

16.4.23 am

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Date: 16 April 2023

Preacher: Reverend Kenny I Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning everybody and welcome to our service this morning. It's our pleasure to have the Reverend Kenny I. MacLeod with us today and he'll be preaching both this morning and this evening. Special welcome to any visitors who are with us as well today and tea and coffee will be served in here at the end of the service so please do stay if you are able to for that.

The evening service is at 6pm and then this evening there's the monthly Gaelic Sam singing event over in the Scalpy Free Church from 7.30 to 8.30 and if you get there between 7.15 and 7.30 there'll be tea and coffee served there as well.

The Ladies' Fellowship meets on Monday. Little Fishers meets on Tuesday again from 10 to 12 and then Road to Recovery on Tuesday at 7 o'clock.

The prayer meeting, as usual, will be in here on Wednesday at 7.30 and will also be on Zoom and God willing I think the minister will be taking that service.

On Thursday, a reminder that we have the Healthy Gospel Church meeting here starting at 7 o'clock but you can arrive from 6.30 and there'll be people up from Edinburgh speaking about the Healthy Gospel Church initiative, what it means and there'll be an opportunity to join in discussions regarding that.

[1 : 3 0] The Deacons' Court will meet briefly after the prayer meeting on Wednesday nights and ask the Deacons to stay behind after the prayer meeting. If you're able, that would be great.

And then Heka Chluch, the Mother and Toddlers Gatlet group, meets in the church again this Thursday from 10 to 11.30. Tea and coffee are provided and crafts for the older ones.

The Friday clubs for young people start up again this week now that the school is back so they'll be on at their normal times. And then the services next Sunday at 11 and 6 will both be taken, God willing, by the minister.

One other thing I should have said is that there is a Sunday school today for children of primary school age. I don't think there's any visitors' children but, oh yes there are.

So if anyone wishes to join that, the kids go out after the second singing and all are very welcome. These are all the intimations.

[2 : 3 1] So welcome Kenny to our pulpit and pray for God's blessing upon him as he leads us in worship. Thank you Duncan. And to extend a very warm welcome to everybody to the service this morning and we're going to begin by praising God, singing from Psalm 63 from the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 63 from the Scottish Psalter. Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek my soul, do I thirst for thee?

My flesh longs in a dry, parched land, wherein no waters be. That I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face, as I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place.

Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live. Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall fill it be.

Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee. When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight. And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night.

[3 : 45] If we sing these verses of Psalm 63, Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek. Lord, thee my God, I'll early seek.

I sold the thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry, parched land, where no waters be.

The shine thy power may behold and brightness of thy face.

As I have seen thee here to fall within thy holy place.

Such better is thy love than life. My lips thee praise shall give.

[5 : 19] I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live.

In thy heart with marrow and with heart. My soul shall fill it be.

Then shall my mouth with joyfully sing praises unto thee.

When I do thee upon my bed. Remember with delight.

And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night.

[6 : 46] Let us bow in prayer. O Lord, O God, as we gather before you this morning, we pray that you will bless us. We need you at all times.

There are times as we go through life we forget about you. And we forget our dependence upon you. But it doesn't take long till you remind us once again that it is in you that we live and move and have our being.

And so we pray, O Lord, that every day that we might have a conscious dependence upon you. That we may seek to set you at the front of everything.

Forgive us, Lord, for when we don't. And when we're self-sufficient and self-reliant. And when we forget about God. But, Lord, we give thanks for today because this is one of the great things about coming to church.

It's a time to focus upon you. A time to forget ourselves and to put our main focus upon you and to give you the worship and the honour and the glory that is due to your name.

[7 : 51] We give thanks, Lord, that you are the God of heaven and earth. The God who cares for us. The God who has shown us so much and revealed so much to us.

Because here we have your word. And this word is life. This word is everything that we need for our souls. Everything that we need for life.

And we pray that we may have an ever-growing dependence upon your word. That it may be just as your word tells us. That it is like a sword that pushes.

That it is like a hammer that breaks. But it's also sweeter than honey. It is more precious than gold. And we pray that we may discover it in all its different forms.

That that word will break into our hearts. And that word will show us more and more of who we are. But above all, show us more of who you are. We pray to bless this congregation here today.

[8 : 51] Bless everybody present. And bless every home represented. We pray that the peace of God that passes all understanding may envelop our hearts. And if there are hearts that are anxious and troubled.

Because that's part of life. We pray, Lord, that you will bring a settled peace to bear. We know that there are so many things that cloud in upon our life.

So many things for maybe today there are people and their horizons in life are becoming dark. Because of worries and anxieties and pressures. Differing things that come into our lives.

Often things that we don't expect or anticipate. And so we pray, Lord, in the midst of all the difficulties that we face. That we may know you.

That we may know your help. Your strength. Your grace. And we pray for those who mourn. Those whose hearts are sore and heavy. And we know that death is never far away.

[9 : 50] And we're aware all the time that there is bereavement. There's bereavement in this community here today. And we ask, Lord, that where there's sorrow and sadness.

That you will bind up the broken heart. And we're aware that while there is an immediacy. When there is a passing. That that passing will often. And indeed not just often but always.

Leave an emptiness. And we pray at the times when that emptiness is most acute. And that pain is greatest. That you will draw close.

And that you will say, it is I. Be not afraid. We ask, Lord, that you will bless the witness of this congregation. We give thanks for it. We give thanks, Lord, for its witness and testimony within this community and the communities about.

We pray, Lord, for David and his wife and family. We ask that you will bless them. And we give thanks for the warm, loving ministry here. And we pray that the work here will grow and develop.

[10 : 54] And that more and more people will come to faith. And that there will be a greater sense, an ongoing sense of your presence with your people here.

We ask, O Lord, that what we pray for ourselves here today, that we pray for all other areas of this world. Lord, we ask that into the areas where there are so many conflicts and difficulties and sorrows and pains, that you will draw close to your people.

We pray especially for your people who don't have the freedom that we do. We know that there are some areas of this world that your people are meeting in secret. They don't even know of other believers.

The pressure from the state is so overwhelming that it's at the pain of death that they worship you. And so we pray to protect them, put a shield around them.

Deliver, Lord, your people from prison who are imprisoned for their faith. Deliver your people, Lord, who are bound to be put to death for their faith. And we ask, Lord, that you will indeed turn the heart of persecutors to yourself.

[12 : 05] You did it with Saul. And we pray that you'll do it again today. And that those who hate you most may come to love you most. We give thanks, Lord, for the wonderful way that your gospel touches people's lives.

And the church is full of people who, one day they hated you. One day they were enemies. One day they were rebels. One day they were going in the opposite direction. But you turned them around.

And it's only you that can turn us around. So we pray, Lord, that even today many will be turned around. We pray for any here, Lord, who come to your church.

They come and it's a wonderful thing that they do. We pray, Lord, that if they don't yet know you, that they will come to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior.

That they will love Jesus. We pray for our young people. Lord, bless them. It's a difficult day. A day, yes, there are opportunities.

[13 : 04] But it's hard for young people today. There are pressures that we didn't know anything about upon them. And so, Lord, we ask to bless them. Bless parents who seek to instruct them and teach them in the way of the Lord.

Oh, Lord, we give thanks for every home where there is a teaching of God's word in it. And pray, Lord, that you will bless and honour that teaching.

And that the little ones will come up to know you and to love you and to embrace you. Lord, we give thanks for all the work that goes on at all the different levels. We give thanks for all the people who serve you so willingly at a voluntary level.

And that's one of the amazing things within our church. It's full of people who love the Lord and serve the Lord willingly. And we often take for granted that service.

But the church could never function were it not for all the different areas and aspects where people do and people give and people live and people witness. And so we ask, Lord, to encourage your people, particularly those who may feel downcast.

[14 : 13] They feel that they've served you for years and they don't feel that they've ever achieved anything. And they look around and they say, what have I ever done? And, Lord, we believe that on the great day, when you will say to your people, let's say, that they did this and they did that.

And they'll say, when did we do that? And they'll say, as much as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it unto me. And so, Lord, we pray that we may indeed realise that no service to the Lord is ever in vain.

We ask then that you will watch over us and we pray then that you'll be with us, be with the Sunday school as they gather just now. And we ask, Lord, that your blessing will be upon all that we do.

We ask, Lord, to forgive us our sin. We do ask that both collectively and individually. And we give thanks that you're faithful to forgive us all our sins when we confess.

Watch over us then, we pray, and do us good. Grant us your grace and cleanse us, we pray, from our every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Amen.

[15 : 27] Just a wee word to the young folk just now. We used to have a dog. Unfortunately, we don't anymore. I'm sure a lot of you here have a dog at home.

We had a dog called Holly. It was a wee bison. And it was, I suppose, as often you'll find, incredibly nosy, incredibly cheeky, incredibly spoilt.

In fact, if the dog had been a human, you would say, what a horrible person. But the thing is, when they're a dog, you just say, oh, that's great.

But Holly was, I think, the nosiest dog. And it was often very embarrassing, particularly if ladies came and they had a handbag. And they would put their handbag maybe down on the couch.

And a little you would see. And she would be in, sort of looking around in the handbag. Well, not with the handbag, but with her nose. So always looking to see if there was a wee sweetie or something. And if you're having a cup of tea and maybe there was a pancake or a scone or something.

[16 : 33] She'd be always just looking, waiting, waiting, waiting to pounce. And would try and get. So we always had, if there were people in, we always had to try and keep the dog out. And one of the things I used to find really annoying is if you're going to make yourself a sandwich or something.

She was always over just staring at you the whole time, her eyes fixed on you. And you'd be tripping over. And she was always waiting for a crumb or something to fall.

And then, of course, when you went to eat it, she would sit before you and just stare and try and get that a wee something from it. Come on, give me something.

And you know the way the dogs look. But one day I said, right, I want peace to make this sandwich. So I went and got one of her, a wee bonio.

And I thought, right, this will keep her while I make my sandwich. So I went over there and I said, there's her bonio. And then I darted back and I started the sandwich. But she picked the bonio up and she came over.

[17 : 34] And she was standing there with the bonio in her teeth looking at me. But she wasn't eating it. Still hoping that she would get something. And I was saying to myself, you know, you're not even enjoying that.

That's a treat for you and you're not enjoying it. Because you're wanting what I have. And I began to think, you know, that's so much like, sometimes we're like that.

That often we have really good things. But we're not enjoying them because all the time we're looking at what other people have. And we're saying, ah, see what he's got.

See what she's got. I think that looks better than what I have. And instead of enjoying what we actually do have, we spend so much time looking at what others have and not able to enjoy what we have ourselves.

And there's a word in the Bible that quite often we see. It's called content. And it's one of the things that God wants us to be, is to be content.

[18 : 39] And he says it's a great thing. Be content with the things that you have. Because he promises that he'll never leave us and he'll never forsake us. And that's something I would ask you to pray for.

Because we live in a world that's always telling us that we need this, we need that. If you get this, if you get that, then your life will be okay. Ask God to help you to be content with what you have.

Now, I know sometimes you lose things. Sometimes you lose people. And that's difficult. But when we think just about our life and the things that we have, where we live here, we're really well off.

Now, I know we could turn it the other way and say, well, there's difficulty sometimes with transport and all these things getting on and off islands. But when we look at what we have, the peace we have and all the blessings we have, ask the Lord every day for that word content.

It means that you're happy with what you have. It makes a huge difference to life. Instead of saying, oh, I've got to have this, I've got to have that, I've got to have the next thing.

[19 : 47] Enjoy what God has given you and ask God to help you to be happy with it. And of course, the greatest thing of all that we can have is the blessing of Jesus.

And if Jesus is at the center of our life, then that in itself gives us a happiness. Because the word blessing, blessed, is the same as happiness.

Let's have a wee prayer. Lord our God, we pray that we might all learn to be content. Content with the things that we have in life.

Yes, sometimes we lose important things and we lose important people. But even in all these things, we ask, Lord, that you will help us every day to be happy with who we are and where we are.

We give thanks above all for having the gospel. And we pray that you'll bless the gospel to us. Bless Jesus to our hearts. Watch over now, the young ones, to say, we'll go to Sunday school.

[20 : 49] Be with us all, we pray. And take away from us our every sin in Jesus' name. Amen. And we're going to sing again, this time in Psalm 36.

And this is in Sing Psalm, Psalm 36, verses 5 to 10. Psalm 36, verses 5 to 10.

Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky. Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep.

Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep. So on, we'll sing Psalm 36, verses 5 to 10. To God's praise.

Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high.

[21 : 56] Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep.

Your righteousness is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep.

How precious is your steadfast love. What confidence it brings.

Both high and low, find sheltered in the shadow of your wings.

[23 : 17] The peace within you, as I'm praying. From streams of pure delight.

For with you is the source of light. In your life we see light.

To those who know you as their God. Your steadfast love impart.

May take your righteousness to those of you, grand upright heart.

We're going to read God's word now in the gospel of John, chapter 4. John, chapter 4. And we read from the beginning. And we read through to verse 39.

[24 : 39] John's gospel, chapter 4, reading from the beginning. The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John.

Although, in fact, it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria.

Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there.

And Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, Will you give me a drink?

His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?

[25 : 46] For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.

Sir, the woman said, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?

Jesus answered, Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life.

The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty, and I have to keep coming back here to draw water. He told her, Go, call your husband and come back.

I have no husband, she replied. Jesus said to her, You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.

[27 : 02] What you have just said is quite right. Sir, the woman said, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.

Jesus declared, Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know.

We worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming, and has now come, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

For they are the kind of worshippers the Father speaks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth. The woman said, I know that Messiah called Christ is coming.

When he comes, he will explain everything to us. Then Jesus declared, I who speak to you am he. Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman.

[28 : 16] But no one asked, What do you want? Or why are you talking with her? Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Could this be the Christ? They came out of the town and made their way towards him. Meanwhile, his disciples urged him, Rabbi, eat something. But he said to them, I have food to eat that you know nothing about.

Then his disciples said to each other, Could someone have brought him food? My food, said Jesus, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Do you not say, Four months more and then the harvest? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest. Even now the reaper draws his wages.

Even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying, One sows and another reaps is true.

[29 : 23] I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work and you have reaped the benefits of their labor. Many of the Samaritans from the town believed in him because of the woman's testimony.

He told me everything I ever did. And so on. Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. We're now going to sing in Gaelic from Psalm 107.

Psalm 107. We're going to sing verses 4 to 6. Psalm 107, verses 4 to 6. Psalm 107, verses 4 to 6.

Sanasachiyyat, Eshachran Ghai. Sanasachiyyat, Eshachran Ghai. Sanasachiyyat, Eshachran Ghai. Sanasachiyyat, Eshachran Ghai.

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[30 : 51] Sanasachiyyat, Eshachran Ghai. Sanasachiyyat, Eshachran Ghai.

Sanasachiyyat, Eshachran Ghai. Sanasachitt, Eshachran Ghai. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[33 : 16] Thank you.

Thank you.

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

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[36 : 00] 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. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Now, this is a good one. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[38 : 10] Thank you. Thank you. And to God bless you. I know. Mlk Black accent. I know, I know you're on the hook 7thce of the Lord.

It's a good one. In the day. I'm not taking me yet. was going on a mission and he was going to save and that's Jesus's great work in this world is to save sinners that's what he says that the son of man has come to seek and to save those who are lost and that if you're today lost if you today are outside Christ remember it's for you that Jesus has come you're in that category you're in the perfect category if you recognize that right now you are as you stand before God that you're in a condition that is lost then that qualifies you for Jesus because he has come for you to seek and to save those who are lost anyway Jesus is making his way with the disciples and we find that Jesus is weary and that's part of the beauty of it here's a son of God God a very God the God who made this world because we've got to remember that nothing that has been made has come into being apart from the son of God and yet here is Jesus and he has become flesh we're told that the word became flesh and dwelt among us Jesus that's what's happened taken human nature now a lot of people say right okay I hear all that but how you explain to me how the son of God the second person of the trinity how he has become a man well there's one thing the Bible there's a version of the Bible that says great is the mystery of godliness Christ manifest in the flesh and a mystery is something that cannot be properly explained if it is if you can explain a mystery it's no longer a mystery there is an aspect of mysteriousness about it all we're told that the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and through that overshadowing she conceived in the womb the baby Jesus but he that seed that was implanted was the seed of God and he remained always God he has the two there are two natures in the one person now these things are really really hard for us to understand in fact it goes beyond being able to understand the greatest theology in the world we believe it this is that's what faith does faith says you know what I completely believe it I accept it

I base my life on it but I there's bits I just I just it's it's beyond me and so it should be because it is and will always remain a mystery but here is Christ the son of God but he is now in our nature and he had to be and he was exactly like you and me apart from his apart from sin he never sinned and thought word or indeed but in everything else the human nature he had was just like ours in other words he got tired he got hungry he hurt he cried he felt pain just all the different things that you and I as a human we feel we experience Jesus did that and so at this point he's weary and it's great to know that that the weary the weary Jesus understands our weariness the crying Jesus understands our tears all these things so the disciples go away and they go to the they go off to get food and Jesus remains at the well and this woman comes she comes to draw water now she's a Samaritan woman and as she said herself the Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings with one another there was a deep-rooted hatred you see the Jews looked in the Samaritans as being as having lost the religious purity they had lost the racial purity because the Samaritans had grown out of the the when the Assyrians conquered Israel way back and the 10 tribes were taken into captivity this is where the Samaritans grew out if they had they had been Jews initially but over the period there was obviously mixed marriages and they became a mixed race and a mixed religion and so the

Jews who were so intent on their own racial and religious purity abhorred they hated the Samaritans in fact the extreme Jews it's it's recorded that Pharisees would pray it's an it's terrible when you think about it that no Samaritan would rise at the resurrection imagine that's that's how much they needed but as on top of that that's why the woman finds it strange that Jesus is talking to her it was also forbidden by the pharisaic law for a man to have a public dealing with a woman now we can't understand that because we live we live in a society where men and women are we're in equal equals and and and as we just go around there's no surprise and how thankful we have that but even in parts of this world it isn't like that there isn't an equality but back then it was it was frowned upon by the extreme religious leaders and they for it was forbidden this is what it said it was forbidden for a man to even greet his wife on the street in case people would start gossiping but especially the wife of another man and so there was this extreme law that was built in now when Jesus came he paid no regard to man-made traditions and man-made laws and that's why this woman and that's why the disciples were absolutely gobsmacked when they came back and found Jesus in a dialogue with this woman and a

Samaritan woman he had broken every law and every taboo going that's that's how they were amazed to find him in conversation with her now we don't have that understanding we can't we can't comprehend that but that's how it was then and so Jesus initiates the conversation now this woman comes and it's it's reckoned it was about midday it's not the time you would come to draw water but she came at a time when people wouldn't be there because she had had five husbands and the one she was with now wasn't her husband and so on and there was all this she would be the kind of person in that day who would be like almost like a leper and nobody would be seen speaking to her that's quicker because of their history but here's Jesus and he initiates a conversation and she finds it quite extraordinary that he he's asking her for a drink but Jesus is a master of initiating he's the one who always begins and he begins like a doctor and he begins probing and you know when a doctor sometimes starts probing and things like that it can be really uncomfortable and it was initially for this woman but as time went on there was a growing realization in her this isn't just an ordinary Jewish man she came to the point where she said he's actually must be a prophet because she was discovering more and more about him and she was getting intrigued about him and of course we read there about who Jesus says if you knew who I was and if you knew the water that I could give you now again the woman is still thinking and with regard to human terms but Jesus is saying to her the water that I can give is water that springs up not like a well but like flowing river that's springing up with fresh bubbling water all the time and you know that's what the gospel is the gospel is like just lovely fresh clear water and you know when you're really really really thirsty supposing it's a hot hot day and you're out in the moor supposing you were out for sheep or something like that and you're and you're absolutely parched you come to a point where all you can begin to think about is getting a drink of water and I know maybe we shouldn't but many a time over the course of my life I've drunk from streams and I know sometimes we would say you shouldn't do that because we don't know what's further up but the thing is sometimes that water is beautiful if you're really really thirsty it's just something about it's clear it's flowing and it just you say oh man I really really needed that because it gives you a sort of it refreshes you it renews you but that's what the gospel does and the gospel you know if the if you're here today without Jesus you don't realize how empty you are you see this this woman this woman had big empty written all over her life she had tried everything and the world promises so much and the world holds out all these promises to you about fulfillment in life and for a wee while it gives and I would be I would be a complete liar just now to say you will never find any happiness in the world you do we've all found happiness in the world but it never lasts it's got a kick in it it kicks you back some way and then it kind of goes what is promised it never holds out never lasts you never get true fulfillment from it always needing something else Jesus is different

[48 : 38] Jesus gives you for life and he gives you a constant satisfaction and you find a rest in Jesus you find a refreshing in Jesus you find a renewal in Jesus and that's what we do as Christians today when we come to church we're seeking that we'll be renewed and refreshed again that's what God's word does because sometimes you can come into church and you say yeah I feel pretty empty today but you know and that's what our prayer is that that the Lord will in some way just give you a wee something wee something else you know this I feel better I feel better in my soul I needed that it's a there's a kind of renewal a refreshing a restoration comes about through God's word and that's what Jesus is saying to this woman that's what you need so she's now getting curious and Jesus said to her well go and get your husband tell your husband to come here and what she said I have no husband and Jesus said you're right you've had five and the man you have just now is not your husband that would have blown the woman away and thought what and that's what she says she realizes she's got this growing awareness and she says I perceive I see you're a prophet and then Jesus he he's getting more and more direct and what does the woman do she does something if you've ever witnessed to people and I know you have what's one of the things when people go on the defensive one of the automatic things they always bring in is church division or or different different denominations why it's one of the things that people always bring into an argument particularly if they're feeling the heat I look at you Christian you're always broken up you're always dividing you but it's it's an age-old argument and that's what the woman is doing straight away she comes in I you you Jews you say

Jerusalem is a place to worship we we worship in Samaria and she brings in the old the old argument of religious division Jesus dismisses that and he's saying the worship God is looking for is in spirit and in truth and if you're ever witnessing or speaking to people and I know that you will have and you will have heard the argument people will try and sidetrack you on to religious division don't go for it keep on Christ keep focused on Jesus because that disarms people that's that breaks up their argument they can't they can't argue against Christ so it's important to keep the focus upon Jesus and that's what Jesus is teaching us here that he's he's not taking it on in any way with that he he mentions it but his focus is upon what's going to happen and what has begun to happen it is this true worship of God in spirit and in truth and then she says we believe them as she said oh well the Messiah the Christ is going to come and you know as I find this probably one of the greatest moments in the whole Bible because Jesus makes this incredible revelation a self revelation a self revelation of who he is I am the Christ now if I was to picture where Jesus would make this bold self-declaration as to who he is I would expect it to be in the temple with all the religious leaders surrounding him it would be in a great moment at some at the Passover or some time like that I am he I am the Messiah but no it's in the back of beyond in Samaria to a woman of the loosest morals going and this is where he makes this awesome declaration I am here we have the whenever we come across the I am here I am it is the moment of this self-declaration identification as a Christ the God the living God remember when the when the disciple when Jesus the soldiers came to take Jesus and he said who are you looking for Jesus of Nazareth and he said to them

I am he literally I am and when he said the words I am there was a moment when the glory attached to the I am came and remember they all fell to the ground they were just like they were propelled backwards there was a glimpse of that glory attached to the I am and he couldn't stand in his presence and as it's I often think what on earth did they think as they picked themselves up from the ground we say what on earth happened there but they all they all fell back with the with the power of that declaration just that one moment and then that glory was again concealed well Jesus this is another of these moments where Jesus is saying to the woman I am and it's very interesting it tells us that the disciples came back just just just at that moment because it tells us in verse 26 Jesus declared I who speak to you am he just then his disciples returned and they were surprised so I think it ties in with this moment when Jesus is making that revelation of himself to the woman the disciples come back they hear it too but they're so it doesn't dawn on them they were you know they were a very they were a slow bunch at getting hold of things the disciples and you know I often look back and I'm I thank the Lord that they were because you know so often we we we often struggle to to lay hold and understand sometimes upon what thing and things that are happening we find it with the likes of Philip when he asks the question of Jesus when when Jesus tells him he's going away and he says well he's almost saying to him who are you where are you going and Jesus has been trying to tell them about his mission and where he's going and he says Philip have I been such a long time with you and you still don't know me now Philip was a good man he was an evangelist he went out and he he it was Philip that got Nathaniel to come to Jesus and so on and he was used greatly by Jesus but you know I I live it and the same with Thomas Thomas was ah he just couldn't get it wouldn't believe that Jesus had risen from the dead in fact they were so slow to lay hold upon things that it wasn't until John went into the empty tomb do you remember what it says when remember when Peter and John ran when Mary Magdalene told them that

Jesus had risen from the dead and that she had seen him and they legged it up to the tomb and John it tells us when he saw he believed there was a moment where it all came together all the teaching of Christ everything that had been he had been saying because John would have been just like the others distraught at the death of Jesus it all came together that was the dawning moment yes he believed in Jesus he trusted but he hadn't got hold of the whole picture and that's often the way for ourselves as well we go on on fresh discoveries you and I don't know at all we never will in this life and sometimes as we go on we say you know as I never saw that before I'm seeing that in a new way new light and it's great that's part of the wonder of scripture the wonder of coming to church the wonder of bible studies the wonder of private devotion you say wow man that's great I know where's that been all the time but it's there and that's what the Lord does he he brings us on bit by bit to discover more and more and more and so the disciples say at this point they could they didn't grasp it they couldn't understand it why are you speaking to this woman and then they had gone gone to get food but he didn't need the food and they were saying how come you're not hungry did somebody else they were wondering did somebody else give food but Jesus said to them about that afterwards oh I mean while the disciples urged him rabbi verse 31 eat something but he said to them

I have food to eat that you know nothing about the disciples said to each other could someone abroad and food Jesus said my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish the work and you see what had happened Jesus who was weary and he was hungry and then he became involved in the saving of this woman and that this restored the weary Jesus this is what he was about and I think you and I at times in our own Christian journey we have known times where maybe you've come to church sometimes you're you're you're almost toying with not going out and you're saying you know I'm really tired today and then in the end you go out and you you get something from your for your soul and instead of getting even tired there's a change you feel invigorated you say well I feel different and in a sense we catch something of what's happening here because this is Jesus's mission he's fulfilling the work of the father this is what he's about and as this woman has been brought to him this feeds him this nourishes him this gives him this it energizes him and we find that the woman raises back we just finish this woman raises back she leaves what she came for that doesn't mean anything left the water pot and she hammers back into town and I love the way the woman does it because if she had gone in and said you know I found the Christ I found the Messiah people are saying I'm not listening to her she puts it by the way of a question is this the kind you know she comes in and she said I met a man and he's told me everything that I've done how poor there was a lot to tell could this be the Christ and she poses a question in such a way that the Samaritan says we must go out and find for ourselves and out they went they came in their droves and they met with Jesus and many believed here's this woman and she becomes she had left that morning as we said with a big empty with an empty empty life and by the end of the day she's a missionary filled with zeal for Christ leading lots of people to Jesus wonderful picture of what goes on in the church now there's so much that we could say but I'm just going to say one last thing because Jesus then goes on and he talks about towards the end here he's saying about looking at the fields that are white and ready for harvest and he says he's talking about the reapers and about the sowers and he's saying to something that it's so encouraging because it he highlights the fact that the gospel work is all about reaping and sowing and probably throughout a congregation's life there are sowing times and there are reaping times a reaping time is when probably a lot of people are coming to faith a reaping time is when there's a there's you almost feel a movement in the congregation where the Lord's people have been revived but then there are sowing times and that's why we should never say sometimes you'll say to people what's happening in your church and say ah nothing I don't believe that I don't believe there's such a thing in a gospel church that's nothing happening but I believe there are sowing times and a sowing time you and I know sowing time is is hard because you have to clear the ground you have to plow the ground you have to turn it it's a laborious work and then you have to sow it and you have to water it and all that the reaping is a lot easier and so there are sowing times sometimes the sowing and a

[61 : 36] little reaping go on together but there are times of sowing so don't ever say oh there's nothing happening remember there are sowing times and they can sometimes be quite difficult but then Jesus tells us something wonderful that at the end of the day in glory the sowers and the reapers meet together and you know some ministers have had have had reaping ministries and some ministers have had sowing ministries it's not for us to judge but there's going to come the time when the sowers and the reapers will all see that the work has all come together and they will all rejoice together in glory and that's an encouragement to us because sometimes you say you know I've been following the Lord for so long and I've witnessed and I've done this and I've done that and I haven't seen anything for it you will one day because it'll be all part of the sowing and the reaping that all meets together so we need that faith to see beyond to believe that no labor in the Lord is in vain I hope today that you come if you have never come before to

Jesus and trust him as your Lord and your Savior let us pray Lord our God we pray to bless us and we give thanks for being able to reflect for a little time on your word and to see the wonderful way the compassionate way the caring way that you worked with that woman and we know Lord that you haven't changed and that you can still be the same and you still are the same and we pray that you will indeed deal graciously with each and every one of us grant us your grace Lord we pray do us good take us to our home safely prepare us for the evening service grant us your grace in everything and take away our sin in Jesus name amen we're going to conclude with a psalm about sowing and reaping psalm 126 from the Scottish Psalter Psalm 126 when Zion's bondage God turned back as men that dreamed were we then filled with laughter was our mouth our tongue with melody among the heathens said the Lord great things for them hath wrought the Lord hath done great things for us when joy to us is brought as streams of water in the south our bondage Lord recall who sow in tears a reaping time of joy and joy they shall that man who bearing precious seed and going forth doth mourn he doubtless bringing back his sheaves rejoicing shall return so we see that that there's the mourning it's hard work the sowing but there's going to be a great time of reaping let's sing these verses words when Zion's bondage God turned back as men I dreamed where we then filled with laughter was our mouth our tongue song with melody they monged the heathens said the Lord great things for them hath wrought the Lord hath done great things for us when joy to us joy to us is brought a stream of water a stream of water in the south our bondage

Lord recall joy to the south our bondage who saw in tear a reaping time of joy and joy they shall that man who bid in precious seed in going forth doth in going forth doth mourn he doubtless bringing back his sheaves rejoicing shall return 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 amen amen oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh