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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] ...serve this morning, and especially those who are there, that's a good time to have some visitors this morning, and you're able to stay behind the end of the service. There's tea and there's coffee served on my left in the hall, just adjacent, so please stay if you're able to.

The intimation sheet received on the way in, and there are so many intimations this morning that I'm going to be selective about which ones I'm going to read, and I'm going to trust that you'll read than yourself at your own convenience. Various things happening as normal in the course of the week, including Christianity Explored and Discipleship Explored, which starts this week, so please make note of that. The Jam Club, the Children's Club, Friday afternoon, which has been off over the holiday period, starts again this Friday, so please note that also. The service is next Sunday, God willing, 11 and 6, and Dr Latham, Anthony Latham, will take the morning service, and Farrakhar will take the evening service. I'm away Monday to Friday in Edinburgh for in-service training. We do that once every three years, and then I'm in Uist over the course of next weekend, so the services are taken by these men, for which

I'm thankful. Envelopes, you can see there, the envelopes are available for those who want to take these to give to the work of the church here. It's hoped to have a WFM fundraiser at the end of this month. If you have your wedding dress and would be willing to lend it for the evening, or know someone who does, please speak to Mary or Peggy. Also, can I highlight that I've been in touch with John Lachey, or MacLeod, the Reverend John Lachey, who was with us during last year, and John Lachey spoke about the possibility of going out to Romania.

He said that they're looking for those who could help with practical things, both men and women, and the week that would be the week for help, and would be the first week of May. So, the approximate cost, £500 per person, and that includes everything. So, if you're interested in that, please just hang about at the end of the service and come up here, and I'll come back in, and you can speak also to Peggy, who's been out there. But it would be good to get a work party from the church here, a few of us, to go out to that. So, come along at the end of the service to here. And if you don't, I have a few people I'm going to be coming to see, to see if you might be interested in getting involved with that. I think that's all the intimations that I want to highlight on this sheet here. Final intimation, two more intimations, actually. One is to say, Deacon's Court meets a week on Monday. The Deacon's

Court meets a week on Monday, and that'll be at 7 o'clock here. So, that's just for noting. The final thing is just, I received an email from Reverend Donald John Morrison this morning, and he asked that I read out this intimation, that the funeral service of the late Mrs. Christina MacDonald, Lough Maddy, but with Scadabay connections, will be held in the Tarbert Church of Scotland tomorrow, that's 14th of January, at 11am, with the committal thereafter at Barb's Cemetery.

[3 : 4 0] And the other sad news that probably many of you have heard already is that the Reverend Roddy McKinnon, Conbridge, passed away yesterday afternoon in Redmore Hospital. So, let's be mindful of the family, Margaret, his wife, and John, and Rona, at this time. Let's pray for a moment.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that when we hear of the news of those who pass from time into eternity, we thank you that we have been given a clear picture in Scripture as to where those who are trusting you go. So, we thank you that although we feel a sense of grief every time somebody passes before us from this world, we thank you that when we're in Christ, we know that we grieve not as those who have no hope, but as those who have eternal hope. And Lord, we pray for your comfort for the families that have been hit by the reality of death, even in these last few days. We pray for the Macdonald family as they gather tomorrow. And we pray for the MacKinnon family. We pray for Margaret and John and Rona. And the extended family and all those whom

Roddy was alongside for so many years, many in the congregation here also. We pray for your comfort to abide with all those who feel that reality of grief at this time. And we thank you that you are the God of all comfort who calls us to come to you and to receive rest for our souls. So, hear our prayers. Lead us in worship now as we pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you on this Lord's Day morning that you've given us the desire and the opportunity to come into this place. And we thank you that we come into this place with that calling and that urge within our own souls to magnify your name and to glorify the God of salvation. And we thank you, Lord, that that's what we see and that's what we hear as we meditate upon the words that we have sang. You are the God who saves us. We see ourselves, Lord, as we look at the psalmist and as we listen to his experience as he pens it in that psalm.

We know, Lord, the reality of what it feels like to be sinking into the mire, into the pit. We know the reality, Lord, of the sin that that is our condition, the sin that weighs us down, the sin that we carry around like a burden on our back. And yet, Lord, we thank you that as we gather this morning, we come to the God who is able to take that burden of sin from us. We thank you that we come to the God who condescends to us, who reaches down from heaven to take us by the hand and to lift us from the pit of sin and to set our feet upon the rock of salvation, which is Jesus.

[7 : 18] So, Lord, we thank you that we can echo the words of the psalmist. We can join together in the prayer that the psalmist shares here. We thank you that you have put a new song in our mouth for all those who are trusting in Christ. We have that song of praise for the God who loved us enough to come from heaven to go to a cross to save us. And, Lord, we pray that you would help us on this Lord's Day to not overlook that, not to forget that, but to remember and to rejoice in the good news about Jesus. This is the first day of the week. This is the Lord's Day, the day when your people first gathered after the resurrection to remember and to be amazed and to be filled with hope in the reality that Jesus Christ, who died, rose from the dead. And we thank you that that resurrection proclaims to us the hope which we are offered as we look in faith to Jesus.

So help us, Lord, we pray this morning to look in faith to Jesus. Help us, Lord, we pray in the busyness of our lives, even in the busyness of this morning, as we see so much activity, even on the sheet before us. Help us, we pray, to stop and to be still and to know that you are God and to have that assurance that you are with us. Help us, we pray, to wait patiently as the psalmist did and as Isaiah the prophet calls us to, so that our strength would be renewed and the joy of your salvation of us. We pray for any Lord who are here this morning who cannot yet sing from the heart this psalm. We pray for any this morning who may have an interest but have not yet surrendered their lives to Christ. We haven't yet heard or responded to that call of Jesus to follow him.

And we ask, Lord, that even in this hour, as we read your word, as we sing your praise, as we draw near to you in prayer, Lord, we ask that you would be touching hearts so that there would be some, even for the first time, who would put their faith in Christ. As we pray for those who are grieving, Lord, we would continue to remember those with special needs. We think of those, Lord, at this time who are sick physically and who are struggling in their bodies. We pray for others who are sick and in their minds and who are struggling in different ways with anxiety and the darkness of our thoughts that sometimes can come over us. We never have to look far to see the reality of the world that we live in, which is so broken. But we thank you that we have the promise that Jesus is the healer and he is the redeemer of all who look in faith to him. And we ask, Lord, that those that we think of just now, those that we remember, those who are struggling, that they would look to Jesus as we carry them to Christ in our prayers. So hear our prayers, Lord. Be with each one who is gathered here today. We thank you for those visiting with us as well. We ask your blessing, especially upon them.

And the congregations that they may be connected with. And we ask, Lord, that you would be with us and that you would be with all who would desire to be here, but who are unable to be here. Those who are at home, those who may feel lonely, who may feel overlooked, we ask that you would draw especially near to them and that they would know, as we pray that we would know, that you are ministering to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. So hear our prayers. Accept us in Christ, we pray. Cleanse us from our sin as we confess of Lord. Empty us of all that fixates on ourselves and fill us with the Holy Spirit, we pray, so that we might see Jesus. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Boys and girls, dear Lord, we thank you for the clear message in the Bible that there's only one way to heaven and Jesus is the way. We thank you that we don't have to figure it out ourselves. We thank you that we don't have to make our own path to heaven because we know that we could never get there that way. But Jesus came from heaven to this earth to make it possible for us to follow him from this earth into heaven. And we know, Lord, that we can do that when we ask you to take our sins away and come into our lives and lead us and guide us. And so we do that even now, Lord. We know that we have sin in our hearts, but we pray that you would take our sin away. We thank you that that's why you went to the cross, to take our sin away. And we pray that you would help us to trust you and to follow you. So hear our prayers and take away our sin and guide us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[13 : 08] And we can turn in our Bibles now to Mark chapter 1. Mark chapter 1. And we'll read from verse 14 of the chapter.

This is God's word. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men.

At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little further, he saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay, he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

[14 : 26] Just then a man in their synagogue, who was possessed by an evil spirit, cried out, What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Be quiet, said Jesus sternly. Come out of him. The evil spirit shook the man violently, and came out of him with a shriek.

The people were so amazed that they asked each other, What is this, a new teaching? And with authority, he even gives orders to evil spirits, and they obey him.

News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.

Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand, and helped her up.

[15 : 29] The fever left her, and she began to wait on her. That evening, after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.

The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak, because they knew who he was.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him.

And when they found him, they exclaimed, Everyone is looking for you. Jesus replied, Let us go somewhere else, to the nearby villages, so that I can preach there also.

That is why I have come. So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues, and driving out demons. Amen.

[16 : 28] And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Amen. Amen. If you could turn with me, please, to Mark chapter 1.

Let us pray as we go there. Lord, we thank you for your word, and we pray for your help now as we open the pages of Scripture.

We pray that you would open our hearts, Holy Spirit, that we would hear, as we've sung in the psalm, we pray, that we would have ears to hear.

That we would hear the call of Christ upon our lives. So help us, Lord, we ask as we come to your word. And we pray that same help for others as they gather around your word.

We pray for the children in the different rooms, that you would open their hearts, that they would trust you in the days of their youth. We pray for the other congregations around this community, the Church of Scotland and the Free Presbyterian and the Episcopal Gathering in Tarbert, that you would be at work, Lord, in each of these places.

[17 : 37] And across the islands and across the nations and across the nations, wherever Christ crucified is preached. We ask, Lord, that you would add your blessing and build your church.

We pray especially for Stuart, King, this morning, as he opens your word and scalp me. We pray that he would know the help of the Holy Spirit and that you would speak through him and be glorified through the message that he brings.

As we pray, Lord, that you would be glorified through the message that we turn to just now. And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him.

When he had gone a little further, he saw James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay, he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

[18 : 56] Today, I'd like us to think about what it means and what it looks like to follow Jesus.

That's what Jesus called Simon, whom we know to be Peter. His name was changed by Jesus as he becomes a disciple. But that's what Jesus called Simon and Andrew and James and John to do.

They didn't simply have an encounter with Christ, which was supernatural and thrilling, and then they go on with life as if nothing had ever happened.

But Jesus called them to follow him. The whole course of their lives was changed. And Jesus calls us, if we have ears to hear him today, he calls us to follow him.

That's the point that we finished on last week, and I want to just think it through a little today. Who is Jesus? Well, that's where we were last week. He is the Christ.

[20 : 05] He is the promised one of God. He is the Savior. He is the singular Son of God.

He's a man, yes, but he is the God-man. Unique. What did he come to do? Well, he came to be our substitute.

He came to stand in our place. He came to take our sins away from us and to give his perfect righteousness to us. That's why he came.

And what does he call us to do? He calls us to follow him. So what did it look like for Simon, Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John to follow Jesus?

And what does it look like for you and I to follow Jesus? We were talking to the children this morning about crossing the road safely.

[21 : 10] When I was thinking about that, it took me back to my own school days. I don't know if they still say this to the children, but when we were getting taught how to cross the road safely, we were always told that before you cross, you need to stop, and then you look, and then you listen.

If it's safe, then you cross over. And that's the points I want to take today. Three simple points. Those who want to cross from time into eternity safely, those who want to be assured that when they die, they're going to go to heaven and not to hell, need to be those who stop and look and listen.

So that's the three points. We'll spend more time on the first point. So the first point is simply stop. What did Andrew and James and John and Simon have to stop doing?

Well, if you've got your Bibles in front of you, which is always more helpful than looking at my face, you'll see that when Jesus called Simon and Andrew and James and John, they had to stop fishing.

At the point that we read here, we see that Jesus was passing by. He's not standing still. He's passing by.

[22 : 48] And they were fishing. And it says in verse 16 there, or we get the impression of verse 16 there, of Simon and Andrew, and they're casting their net out.

They're midcast. They're at the most busy point in their working day. And then we have James and John, verse 19, and they're preparing the nets for fishing.

They're committed to the family business. There's the hired hands. Zebedee is the father. We can imagine he is likely the boss man. And these two sons were working for him.

Now, when people are working, certainly in my experience, if I call in to see somebody and I can see they're very, very busy and working, I tend to step back.

If somebody's busy and they're working and they're very industrious, we tend to leave them alone. We tend to say, well, I can see you're busy.

[23 : 52] And so what I'll do is I'll come back later. And they'll say, that's fine, yes. And they'll hardly lift their head because they're busy. Now, Jesus, when he's passing here, he can see exactly how busy they are.

But still he says to them, come, follow me. He can see how disruptive this is going to be to the course of their lives.

Never mind their working day. But still he says, come, follow me. And we get that sense of motion.

This is a moment in time. Jesus is not standing, static, waiting for people to come in his direction as he is stationary.

Jesus is passing by. He's verse 16. We see him. He's walking along. He's walking along purposefully. And all of a sudden, for Simon and Andrew and James and John, there's this opportunity.

[25 : 02] There's this call that comes directly to them. And they have to respond to it. And if they were going to heed the call of Jesus, then they were going to have to stop doing what they were doing in order to start following Jesus.

And very often, that's how it is in our own experience. When we hear the call of Christ upon our lives, when the Spirit of God begins to strive with us and our ears are opened and our eyes focus on Christ and he calls us to come close to him and follow him, there can be things that we need to stop in order to start following Jesus.

There can be sinful patterns of life that we're setting. It has to stop if we're going to start following Jesus. He calls us to repent, turn away from sin.

There can be sinful habits that just grip us. We have to stop if we're going to start following Jesus.

There can be addictions. And we have to stop doing these things with God's help in order to start following Jesus.

[26 : 45] There can be a spirit of pride deep within us. When we quietly think that we are superior to other people, that has to stop if we're going to start following Jesus.

There can be a legalistic, religious spirit of Pharisee-ism and legalism in us where we think we can save ourselves. And that needs to stop if we're going to start following Jesus.

All that needs to stop before we can enter into a relationship with Jesus. Jesus says, repent and believe. Turn away from your sin. Don't take it with you.

Jesus does not bless us in our sin. He calls us away from it. He calls us to follow him. Now, going back to the text here, you might say, well, what's wrong with fishing?

Simon, Andrew, James, John, they're fishing. They were fishermen. That was their family business. That was where their skill was. What was wrong with fishing? And the answer is nothing.

[27 : 56] John Struthers breathes a sigh of relief as do a few others in the congregation. Nothing's wrong with fishing. But the thing is, Jesus had a different plan for their lives.

Jesus intended to use these men in gospel fishing. But if that was to happen, they were going to have to put their necks down in order to start following Christ.

And still that can be true. And this is a word for those who are Christians as well as those who are not. When Jesus calls us to be with them, and he does that every day, when Jesus calls us to serve him in particular ways, sometimes there can be good things, not sinful things, good things, even like fishing, that we have to stop giving ourselves so fully to if we are going to respond seriously to the call that Christ places upon us to follow him closely and to serve him seriously.

And it could be our work which overwhelms us at times. And as Jesus calls us to come to him, there can be aspects of our work that we have to stop and set aside in order to be with Jesus.

Sometimes when God calls an individual to a full-time ministry, there can be valid work and leisure pursuits that we have to set aside to follow him.

- [29 : 56] When Christ calls us to follow him, it can even be sometimes that our whole family dynamic has to change. in order to respond.

Family is a good thing. God has ordained it. He has gifted us. He has put us within families. But sometimes when Jesus calls us to follow him closely, there has to be a whole reordering of the home.

One of the things that I hadn't probably thought about until this week, was the conversation that must have happened in Simon Peter's home when Jesus called him to follow.

Simon Peter was a married man. We know he was a married man because we read that his mother-in-law was sick. And yet Jesus said, Simon Peter, I want you to follow me.

And that took him away from home for probably the best part of two years. But in order to respond to the call of Jesus, that's what had to happen.

- [31 : 15] There are things sometimes, even good things that have to stop in order for us to start following Jesus or to restart following Jesus if we've drifted.

Now, if any other person was to come into your life and ask you to do this, to stop all these things in order to follow them, he'd be quite justified in saying, you're out of your mind.

There's no way I'm setting all these things aside to follow you. So why should we do all this for Christ if he's calling us today? Well, the reason is, verse 1, because he is the Christ.

Because he is God the Son. And his plan for your life and mine is far better than any plan we can formulate.

So if he calls us to stop anything in order to start following him or start serving him in a new way, we would be wise to listen.

- [32 : 33] The first point there is stop. They stop fishing. Things about their family life, there's things about their leisure time, there's perhaps sinful practices and sinful habits and sinful lifestyles that had to stop in order for them to start following Jesus.

Second point is Luke. Mark doesn't tell us this in his gospel because he's in so much of a rush to get through it, but John tells us in his gospel that when John the Baptist saw Jesus, when Jesus walks onto the scene in terms of ministry, John the Baptist turned to those who were gathered around him and said, behold, look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And in order to follow Jesus, we need to look to him. We need to look to him. him. But we have to be careful how we look.

Now as we go through these verses here, there's actually quite a number of people, crowds of people, who are looking to and looking for Jesus.

But the vast majority of those who are looking to and looking for Jesus in this passage were not saved. they were not followers of Christ.

- [34 : 15] So there's three things that we can see with this point. We see the demons and they looked at Jesus for a fight. And we see, secondly, the crowds and they looked at Jesus for an entertainment fix.

And thirdly, we see just a few disciples. And they're looking at Jesus in faith. So let's look at these three elements within this.

First of all, we see the demons here and they're looking at Jesus for a fight. Verse 21. They went to Capernaum and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Be quiet, said Jesus sternly. Come out of him.

[35 : 28] The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. God is a peculiar thing in Mark's gospel, that the first person to see Jesus clearly for who he was and is, and the first person who understood why Jesus came and the spiritual warfare into which Jesus was entering was a demon-possessed man, a man with an evil spirit.

He saw Jesus clearly, he looked to him and he hated him instantly and he resisted him and he rebelled against him, he fought him and we see here that he lost and the demon was cast out of the man.

It's a sobering thing to think that James in that wee book reminds us that the demons are not unbelievers.

They believe, says James, the demons and they shudder and we hear these shudderings and these rebellions in this passage here.

And still today there are many who share that demonic outlook when they look to Jesus.

[37 : 18] You might read this and think this is part of an age that was far less advanced than us. Nothing has changed in terms of the spiritual warfare that we are in.

We just don't recognise it as readily as so many do. Many today share that demonic outlook when they see Jesus.

And if you want some evidence of that, this is what you can do. Post something. I'm not suggesting you actually do this, but if you want evidence of a demonic opposition to Christ, post something about the deity, the godship, the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, and he's the son of God, and he's the only way to heaven, he's the only saviour, post something about that on Facebook.

Post something on the Isle of Harris or the Isle of Lewis page about Jesus being the son of God, the saviour, the only one who can save us, and within minutes, you'll read comments that are so full of hatred for and rebellion against Christ.

Within minutes, you'll see that so many people look at Jesus in order to fight against him. And there may be some here this morning and there's a fight going on in your life, and you see Jesus, and you kind of want to follow him, you're drawn to him, but you're aware within yourself there's an opposition, there's a fight for your soul, Spurgeon wrote a wee book about that, the fight for the soul.

[39 : 22] You know, Mark enables us to see where that fight, where that opposition, even within us, comes from. See, to fight Jesus is a fight that cannot be won.

and those who spend time, this life, fighting Jesus, will at the end of time, be cast out by Jesus, into that place of outer darkness.

Those who do not repent, but who determine that they will persevere in rebellion against Christ, will go eternally to be with the devil.

and there's demons in hell. That's a hard truth. That's the truth. And Jesus tells us it in love.

The demons looked to Jesus for a fight. The crowds looked to Jesus for a fix. An entertainment fix.

[40 : 38] Today, entertainment is a big business. Netflix, Amazon, gaming, sport, music, and there are so many different streams to the entertainment industry.

It's big, big business. Now, in Mark chapter 1, the crowds weren't looking at their TV screens because they didn't have TV screens. They were looking for entertainment and they were looking to Jesus because he was the next big thing as far as those who dealt with entertainment were concerned.

He was the new attraction at this moment in time for the crowds. He could cast out demons with such drama and such power and he could heal so many that were coming to him.

Verse 29, as soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever and they told Jesus about her.

So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on her. She wasn't just a wee bit better but she was fully restored.

[41 : 55] Just through a touch of Christ, she was healed. And as that story got out, the crowds were amazed.

So they became fans and they chased Jesus looking for the next miracle. Verse 32, that evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon possessed.

The whole crowd gathered at his door. The whole town gathered at the door and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

We'll come back to that in a period later on and not today. But the point to note here is that this was huge. This was not something that was happening that one or two people heard about.

The whole place was absolutely transfixed on this man Jesus. And the crowds just grew and they grew.

[43 : 00] Verse 35, very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed. Here's a sort of sidebar here.

Why did Jesus pray at this point? I think he prayed because the devil was tempting him. The devil had tempted him in the wilderness before and again Jesus goes to this quiet place because likely there was temptation of a whole community.

It's gathering around you and shouting your praises. There's temptation there. To have a ministry of simply healing the sick and casting out demons and everybody saying how wonderful you are.

There's temptation in that but Jesus knew he's heading to a cross. He's heading on a route that would make him despised and rejected. And perhaps the devil was saying just hang about in Capernaum.

Folks love you here. You don't need to move on. So Jesus prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him.

[44 : 19] And when they found him they explained everyone is looking for you. Jesus replied let us go somewhere else. And you can imagine the disciples saying pardon look at the crowds.

people are at your door. Everyone loves you. Everybody's listening to you. Everybody's looking to you. You're not going anywhere else.

But Jesus could see the crowds were just looking to be entertained. The crowds were just looking for a touch from Christ. maybe a wee bit of healing.

A wee bit of help when they were going through a hard time. And Jesus had compassion on the crowds. And he healed many. But Jesus' interest was not so much on the healing of the body.

He hadn't come to be some super doctor. He hadn't come to be a paparazzi interested figure who has a stream of photographers running after him.

[45 : 39] So when he saw that the crowds were just looking for an entertainment fix, he moved on. And still some look to Jesus for these reasons.

Just to be entertained. these Bible stories are gripping. John's Gospel, for example, is one of the greatest pieces of writing ever penned in any genre.

Some people find it very entertaining to just read it. Some people are sermon tasters. They have their favourite preachers. They follow them wherever they go online and download everything they ever do.

but it's for entertainment's purpose. Some people love to meet in fellowships and have their minds stretched through theological acrobatics.

Just to stretch the grey matter but they're not interested in following Jesus. Some people love a good argument. Or somebody coming to me in the gym one day and saying one of my favourite hobbies is arguing with Christians.

[46 : 48] Christians have no interest in following Christ. Some people come just for a personal blessing, a touch of healing when we feel sick and Jesus so often will give it because he's compassionate.

But then when the sickness goes, they're gone. They're gone. So many of the crowds, they look to Jesus for that entertainment fix.

The demons looked to Jesus for a fight. The disciples looked to Jesus in faith. And we haven't heard this from them yet.

But we know that the disciples looked in faith to Jesus. When the crowds dispersed, everyone had gone home.

When the buzz of all these occasions had passed, the disciples were still there with Jesus. When fashion had moved on, the disciples were still looking to Christ.

[48 : 16] Isaiah 45 22, look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.

That's how the disciples were looking to Jesus. They were looking in faith to Jesus, the Son of God. It was mustard seed faith, albeit.

They didn't have a clear understanding of who he was yet. They had no real grasp of what he'd come to do yet. That would come. But even at this stage, I think they were looking with faith to Jesus, not with fight.

They didn't want to rebel against him. They weren't looking for an entertainment fix from him, but they had the beginnings of faith in him.

My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour Divine. That's the hymn of a disciple.

[49 : 34] Can you sing that hymn this morning? Do you go from here? My faith looks up to thee, not to anyone else, not to any other place, but to the Lamb of Calvary.

Can you see this morning that Jesus is the Messiah, that he is the Christ, that he is the Son of God, that he is the only one, who can save you.

Stop, look, just a final word, listen. A disciple is one who listens to Jesus.

Verse 37, the disciples are saying to Jesus, everyone is looking for you. Jesus replied, let us go somewhere else, the nearby villages, so I can preach there also.

That's why I have come. So he travelled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. If you and I were gifted a million pounds by someone but no one told us, we'd never receive it or we'd never receive the benefit of it.

[51 : 03] If someone in this congregation this morning had been researching and development and they found a cure to cancer but they never told anyone, then still millions would die without ever being able to get access to this cure.

Now Jesus came to this world and we're just finishing with this, Jesus came to this world to be our substitute to stand in our place. He came to take our sin from us, he came to give his righteousness to us, he went to the cross, he came to be our saviour, he came not just to heal our bodies but to heal our hearts, he came not just to deal with a few demons in Capernaum but to deal with the devil, the enemy of our soul, once and for all.

And so as he made his way to Calvary, his primary concern over these three years of ministry was to tell people about the salvation that he had come to procure God's that's why he preached.

That's why he made it a priority and that's what he preached. He was the good news and he preached the good news about himself. And those who follow Jesus, those who are saved, believed, are those who have listened and believed.

Jesus said in John 10, my sheep listen to my voice, I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.

[52 : 59] what a promise to those who hear the voice of Jesus and follow him.

Can you hear his voice today? And if he's calling you, will you stop?

Whatever you're doing, whatever may be distracting you, whatever may be getting in the way of coming to Jesus, will you stop it? Will you look in faith to him, the Messiah, the Son of God?

And will you listen and believe in him? and his gospel. I pray that we will, let's pray.

Lord God, we pray that just as Simon and Andrew and James and John heard the voice of Jesus as he was passing by, we pray that in the same way as we come together in your name that Jesus would be passing by and calling many to follow him.

[54 : 43] And for those, Lord, who have never followed, we pray that they would hear and that they would look and listen and come to Jesus. for those of us, Lord, who have been following for a long time, we confess that still there are things that we get entangled with, that are sins, that is indiscipline, that is all kinds of things, some things which are wrong and some things which are good and right, and yet they become God's things rather than good things to us and get in the way of our walk with you and our service of you.

So we know, Lord, that you keep on calling us to come and to follow more closely. So we ask, Holy Spirit, that you would be searching us and knowing us and showing us if there is anything that we need to stop.

To help us, we pray to hear, help us, we pray to listen, help us, we pray, to look in faith to Christ. So we pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. 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, both now and forever more. Amen.