of Jesus Oh precious is the blood of Jesus Let's turn now your Bibles To Luke chapter 13 please Luke chapter 13

And we'll read from verse 22 This is God's word Then Jesus went through the towns and villages Teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem Someone asked him Lord are only a few people going to be saved He said to them Make every effort to enter through the narrow door Because many I tell you will try to enter And will not be able to Once the owner of the house gets up And closes the door You will stand outside knocking and pleading Sir open the door for us But he will answer I don't know you or where you come from Then you will say We ate and drank with you And you talked in our streets But he will reply I don't know you Or where you come from Away from me you evildoers There will be weeping there And gnashing of teeth When you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob And all the prophets in the kingdom of God

But you yourselves are thrown out People will come from east and west And north and south And will take their places at the feast In the kingdom of God Indeed there are those who are last Who will be first And first who will be last Amen And may God bless that reading Of his word to us We're going to sing Now again to God's praise We sing in Gaelic Psalm 121 The first two stanzas Of the psalm Psalm 121 And the first two stanzas Of the psalm To the verse marked 4 In English Which I to the hills Will lift mine eyes From whence doth come my need My safety cometh from the Lord Who heaven and earth hath made Thy foot He'll not let slide Nor will he slumber That he keeps Behold he that keeps Israel He slumbers not Nor sleeps So we remain seated To sing This psalm To God's praise He slawan

Asifenmerere Thank you.

[34 : 17] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[36 : 47] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

of verse 30. And as we look in at that, we see from verse 22 that we're seeing Jesus and he's on the move. He's on a journey. It says there in verse 22, then Jesus went through the towns and villages teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Jesus, he's on the move. He's not stationary. He's not stopped. There is a clear intent. He's not wandering aimlessly. We can see there's purpose, there's direction. He's on route to Jerusalem. Now we know from places that we visit and journeys that we go on that there are certain places that are not safe for us to go. Any city almost that you visit, there are certain times of the day or night and there are certain areas and we just know it's not safe for us to be there. It's not safe to travel that way. So you tend to take a different route.

And as we see Jesus here, he's on his way to Jerusalem. Since chapter 9, is it verse 51? He's set his face towards Jerusalem. He's going there. But we know that Jerusalem was not a safe place for Jesus to go. Jerusalem was HQ. It was the headquarters of the religious authorities.

[40 : 04] They were gathered together in that place. They had a lot of force. They had a lot of power in that place. And they were very much against Jesus. So for Jesus to go to Jerusalem, he's going to a place of danger. But he knew all that. Jesus knew that the journey that he was on was a journey to death.

And so Jesus, at this point, as he made his way to Jerusalem, he's focused on the cross. He's focused on the cross. We began the service with that call to lift our eyes from our devices and diaries and whatever and survey the cross. And Jesus here, as he travels in the direction of Jerusalem, his focus is on the cross that he would go to. He's surveying in his mind's eye the cross where he, the Prince of Glory, that would die.

Now we see various people who are on journeys. Almost every time we open up social media, there's somebody who's asking for money because they're going from Land's End to John the Groats for some particular cause.

But as we see Jesus here, why is he on this journey? For what cause is he walking? What's for the cause of our salvation?

So we don't get to stand back from this like we might do as we look at some journey online that somebody's looking for sponsorship on. We can see that. We can see the cause and say, well, it's a good cause, but it's far removed from me.

[41 : 58] Now the cause for which Jesus is walking here is the cause of our salvation. He's walking for us.

He's heading to the cross for us. So that's the context as we see Jesus on the move on this journey. And into that context comes a question.

So we just have two points this morning. There's an indirect question. That's the first point. And then the second point is there's a very direct answer. So first of all, there's an indirect question.

And we see that question. We hear it in verse 23. Someone asked Jesus, Lord, are only a few people going to be saved? It's a short question.

We don't know who asked it. It just says someone asked the question. And we don't know the motivation behind this question either. Luke doesn't tell us what's going on in the mind and heart of the person who asked the question.

[43 : 03] It might have been a trick question. That was pulled out of the artillery of the religious leaders. They were trying to build a portfolio of evidence that they could use against Jesus.

And so they're firing all kinds of questions at them so they can take notes and use it in evidence against them. So it might have been that kind of a question. A trick question to try and catch out Jesus.

It might have been a question from one of the ordinary Jews. Many of them believed that the Jews, all the Jews, and only the Jews would be saved.

And so it might have been that a Jewish person is asking this question. Jesus, can you just confirm, please, it's only a few people.

It's only the Jewish people who are going to be saved. It might have been that kind of a question. Or it might have been a genuine question. Coming from someone who was wanting to be saved.

[44 : 08] But just didn't want to come out and say that straight. You know, sometimes you might be in a community meeting and somebody's speaking about something or other.

And someone will put their hand up and ask a question. And when they ask the question, everybody turns around to see who asked the question. And they'll quickly qualify it by saying, I'm not asking for myself.

I'm actually asking this question for somebody else. It's somebody else that wanted me to bring this question. But you know, fine, they were asking for themselves. And it might have been that that kind of a person was asking this question.

They don't want to be too personal. They don't want anyone to think that they're on some quest for salvation. They don't want to give too much away.

So the question comes indirectly. Lord, is it true that only a few people are going to be saved?

[45 : 14] Maybe the heart of this question was, Lord, is it possible for me to be part of that number, or that few number of people who are going to be saved?

It might have been that kind of a question. It certainly is a question about salvation. It's a question about eternity.

And I wonder if anybody here is asking that kind of question. Maybe you're not a member, not professing our faith in Christ.

And you come week by week, or every few weeks. And deep down, there is that question. It's a question about salvation.

You know, it's good to be asking these kind of questions. It's good for us, whoever we are, wherever we are, in the spectrum of faith, it's good to be thinking about eternity.

[46 : 26] Because everything in this world would cause us to focus on time. But time is short. Rory Morrison used to use this illustration often.

He would talk about, you know, when we boil the kettle for a cup of tea. And you put the water in, you push the button, you start to hear the movement. Then as the water comes to boiling point, it bubbles away, there's that mist, there's that steam.

Then there's the click. It's gone in seconds. James says, in James 4, 14, that our lives are like that.

Like a vapour. Like steam, like mist. What is your life, says James? You're a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

Time is short. Eternity is long. We're going to sing at the end of the service, the sands of time are sinking.

[47 : 37] And the older we get, I think the more we realise time is flying. I remember my parents saying to me when I was younger, time is flying.

And when they said it to me when I was a wee boy, it seemed like nonsense to me. They usually said it on Sundays, and time was dragging. But now I'm saying it to my girls.

Time is flying. Now one minute you're taking them home, and one of these carry-cot things from the hospital, the next minute you're thinking about applying for a driving licence.

How did that happen? Time is flying. Time is passing so quick, and then is eternity.

And all of us are going there. So it's good for us, it's important, it's crucial for us to be asking questions about eternity.

[48 : 47] About who will be lost. About the number who will be saved. And more importantly, whether we are part of that number.

Because that's what Jesus zeros in on in his answer. We have the indirect question, but then we have secondly, finally, a very direct answer from Jesus.

And if you scan from verse 24 to verse 30, we see the substance of the answer from Jesus. There's two things to note within this answer.

The first thing is that Jesus doesn't answer the question that was asked. And the second thing, the final thing, is that Jesus answers the question that should have been asked.

So first of all, as we note Jesus' answer, we can see that he doesn't answer the question that was asked. Now we're quite accustomed to this if we watch any news programs or any politics programs.

[49 : 50] We know that politicians, they're asked a question, but they never answer the question that was asked. They just skirt around it. But Jesus was no politician. Jesus was not fearful of straight talking.

So if Jesus didn't answer the question that was asked, there was good reason for that. And we see here that he doesn't. The question that was asked, it was indirect, as we noted, but the question that was asked was impersonal.

It wasn't about me. It was a theoretical, hypothetical question. Lord, are only a few people going to be saved? And so Jesus, he doesn't answer that question.

Dale Ralf Davis says, matters about salvation, about entering the kingdom of God, can never be academic with Jesus. He will not allow you to deal with him as fodder for interesting theological discussions.

So if this person who was asking the question was hoping for a bit of a kind of theological acrobatics, if they were looking for a kind of fellowship style, long and complex debate about the number of people going to be saved, if they were looking for a long circular discussion about election and predestination, they were going to be disappointed.

[51 : 20] Because Jesus doesn't answer these questions. Jesus doesn't give out the number of the elect. He doesn't say, hang on a second, till I just check the number.

I'll tell you exactly how many there's going to be. He doesn't get out a long list and say, here's the names of all those who are saved. Do you want to check on this list? No, that's classified information.

There is a register of those who will be saved. There is a book in heaven. It's called the Lamb's Book of Life.

You can read about it in Revelation. And all the names of the saved are in there, but we don't get to see it in time. So to ask questions about the elect, the number who will be saved, who's in, who's out, is pointless.

Ryle makes the observation that Jesus just does not engage with what Ryle calls idol triflers with religion. They've always been there.

[52 : 42] They're still here. Those who just want to have a little bit of fun. Let's have a debate and go round and round in circles, but it's nothing to do with me.

You know, to ask these kind of questions that are going nowhere, it's pointless. because Jesus won't answer these kind of questions. So it could have been a question that, you know, it was theoretical.

A little bit of religious debate. It's also possible this question had a kind of critical edge to it. You know, the question could have been asked along this line, Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?

See, Jesus had been teaching and would continue to teach that he was the way and he was the only way to be saved. John 14, 6.

He says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Full stop. End of story. salvation through Christ, no other way.

[54 : 00] That was what Jesus taught crystal clearly. And looking around on that day, very few people believed in Jesus. Most people were against him. So it's possible that the question was being asked along these lines, Jesus, are you telling me seriously that only a few of your strange followers are going to be saved and everyone else is going to be lost?

Is that really what you're trying to say? That so few people, just a few of your strange disciples are going to be saved? It's possible that was the tone of the question.

You know, that's the question that's often asked today. It's a question that will often be sparked in my direction. You know, there are many people today who have no fear of God, but they're very quick to judge God.

They're very quick to condemn God because they object to the idea that salvation comes only through Jesus. So they'll say things like, what do you mean Jesus is the only way?

Surely you're not saying that. In our multicultural, multi-faith world, surely you're not that narrow. Surely you're not saying that. What about all the other ways?

[55 : 24] What about all the other religions? What about all the nice people who are trying hard to be good? Surely, surely they're going to be saved. What kind of a God would save so few people?

Come and answer. If you're a Christian and have been for any length of time and you're serious about reaching out to tell folks about Jesus, you'll have heard this kind of thing.

So what do we say when we're faced with that kind of aggressive line of questioning? questioning? What do we say when we encounter people who are condemning God, judging God, and demanding that God answers to them?

Well, what did Jesus say? Nothing. He doesn't answer their question about the number of people who will be saved because he doesn't have to.

He is God. And Jesus did make clear and he will continue to make clear that the door to salvation is narrow.

[56 : 45] There is only one way to be saved. it is through him. But at no point Jesus apologized for that and at no point does Jesus defend his position on salvation.

And I think we can learn from that. We can be sometimes so so weak against the culture.

So apologetic in the worst sense of the word. But we don't have to defend God. In a sense he doesn't need us to stand up for him.

And make him seem palatable to the culture. And no matter what our culture thinks, we don't get to judge God. But he will judge us.

And we don't get to demand an account from God on who is saved and who is not. But we will, each of us, give an account of our lives to him. So the question, whether it was an academic question, hypothetical, or an aggressive question, Jesus doesn't answer it.

[58 : 17] Doesn't answer the question that was asked. But he does answer the question that should have been asked. And that's our final element within this. And so what is the question that should have been asked?

Well, the question that should have been asked, the crucial question, is, am I saved? not how few are the number going to be, or how big is the number going to be, not the hypotheticals, not the kind of theological ideas.

The main crucial question is, am I going to be saved? Because Jesus here, he responds by saying to the person who asked the question, and saying to the whole of the listening crowd, on that day, including us, in this, because it's in Scripture for us.

And essentially what Jesus says is, never mind about the numbers. Never mind about the number of people who are going to be saved.

Stop looking at everybody else. The crucial question is, what about you? Are you saved?

[59 : 39] Are you making every effort to be saved? Verse 24, Jesus said to them, make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many I tell you will try to enter and will not be able to.

Now, I think on first reading, we scratch our heads a little on this. At Jesus, a choice of words, we might say, effort to be saved? Make every effort to be saved?

Aren't we saved by grace? And the answer is, yes, we are saved by grace. We're not saved by our efforts. We're not saved by our works. We're saved by the finished work of Jesus.

But see, to receive that grace, we need to make every effort to turn away from sin, and we need to make every effort to seek Jesus.

Jeremiah 29, 13 says, you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. That's effort.

[61 : 02] effort. It takes effort to forsake sin in thought and in action when the easy thing is to give in to sin.

It takes effort not to lose the rag when you feel your temperature going up. You're one of these people who just blows the stack. It takes effort not to pick up the bottle and have another dram when you should be seeking salvation.

It takes effort to seek the Lord in a world that would do everything to block us seeking the Lord and distract us from the Lord.

It takes effort to call upon the name of the Lord when he draws near to us in his word when it's much easier to sit in the chair for 20 more seconds and walk out the door talking about the weather.

There is an effort required on our part. salvation. The way of salvation is narrow. There are things that the Lord will highlight for us as he calls us to come to him and he's saying to us put them away put them down.

[62 : 38] So many people will say I've asked for salvation but I haven't got it and yet they're still holding on to the bottle. tighter than they're seeking salvation.

And Jesus says make every effort. Every other thing that's blocking the way make every effort to shift it.

To receive the salvation that I'm offering. Jesus makes that clear. There's effort required. There's action required and it's now.

Not tomorrow. Seek the Lord while he may be found says Isaiah in Isaiah 55. Call on him while he is near. Dale Ralph Davis says Jesus refuses to allow this question about salvation to be a matter of curiosity but he makes it a matter of urgency.

Then in verse 25 to 30 Jesus says he illustrates this with a parable. You can scan down the parable just now my time is gone.

[63 : 54] But we have that picture there of the owner of the house who's closing the door. And there are people who want in to that place of safety and that place of blessing and the door is closed and they're knocking and they're pleading but the door is locked.

And they're saying we ate with you, we drank with you, we know you. You taught on our streets, Jesus.

We listened to your sermons. Some of us were healed by your touch. And Jesus says, away from me.

there's that picture painted there of a place where there's weeping, where there's sorrow eternally. There's gnashing of teeth, there's frustration and anger eternally.

It's a picture of hell. And the Jews who see Isaac and Abraham and Jacob up there as their heroes, Jesus says, they'll be in.

[65 : 10] But you'll be banging on the door and you're out because you're not trusting me. Now some of us saw these harrowing pictures from Afghanistan where there were people who were desperate to get into that plane.

They're hanging on to the plane. the doors are locked though. There's no way in. It's too late.

We can think about the illustration from Genesis and Noah. So many people would have heard Noah saying so many times, come in and be safe.

Safe from what? Safe from the flood. What flood? But then as the waters rose, the doors were locked.

And people thumped the doors, but it was too late. And that's the picture. Jesus is saying there will be people thumping on the door, wishing they could be saved, but it will be too late.

[66 : 26] J.C. Ryle says, Myriads will wake up in another world and be convinced of the truth which on earth they refuse to believe.

Hell itself is nothing but truth known too late. That's what Jesus is saying here. He's saying to religious people, people who were close to him in congregations, people who had all the tenets of religion in their lives.

He's saying to these people, there's no salvation in religion. There's no salvation in church attendance.

There's no magic saving power in the chairs. There's no salvation in being part of a crowd of people who were close to Jesus.

Jesus is saying, salvation is offered in me. No other place. The door is narrow and I am the door. So come to me, says Jesus.

[67 : 51] come now. Make every effort to enter through the narrow door.

So there's that clear evangelistic drive through this section. There's that clear call from Jesus to believe in him and be saved. I hope we're hearing it.

But just to finish in two minutes, through this message, there's a challenge to the person who professes to believe.

You know, many of us are professing Christians here. We might say that's a good message for those who are lost. but this is also for us.

Through this little section, we are being asked the question afresh, are we making every effort, day by day, to enter through the narrow door?

[69 : 04] Are we making every effort, day by day, to turn from sin? Because salvation, well, not salvation, but repentance is a day by day thing.

Salvation, when we believe, it's once for all. But repentance, it's not a single moment in time, it's a day by day by day by day thing. Are we making every effort, day by day, to turn from sin?

Are we making every effort, day by day, to turn to Jesus? perseverance. Because that's the only way we can be sure of salvation.

Perseverance is not the means of salvation, but it is the evidence of salvation, and without evidence, without the fruit of that, there can be no assurance. so there's something about this message that is necessarily unsettling for those who profess to believe.

We're called to examine ourselves, not look at everybody else. Remember, Judas heard this message.

[70 : 22] He was one of the twelve. He professed to be a follower of Jesus. He said he was saved. The other disciples thought he was saved.

He may have even thought himself that he was saved, but was he making every effort day by day to turn away from sin? Well, no, he wasn't. Because we know at this point that Judas was making more of an effort to get rich than he was to get right with Christ.

And so on the final day, Judas would find that he was locked out. So those of us who are Christians, let's not push this aside for others.

this is for us. To finish with a quote from William Barclay, he says to Christians here, we run a certain danger.

It is easy to think that once we have made a commitment of ourselves to Jesus Christ, we have reached the end of the road and can, as it were, sit back as if we had achieved our goal.

[71 : 46] But there is no such finality in the Christian life. A person must ever be going forward or necessarily he goes backward.

forward. The Christian way is like a climb up a mountain pathway toward a peak which will never be reached in this world. It was said of two gallant climbers who died on Mount Everest when last seen they were going strong for the top.

It was inscribed on the grave of an alpine guide who had died on the mountain side. He died climbing. For the Christian, life is an ever upward and an onward way.

And that's where there's assurance. That's where there's joy. When we are pressing on, when we are climbing to want to go on with Jesus.

Make every effort, Christian. I speak first to myself to enter through the narrow door. We will sing to conclude.

[73 : 05] The hymn from the Red Book and the words are on the screen in just a moment. Hymn number 694, The Sands of Time Are Sinking.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. The sons of time are sinking, the dawn of heaven breaks.

The sun are born outside for the fierce green morn a waste.

Dark, dark hath been the midnight, but day spring is at hand.

And glory, glory dwell in Emmanuel's hand.

[74 : 17] O Christ, he is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love.

The streams on earth I've tasted, more deep I drink up.

There to an ocean fullness his mercy does expand.

And glory, glory dwell in Emmanuel's hand.

With mercy and with judgment my web of time he wore.

[75 : 20] And day the Jews of sorrow were luster by his love.

I bless the hand that guided, I bless the heart that planned.

When throne were glory dwell in Emmanuel's hand.

I've wrestled on towards heaven, yet storm and wind and tide.

Though like a weary tower of love that leadeth on his sky.

[76 : 23] Amid the shades of evening, while sinks like slinging sand.

I hear the glory dawning in Emmanuel's hand.

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

Amen.