

## 28.7.24 am

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Date: 28 July 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning everyone. A warm welcome to the service this morning. All those who are here and those who are watching online as well. It's good to have quite a number of visitors with us this morning and you're especially welcome if you're able to stay behind at the end of the service. It would be good to see you and get the chance to enjoy fellowship together. It's good to have some as well. Some we've never met before and you're very welcome. Some who have been away for a while and are back amongst us and so it's good to have everyone coming together to to worship God this morning. Tea and coffee after the service if you're able to stay behind please do so. I'll just take a moment to go through the intimations over the school holidays. There's creche so it's great to have the wee ones here and to hear them. You're very welcome to stay in but if you want to take them out to the creche, the creche is just behind me there so you're very welcome to do that also. The children, the primary school children also, there's a Sunday school for the primary school children during the holidays so they go out after the second singing.

Evening service is at six. It was going to be taken by Dan Marig. I know some of you were expecting that. Dan's not been well so I'm very thankful for Angus M who has agreed to take the service at very short notice and there'll be an English fellowship at half past seven.

So please be encouraged to stay for that. Ladies fellowship Monday night, usual time and place, Little Fishers on Tuesday, 10 till 12 Road to Recovery Tuesday evening.

Church key, we can move on. Prayer meeting will be held in person and on Zoom this Wednesday at past seven. Services next Sunday will be taken by myself, God willing. Cleaning rota, you've got the details there and this is one I want to just underline for you. The Wild West Holiday Club, 57th of August. Be praying for that in advance. Be encouraging young ones to come along to that, please. And if you're able to help at that, please do so. Stuart and Joyce have been organising the logistics of this over the last couple of weeks with Maddie being away at this time. And so they have been doing a great job in that. I understand we're still quite short on volunteers. It's not just about standing at the front and leading a group or whatever. I know not everybody wants to do that.

There's about a thousand jobs and people from age eight to age 88 will be very well equipped to do these jobs. So if you're able to help at all, please speak to Stuart or Joyce after the service today. And these are all the notices. Let's begin this time of worship now. Let's sing to God's praise.

[ 2 : 5 7 ] We sing from Mission Praise number 51. The words will be on the screen in just a moment. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart.

Be thou my wisdom, O Lord of my heart.

Thou my true heart. I ever with thee, thou with me, Lord. Thou my great Father, I my true Son.

Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee, Lord. Be thou my path, O shield sword for the fight.

Be thou my dignity, thou my delight. Thou my soul, thou my soul, sheltered. Thou my high tower.



[ 9 : 28 ] Help us to remember and to rejoice in the hope that we have in Christ. That we have the assurance of sins forgiven if we have come to him in repentance and in faith.

And so, Lord, even now we come and we confess our sin. The things that we are conscious of that we have said and left unsaid. The things that we have done. The things that we have failed to do.

The thoughts that flood through our minds. The shadows within our own hearts. We confess each thing, Lord, as you bring it to our memories.

And we ask that you would cleanse us in the blood of Christ and give us the joy of knowing that we are forgiven, that we are saved. And give us that joyful perspective as well.

That we have eternal life, that we can enjoy and use wisely the days that you give us in this world. Knowing all the while that there is a place prepared for all who are in Christ.

[ 10 : 33 ] Christ. We ask, Lord, for any this morning who are not yet in Christ. We pray for any who may be part of the crowd this morning, who have an interest in Jesus, who may listen, who may come willingly or who may come under some pressure.

We ask, Lord, that you would open their eyes to see Jesus, that you would unblock their ears to hear the voice of Jesus saying, come unto me and rest. We pray that you would stir, that you would awaken hearts that are cluttered, that are crowded, that may be hardened against the gospel.

And, Lord, that you would work to bring those who are still outside of Christ into that saving relationship with Jesus. And for any who may be drifting, we ask, Lord, that you would draw them back, that they and we would have a close walk with God.

Lord, we pray for our world, Lord, we see a world that you have created that in so many places and in so many ways is far from you.

And even as we see Paris on the news day by day, as we see sporting events, we see also the willingness to blaspheme the name of Jesus.

[ 11 : 55 ] We see and we feel that persecution that goes on as Jesus has resisted. And we ask, Lord, that you would have mercy upon us and upon every nation that gathers together against you.

We thank you that the psalmist reminds us in Psalm 2 that though all the nations conspire against the Lord's anointed, that still you're the God who prevails, you're the God who is on the throne.

And so we pray that you would help each one of us to see that, that we may kiss the sun, that we may bow before Jesus, that nations all may know the blessing of the Lord that comes to all those who bow before him.

We pray for our own nation and we ask that you would be working in the power of the Holy Spirit. And as we see new government, we pray for those that you are allowed to be in authority over us, that they would look to you in humility, that you would cause them to pray for the wisdom that we have sang of in the hymn that we began with.

We pray for those who struggle today, for those who are sick, for those who are grieving, for those who battle with addictions. Week by week we pray, and week by week, Lord, we see that need, and we ask, Lord, that you would meet it.

[ 13 : 14 ] But above all, Lord, we pray for not only the bodies, but for the souls of all the people that we know and love, that they and we would look to Jesus, and know the salvation that he alone can give.

So hear our prayers, take away our sin, lead us and guide us in worship, we pray, for we pray these things in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Good to see you all. How are you all today?

Some visitors with us today. And some who are back, who are away for a while. How are you guys? Good, good. Is it good to be back home in Harris? Good stuff.

Having a good summer holidays? Yeah? Yeah? Ready for the holiday club? Good stuff. I don't have anything to show you today.

[ 14 : 25 ] But I wanted to ask you a question. And it's quite a deep question. But you guys are good at giving a good, deep, thoughtful answer.

So here's the question for this morning. What do you think heaven's going to be like? It's a big question, isn't it?

It's a big question. Do you ever think about heaven? Yeah? Do you think? Do you think about heaven? Yeah? Tell me some of the things that you think heaven will be like.

It's one thing I want to tell you about heaven. But there's lots of things we can think about. And it's good for us to think about heaven. So what do you think heaven's going to be like? Michael, you were going to start, right? Yeah.

There'll be no sadness. It's good news, isn't it? Do you ever feel sad? Sometimes we can feel a bit sad. Sometimes we can have people that we love who get sick.

[ 15 : 34 ] And they're having a hard time. And we can be sad for them. And sometimes we can be sad for ourselves when things happen. Heaven is a place. And there will be no sadness.

Ever. How good does that sound? What else about heaven? What do you think about heaven?

What else? Give me just a few things. Before we get to the thing I want to tell you about. Goodness me.

I've only been away two weeks. They've all gone quiet. It'll be perfect. Be no sin in heaven, will there? We struggle with all kinds of sins, don't we?

And this world, it makes us sad sometimes because of what sin has done to the world. Heaven is a place where there's no sin. And so no sin and no sadness.

[ 16 : 34 ] These things are linked. Heaven is a place where there's no sleeping. We won't need sleep. Is that good news?

It'll be good that we're not tired. We won't need to be sleeping until two o'clock in the afternoon.

We won't need to be sleeping. We won't need catnaps in church. Heaven is a place where we won't need to have lights.

Because where will the light come from? No? God. The sun is going to be so dim, it'll be like nothing.

Because the light that comes from Jesus will be so bright. What else? Will there be death in heaven?

[ 17 : 36 ] No. No death. We won't need to have funerals. We won't be sad when those that we love get taken away from us.

There'll be no death in heaven. It'll be a place of just never-ending, full, perfect, amazing life. And here's one picture that we're given into heaven.

There was a disciple called John. A disciple of Jesus called John. And probably when he was in his 90s, he was... Because he wouldn't stop talking about Jesus all the time.

He was sent off to an island on his own called Patmos. And so when he was on this island, God, he gave him a picture.

He opened his eyes. It's like he took him... It's almost like he took him to the window of heaven and showed him some things about heaven. And so John wrote a book called Revelation.

[ 18 : 39 ] And he tells us some of the things about heaven. And this is what he says in Revelation 21 and verse 1. He says, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

And the sea was no more. The sea was no more.

So in heaven, no sea? What do you think about that? Not sure about that, are you?

I actually don't like living anywhere that's far away from the sea. Places like Abbeymore are nice places, but I always want to get back to some place that I can see the sea, for some reason.

So when I read that about the sea was no more, there was no sea, I think, I'm not sure about that. But there's another verse, Revelation chapter 4, verse 6.

[ 19 : 48 ] Earlier on, when John was seeing a picture of heaven, he says this, Before the throne, there was, as it were, a sea of glass, like crystal.

So it sounds like in heaven, maybe there will be a sea. Not very sure, really, what heaven is going to look like with our eyes.

But seeing the Bible times, when they were speaking about the sea, when they thought about the sea, it made them a bit scared. Because sometimes the sea, have you ever been on the sea when it just gets all stormy?

You're on the boat, and it starts to get stormy, and you're going up, and you're going down, and your fish and chips that you had, had it starting to not taste so good, as it comes back up into your throat.

Have you ever been on the sea like that? I have. And they, they would sometimes, in the Bible times, they would think about the sea as being a bit scary. Because it could just change in a second, and it would be really dangerous.

[ 20 : 52 ] And the other thing about the sea, is the sea separates us, from different places. You know, I had a hard job.

Have any of you guys been on holidays this year? Don't watch my time here, I'm going on too long. Were you away on holiday anywhere this year? Anyone being off Harris? Yeah? And did you get back no problem?

Well, I didn't get back no problem. I never get back no problem. I think it's the fourth or the fifth year in a row, I was on Wednesday night, I was just getting my bags packed, and ready to go, and I got a text, at two minutes to eight, from Kyle Mack, office closed at eight o'clock, saying, your ferry that you were booked on, for Thursday night, at ten o'clock, has been cancelled.

I thought, oh, that's not good news. So I phoned up, the office that the number came from, it wasn't Harris, because Harris worked very hard, to get us over, they were excellent.

It was a different office. Phoned up, and when I phoned up, at eight o'clock, it said, all the lines are closed, the office is closed, phoned back in the morning.

[ 22 : 09 ] Phoned back in the morning, ferries cancelled, all the other ferries, are fully booked. So I was thinking, how on earth, can I get back to Harris?

And this is Thursday night, and I was thinking, I'm going to have to queue, in a standby queue, for four hours on Friday. And I've only got one hour, to write a sermon, I've only got one day, to write a sermon, and the thing is, the less time you have, to prepare a sermon, this is a scary thing, for you guys, the longer the sermon, ends up being.

So I thought, if I don't get in that study, there's going to be, a huge problem. And I'm here, and Harris is there, and what do I do? Phoned Logan Air, too many bags, to get on Logan Air.

Not enough money, in my wallet. So the thing with the C, is, although the C, is a, an amazing thing, it separates us.

A wee bit of water, and we can't get, to the place, that we want to go. And we can't get, to the people, that we love. And so, when the Bible says, that one of the things, about heaven, that's going to be, so good, is that there's, there's no C, I think, what John, is trying to tell us, is that, there's no separation.

[ 23 : 32 ] Because in heaven, we're going to be together, with Jesus. And we're going to be together, with everyone, who trusts, in Jesus. And how amazing, will that be?

Because, even as I look at you, boys and girls, I can think of people, that you've loved, and they're no longer, in this world. They've gone, from this world, but everyone, who trusts in Jesus, is in heaven.

And when, we come to the end, of our days here, if we're trusting in Jesus, we'll be in heaven, and we will never, again, be separated.

There'll be no C, that separates us, from Jesus, and the people, who are trusting in Jesus. So, when you're looking, out at the C, think about heaven.

And think about, all the amazing things, that we're told, about heaven. And think about, how in heaven, we will be with Jesus, forever. And with all, who are trusting, in Jesus, forever.

[ 24 : 46 ] How do we get to heaven? Through Jesus, believing in him. So let's pray, and ask, God, to, save us, and to keep us, and to, save us a place, in heaven.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word, we thank you for these pictures, that you gave to John, in Revelation. We thank you for all, these pictures, that comfort our hearts, as we think about, those who have gone, on ahead of us, from this world.

And we thank you, that if we trust in Jesus, we are told, that a place is prepared, for us in heaven. We know, Lord, that, if we don't trust in Jesus, there's a different place, where there's no, no joy, and no life, and nothing, that's good, a place called hell, but we thank you, that Jesus came, to save us, from hell, that Jesus came, to open up, the way to heaven, and we pray, that you would help, each one of us, whether we are very young, or whether we're very old, to trust in Jesus, and to know, that we have a place, that's prepared, for us in heaven, and we ask, all these things, in Jesus name, and for his sake, Amen.

We're going to sing now, we're going to sing, the hymn on the screen, Bless the Lord, O my soul. Amen. O my soul, Worship this holy name, Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name, The sun comes up, It's a new day dawning, It's time to sing, Your song again, Whatever may pass, And whatever lies before me,

Let me be singing, When the evening comes, Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, Worship his holy name, Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name, You're rich in love, And you're slow to anger, Your name is great, And your heart is kind, For all your goodness, I will keep on singing, I will keep on singing, Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find, Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, O my soul, Worship this holy name,

[ 28 : 02 ] Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name, And on that day, When my strength is paid, The end draws near, And my time has come, Still my soul, Will sing your praise unending, Ten thousand years, And forever more, And forever more, Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, Worship this holy name, Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship your holy name, I'll worship your holy name, I'll worship your holy name,

Amen. Okay boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school, and as they go, remember to pray for them.

If we could turn down, our Bibles please, to Matthew chapter 9, Matthew chapter 9, words are on the screen as well, This is God's word.

And getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over, and came to his own city, and behold some people, brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed, and when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, take heart my son, your sins are forgiven, and behold some of the scribes, said to themselves, this man is blaspheming.

But Jesus, knowing their hearts, their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise and walk?

[ 30 : 32 ] But that you may know, that the Son of Man, has authority on earth, to forgive sins. He then said to the paralytic, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home. And he rose, and went home.

When the crowd saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men. As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew, sitting at the tax booth.

And he said to him, Follow me. And he rose, and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table, in the house, behold, many tax collectors, and sinners came, and were reclining with Jesus, and his disciples.

And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, Why does your teacher eat with the tax collectors, and sinners? But when he heard it, he said, Those who are well, have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners. Then the disciples of John, came to him, saying, Why do we, and the Pharisees, fast, but your disciples do not fast?

[ 31 : 37 ] And Jesus said to them, Can the wedding guests mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth, on an old garment, for the patch tears away, from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Neither is new wine, put into old wineskins.

If it is, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved. While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in, and knelt before him, saying, My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.

And Jesus rose, and followed him, with his disciples. And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood, for twelve years, came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment.

For she said to herself, If I only touch his garment, I will be made well. Jesus turned, and seeing her, said, Take heart, daughter. Your faith has made you well.

[ 32 : 43 ] And instantly, the woman was made well. And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd making a commotion, he said, Go away, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.

And he laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the report of this went through all that district.

And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, Have mercy on us, son of David. When he entered the house, the blind men came to him.

And Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said to him, Yes, Lord. Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it done to you. And their eyes were opened.

And Jesus sternly warned them, See that no one knows about it. But they went away, and spread his fame through all that district. And as they were going away, behold, a demon-possessed man, who was mute, was brought to him.

[ 33 : 47 ] And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, Never was anything like this seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casts out demons, by the prince of demons.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again to God's praise. Psalm 40, and verses 1 and 2 of the Psalm.

We sing in Gaelic, and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic. I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice, and cried to hear. He took me from a fearful pit, and from the mighty clay, and on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

These two verses of Psalm 40, we sing to God's praise in Gaelic. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.

[ 35 : 54 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

To measure the Lord again.

If you could turn back to the passage that we read in Matthew chapter 9, please. As we go there, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you again for your word that we have sung and we have read. And now we come to meditate upon. We ask, Lord, that you would help us. That you would send the Holy Spirit to be our teacher.

[ 38 : 12 ] To work in us and around us in this place. We ask, Lord, that you would minister to us in your grace. And what we pray for ourselves here. We pray for the congregations connected to us.

We thank you for the visitors with us today. We ask, Lord, that you would bless the places that they've come from. We think of our own folks as well who have gone different places on holiday.

And wherever they are, we pray for your blessing upon the word as it's opened. And for the congregations around us, different denominations. Whatever the gospel of Jesus is preached, we ask, Lord, that you would be working to build your kingdom.

To bless your people. So hear our prayers. We pray for the children as well. Those who are through a Sunday school. Those who are in creche. Those who may be in here also.

We ask, Lord, that you would open their hearts. That from their very earliest years, they would know that Jesus loves them. And Jesus calls them to come to him.

[ 39 : 15 ] So hear our prayers and help us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. For the first week of our holiday this year, as we have done in past years, we went to a place in the Lake District called Keswick.

There's a Christian convention that goes on there. A number of you also were there. I think it's been going on for the last 149 years. And there's about 15,000 people, I think, that would flood into this small town called Keswick.

And I suppose if you've never been there and never experienced the thing, it's a bit like a supersized faith mission, tent mission, that lasts for three weeks. And it's always an enjoyable week for us when we go through to Keswick.



But what's become clear to me over the years, as I've spoken with the people who live in Keswick, is that the majority of them, they know about this Christian convention, but very few know who Christ is.

Keswick apparently is a place where very few people actually go to church. And so for three weeks of the year, the locals, they see these crowds, vast crowds, that flood into their town and take all their parking spaces.

[ 40 : 53 ] They notice all this activity around Jesus, but they aren't really sure who Jesus is. And that's the way things were in Matthew chapter 9.

Again, as we, if you've got the passage open in front of you, you'll find that helpful. I'm going to just step through the verses. As we come to Matthew chapter 9, we see once more that there are crowds that are following Jesus.

There are amazing things that are happening. Whatever Jesus is, it's very clear to the crowds that this is a man who has immense authority.

But the crowds who are made up, as we'll see, of the religious and the non-religious, they haven't yet figured out who Jesus is.

They don't know what he is doing among them. And they're not quite sure how to respond to him. They're asking this question, who is Jesus?

[ 42 : 03 ] And maybe there are some here today who are asking the same question. Who is Jesus?

What is it that he was doing? What is he still doing today through the word and the power of the Holy Spirit? And how should we respond to him?

If we have these kind of questions, Matthew, he helps us with the answers as we step through these verses. Three points today, very simply. Not sure I'll get through them all, but we'll see.

Who is Jesus? That's the first point, the first question. The second question to come to us is what did Jesus come to do?

And the third question is how should we respond to him? So first of all, who is Jesus? It's the most crucial question we could ever be asked and it's the most important question we will ever determine to answer.

[ 43 : 08 ] We can have questions about all manner of things that have no great consequence, but this question will shape the whole way that we live our lives. This question will determine where we spend eternity, whether we get into the heaven that we've seen a picture of even today, or whether we are called to depart from that place and go to hell.

It all hinges on this question and a response to it. Who is Jesus? There's two answers to this question.

The first thing that we see here is that he is the saviour of sinners. The second thing that we see as we move to Matthew and his testimony is that he is Lord.

Who is Jesus? He is saviour and he is Lord. So first of all, he is the saviour of sinners. Look at verses 1 through to verse 8.

It says, In getting onto a boat, Jesus crossed over and came to his own city. Now, if you glance back just a verse or two, that takes us to where we finished off a few weeks ago.

[ 44 : 24 ] We finished in Matthew chapter 8 with this striking scene in this region of the gatherings. Jesus has done amazing things in this place.

There are vast crowds. The whole city come out to see Jesus, to speak with Jesus and they beg him to leave. They ask him to leave.

They ask him to go. And so what Jesus does, and we see it in verse 1 of chapter 9, is that he leaves. He leaves that area, that region of the gatherings and he crosses over to his own city.

He leaves that place where the people said to him, we don't want anything to do with you. As far as we know, he never returns. Ligon Duncan, the commentator, says, it is a frightening thing when the Lord Jesus absents himself from us.

But Christ does not tarry long where he is not welcome and so we must not trifle with him when he comes to do business with us.

[ 45 : 38 ] There is a lesson there perhaps that someone here needs to take in today. We don't trifle. We don't trivialize Jesus. It is a frightening thing when we see the Lord Jesus absent himself from us because we keep pushing him away.

And that is what the gatherings did. They pushed him away and Jesus he crosses over. He comes to his own city. Verse 1 We expect him to be welcomed at home in his own city.

And at first it seems that the people in his own city are happy to have him home. Because in verse 2 it says So what's happening here?

Well we see some people and they bring their friend to Jesus. They're burdened for their friend because their friend he needs healing of the legs.

[ 46 : 59 ] He's paralyzed. And so they've heard about all these miracles that Jesus is able to do and so they take this man their friend to Jesus and Jesus is able to heal his legs.

But Jesus makes the point here that the healing of the legs is not the greatest need that this man has.

He needs to have his sins forgiven. And so Jesus as he sees their faith he forgives this man's sins.

Here's a question in application. What is your greatest need today? A question for everyone.

What is your greatest need today? What is your greatest need today? Well it's not health. Even though some of us may be struggling with our health.

[ 48 : 07 ] Our greatest need is not health. It's not wealth. Even though some of us might be a bit stressed about the bills that are coming in.

But our greatest need is not wealth. Our greatest need is not popularity. our greatest need is not education. Even though the teenagers are starting to get stressed out about the exam results, the envelope that's soon to come.

That may be important but it's not their greatest need. Our greatest need is not education. Our greatest need is salvation.

you and I need to have our sins forgiven. And when we think about the people that we love, when we think about the people that we work with, when we think about the people that God has put around us in our world, and we think about how they are, and how to pray for them, and what their greatest needs are, their greatest need is the same as our greatest need, and that is salvation.

The forgiveness of sin. Eternal life. One commentator says, we can be fervent about the need for cure of the body.

[ 49 : 37 ] Are we as fervent about the need for forgiveness? Christ reminds us here that it would be a terrible tragedy for a man's body to be healed, and a soul to be empty.

For a man's body to be healed, and yet for his soul to be condemned before the Lord, and so he points us to the forgiveness of sins, and he shows himself to be a just and merciful Savior, who is Jesus.

forgiveness of sin, eternal life, place in heaven.

verse 3, and behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, this man is blaspheming.

Now, the scribes were like the religious lawyers. They were experts in the scriptures. they were, I suppose, our equivalent would be theology professors.

[ 51 : 03 ] They knew their Bibles. They're watching and they're listening to Jesus, and they hear Jesus declare forgiveness of sin, and they know, this is correct, they know that only God can forgive sin.

So they are suddenly faced with this question, who is Jesus? Who is this man who's declaring forgiveness of sin?

And because they knew their Bibles, because they had read the Old Testament and memorized the Old Testament, because they had lived their lives with the promise of Messiah who would come to be the Savior of sinners, they should have been the first to recognize that Jesus was this promised Savior, that he was the Son of Man, the one that was prophesied in Daniel 7, that he was the Son of God.

They should have recognized him, but they didn't, or maybe they wouldn't. So instead of calling Jesus blessed, instead of recognizing him as the Messiah, as the Savior, and bowing before him in worship, they call him a blasphemer.

Verse 4, But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven, or to say, rise and walk?

[ 52 : 49 ] But that you may know, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. He then said to the paralytic, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.

And he rose, and went home. When the crowd saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

So you have the scribes, they reject Jesus, they call him a blasphemer. They don't want him. Then there's the crowds, and they see this miracle being performed before their eyes.

This paralytic, who all of a sudden stands up, no physiotherapy, he just stands up, picks up his bed, and he goes home.

And they recognize, as they see what Jesus is doing, that God was at work in that place. They recognize that God was at work amongst them.

[ 54 : 07 ] and they look at Jesus, and they can see that he is a man. Isaiah tells us he was just an ordinary looking man.

He didn't have film star looks, nothing striking about him. He was just an ordinary looking man. And they're trying to understand what's going on here.

the work of God evident. And yet this man seems to be getting used. And so they see that God was at work through the man, but they don't yet recognize that Jesus is the God man.

God is the Messiah, that he is the Savior of sinners, able to give healing to a paralytic, but also, first of all, to forgive his sin, to give cleansing to his heart.

They don't see it, that Jesus is the Savior of sinners. And yet that's who Jesus was, and that's who Jesus still is. And so today we can come to Jesus ourselves, with our sicknesses, with our struggles, and ask for his touch.

[ 55 : 40 ] And we can come carrying those that we love, who are sick, who are struggling, who are battling with various things, and we can bring them to Jesus in prayer, and we can ask for his touch, for his intervention in their difficult lives, and it's right that we do that.

But the most important thing that we do is that we come to Jesus with our sin, and we ask for his forgiveness, and we ask for his salvation, and we ask that he move in the hearts of those that we know and love, so that they will see that they, like we, are sinners who need the salvation that only Jesus can bring.

Can I ask before we move on this morning, have you asked for salvation? Who is Jesus? He's the Savior of sinners. He's the only one who can cleanse your heart and mind.

There's no other one we can go to. There's no other place we can go. We cannot go through some psychotherapy therapy, to have our hearts cleansed. We cannot go and travel off to some ancient eastern place and practice some eastern religion to have our hearts cleansed.

There's only one way, there's only one name, there's only one route for salvation, and it's in Jesus. And he is here today in the word, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and he offers us cleansing of our souls, cleansing of our hearts, salvation, eternal life.

[ 57 : 44 ] So will you ask? Will we ask for it? Will we pray for those that we love?

Not just for their bodies, not just for their struggles, but for their hearts. who is Jesus? He is the Savior of sinners, and he is the Lord of all.

Look at verse 9. As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, follow me.

and he rose and followed him. Now, if you look at the top of your Bibles, in the page that we're on, it says Matthew chapter 9.

So that's just a reminder that this is the gospel according to Matthew. This account that we're reading is the eyewitness testimony of a man called Matthew.

[ 58 : 53 ] Matthew. And so what we're reading in verse 9 is a very short version of Matthew's testimony. Matthew at this point decides that he is going to share his testimony with us.

So we have this account of Jesus, and he's on the move. And Jesus passes on from the place that he was in, and as he's in transit, as he's moving, he sees this man called Matthew, who's sitting at the tax booth.

We can just picture him there. It's during working hours, so he's busy. There's probably a queue of people waiting to see him.

He has deadlines, he has commitments, he has a whole lot of industry, a whole pile of things to get through in the course of this busy day. Jesus passes by, and Jesus calls Matthew, and he says to him, follow me.

And Matthew rose up from his desk, out of the booth, and he follows Jesus. And it just seems so impossibly simple, and yet that's what happened.

[ 60 : 24 ] Jesus doesn't make an appointment. Jesus just comes unannounced at an inconvenient time, and he calls Matthew.

And Matthew leaves the booth. He follows Jesus, leaves the booth, leaves the clients, leaves the paperwork, laptop still on, phone still ringing, messages pinging.

He's following Jesus. And this underlines for us what we've been seeing over the last few chapters, and that is that Jesus has authority.

authority. authority. There's only one who has such authority that they can do this.

Only one who has supreme authority can just walk up to this man and demand such a response. Only one who is called Lord can walk up to this tax booth, say, Matthew, follow me, and expect that Matthew will leave everything and follow him.

[ 61 : 49 ] Only one who is called Lord can do that, and that's who Jesus was, and that's who Jesus is. He is Lord. Savior of sinners and Lord of all.

so if you're here today, maybe preoccupied with a thousand things that have been going through your head, maybe wishing you hadn't actually had to come out today, but you're here anyway.

And if you're hearing Jesus, as the scriptures are read, saying, I want you to follow me, then what are you to do?

You're to stop everything you're doing. Everything else that was priority goes down the list. And as you hear his voice calling you to start following him, follow him.

give your life to him. That's what you're to do. And if we're already following Jesus, but he's calling us today to start following him more closely than we have been, even though that's going to cost us, to do it.

[ 63 : 40 ] And if he's calling us particularly to some kind of special mission, whether it's serving biscuits at a holiday club, or going overseas to be a missionary, or going off to be a minister in some place, if you are aware that Jesus is calling you to some special ministry as he did Matthew, what are you to do?

Leave everything. Immediately. And follow him. Turn your diary upside down.

Put your phone on silent. Rearrange your calendar. And follow him. But I've got commitments, you might say.

Well, so did Matthew. His diary was full. But I've got family ties, we might say. Well, so did Matthew. Yet Jesus is going to take him from region to region.

A whole lot of domestic disturbance. But I have a life plan that I've worked out with my wife, you might say. Well, I imagine Matthew had some kind of life plan mapped out for himself as well.

[ 64 : 57 ] But I have a good job. I have a salary. Well, so did Matthew. Matthew actually would have been one of the highest earners in that place at that time.

But when Jesus called him, immediately he followed him. He recognized him as the savior of sinners like him and the Lord who demands all of our lives.

Are we following Jesus? That's the question that I'm going to finish with. He is the savior of sinners. All of us are sinners.

for how we come to him. We might be religious like the scribes. We might be reprobate like the tax collector.

But how we come to him and ask for that forgiveness. He is Lord of all. Are we bowing before him? Are we responding to the call that he places on our lives day by day to put him first.

[ 66 : 21 ] To seek first his kingdom. To do the good works that he has prepared in advance for us to do as those who are recipients of his amazing grace.

Savior of sinners and Lord of all. and if he's not Lord of all, he's not Lord at all.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for sending your son Jesus into this world.

We thank you that he is the savior of sinners, that he came to seek and to save the lost. God that he came to make it possible for us with all our sin to be forgiven.

And we thank you that that forgiveness is offered freely. That forgiveness can be given to us instantaneously. It's something that we can have the moment that we ask for it because the price has been paid.

[ 67 : 41 ] need. We thank you that Jesus came into this world knowing that he was coming to suffer, that he was coming to die, that he was coming to lay down his life, to take the punishment for our sins so that we can be forgiven, that we can be saved, that we can have a place in heaven.

And Lord, we pray that if we are saved, we would in our lives show our thanksgiving for that salvation by putting the Lord Jesus first in everything, every day.

So speak to us, Holy Spirit, we pray. Help us, Lord, if we are following at a distance, if we are being disobedient in some areas of our lives, help us to even in these moments resolve once more to seek first your kingdom, to bow before Jesus as Lord of all, Lord of our diaries, Lord of our time, Lord of our finances, Lord of our life plan.

Help us, Lord, to do so. We pray this in Jesus' name. And for Jesus' sake, Amen. We'll sing to finish the hymn, the well-known hymn, Mission Praise 31, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound has saved a rich like me.

amazing grace, amazing grace, amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

[ 69 : 50 ] I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

But now I see. grace, was grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieve.

How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come.

'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

[ 71 : 09 ] When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've called as days to sing God's praise, than when we've first begun.

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