

18.8.24 am

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Date: 18 August 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's quite good, it's good, it's not quite good, it's very good to see quite a lot of visitors and you are especially welcome if you're able to stay behind. There's tea and there's coffee at the end of the service and it'd be good to get a chance to enjoy fellowship together. Yep.

There is no evening service tonight, just a few intimations have been on the screen before the service began and just to remind you, I won't go through them all, there's quite a lot this week, but a few things just to remind you all. First of all, there's no six o'clock evening service here tonight. Leverborough are celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper over this weekend, so they have their Thanksgiving service this evening and a fellowship and we are invited to join them at six tonight for the service in Leverborough, so there's the opportunity to do that. Crest provision continues during the service. It's good to see and hear the wee ones, but there's a crest just behind me for the wee ones if they need to go out at any point and the Sunday school is back on as usual this week. Don't know if the YF has started back up again. It's maybe not quite started yet.

Ladies' Fellowship, Little Fisher's Road to Recovery all at the usual time and the usual place. Scripture Union, just for the school pupils, is back on this coming Wednesday in Mr. Morrison's room, so please note that, pupils. Pray for that, those who are not pupils. Pray for the work that continues in the school.

Secondary school pupils, that's the SU group, but the writing and the intimations, if you could see it, seems to get smaller every week. Either that or my eyesight's getting worse every week, so SU, we've noted that. A couple of extra notices, CPR, AED, awareness sessions are being held in the church Saturday, 31st August, 6.30pm. As many people as possible are encouraged to attend to learn the skills required to perform CPR, and we've got the box at the door of the church, the defibrillator. So we've not had the training yet, but there's the opportunity for that, and you've got the details there.

The Island Study Conference Curry Night Fundraiser is part of the fundraising activities to help cover the costs of the conference. The committee are planning to host a curry evening, a takeaway or sit-in at the church Saturday, 7th September from half past six. Members of the community can come to the church and, for a small donation, have a takeaway or sit-down curry. And if you are a master in curry making, as Cammy's put it, then please speak to himself or Anne or David Cameron about how you can help with that. There's a conference coming up and back, Reflections Women's Conference, Saturday 21st September.

[3 : 1 7] There's a brochure, I think, in the vestibule for those who are interested in that. Last thing, I think, is the community lunches are due to start again. If you can help serve or with making soup or baking, please speak to Mary or add your name to the list in the porch. I think these are all the notices. I want to just say as well a word of welcome, not just to everybody, but also to Scott and to Fiona and to Katie and Lily, who haven't actually started with us yet. Scott will take the morning service next Sunday and that will be the beginning of his period here with us, almost two years. But it's great to have you and a warm welcome and we pray God's blessing on you as you serve here. We're going to sing now to God's praise as we worship him. We sing from Psalm 100. Psalm 100, the words are on the screen.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. We'll stand to sing.
All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him, sir, with mercy, pray, foretell. Come, ye, before Him, and rejoice. Know that the Lord
is God indeed.

With our charity get us made We are his love he does us be And for his sheep he not must
be O enter then his gates with praise Unproached with joy his course unto Praise God and
bless his name always For it is simply so to do

For while the Lord our God is good His mercy is forever sure His truth that old times firmly
stood And shall promise to it Let's unite our hearts in prayer together Let's pray Our
Heavenly Father we thank you for this your day

[7 : 24] And we thank you for the word of God We thank you that the word of God is truth It is truth
that endures from age to age We thank you that we can be sure That it is the truth that it is
reliable We thank you that each week as we gather here We open the same book And we
thank you that as we open scripture And as we sing And as we read and as we meditate
upon The words of scripture We thank you that we find life We find nourishment for our
souls We thank you that we find wisdom We find guidance for all of our lives And we thank
you that we find salvation Because as we open the pages of scripture You're the God who
reveals yourself to us And speaks to us

About who you are And all that you have done for us And we thank you Father For the fact
that you are merciful And we come this morning Seeking that mercy We think of the
prayer that was recorded In the parable of the publican The tax collector who cried out
Lord have mercy upon me the sinner We think of the echo of the words Of the blind men
That we looked at last Sunday As we hear them cry out Also have mercy on me Son of
David And we thank you that we can take The same words That the psalmist used And we
can use that as our prayer As our cry We confess that we are sinners That we are not
worthy That we are not able to come Into your presence in our own name And pleading
our own righteousness Because even our best efforts

Are like filthy rags But we thank you that we can come To you this morning In reverence
And even with holy boldness Because we come Asking for mercy And we come in the
name of Jesus Your son Our saviour We thank you that Jesus Is the one Who was the
son of David He is the one Who was promised The Messiah The saviour And we thank
you that he came Emmanuel God With us We thank you that he lived for us That life of
perfection That life Without sin We praise you Father That Jesus Your son He went to the
cross To die for us In accordance with the plan Of salvation That was Agreed before time
began And we thank you that death Could not hold him That having Done the work of
salvation On the third day He rose from the dead And in rising from the dead

Showed That there is resurrection There is eternal life For all Who will believe In him So
we pray for faith This day This resurrection day That we would Remember That we would
rejoice In the gospel And that we would believe Personally That we would Be able to say
That Jesus Is our saviour That we are A sheep In the flock That he has called To himself
That we would be able To say the Lord Is my shepherd And I am contented I am at peace
I am secure When I am in him So bless us Lord We pray We thank you for all Who are
gathered here today We pray for those Who are visiting with us We thank you for them
We pray your blessing Upon them On this time of holiday We pray for the congregations
That they are connected with That you would be working That you would be blessing As
your word is opened In different places Across the nation And perhaps even Across the
world

Be at work Lord We pray That Jesus Would be lifted up In many places That many Even today For the first time Would come In repentance In faith To claim him As their saviour As their Lord We pray that you would Help us As we sang in the psalm To praise you To serve you Cheerfully With our voices And with our whole lives To seek To lift up The name of Jesus And we pray for all The things that are In our notice sheet We see So many things That are going on And we pray that In every endeavour Whether it's With the children Whether it's With the young people Whether it's Community lunches Whether we are Gathering together For particular Fundraisers We ask that In everything that we do That Jesus Would be lifted up And that many Especially those Who don't yet know Christ Would come to know

[12 : 30] And trust him We pray for the Work of the The SU in school And we ask that As a new term begins That you would be Working amongst The young people That you would give them The courage To come And to gather Around your word That you would be With Mr. Morrison And Cammie also That you would help them As they prepare As they prepare A message That they can bring To the children And we ask that You would open The hearts That many Would trust The Lord Jesus In the years That are early In their lives So bless them And bless each one Of us we pray We pray for those In particular need today We are always conscious Of those who are grieving Of those who are anxious For those Who are sick And who are struggling And as we See them in our mind's eye And as we name them In the quietness Of our own hearts Just now We ask Lord That you would meet them At the point Of their need

So hear our prayers And take away Our sin we ask Keep us Close to the cross Always confessing Always repenting And always rejoicing In the blood That was shed To make it possible For us to be forgiven For us to be children Of God And we ask all these things In Jesus name And for his sake Amen Boys and girls Would you like To come forward please It's good to see you all back Did you enjoy Getting back to school No One of the young people Was quoted as saying

I won't tell you who it was That they were wasting The best years of their lives Going to school Now I want to I want to tell you A story today And remind you of a story That we began A few weeks ago So Can you tell me First of all Because some of you Know this story Katie and Lily It's good to have you guys With us today You won't have heard This The first part of the story But these guys Will tell you Can you tell me Please Who's Bryce If I tell you the name Bryce Not you yet Henry But I'll get to you In a second If I say the name Bryce Can you remember Who Bryce is Fraser A dog Pardon A dog That's right So tell me about Bryce the dog What happened What's the story of Bryce the dog So he like ran away

He ran away Yeah Onto the hill Onto the hill So he didn't really feel Comfortable With his He just ran away So he'd come from I think it was from Wales Wasn't it And he He came to Harris And he was a bit Uncomfortable Maybe I know Shores hates the ferry Maybe he got a bit Spooked on the ferry Who knows what happened But when he arrived In Harris He was a bit spooked And he He ran away Onto the hills Michael Yeah So that's a good summary Of Of where he was at So He ran off Up onto the hills And He was lost So How long was he lost for Can you remember You think back to When we were Seeing a picture of Bryce On the screen How long ago Do you think that was Lily 14 weeks Sounds very accurate Maybe Maybe correct Maybe you know I think it probably

Was about that About two or three months See over the last Two or three months When you would wake up In the morning And you'd think About your day Did you think about Bryce Every day It was a few days Wasn't there When we Saw his picture On the screen And we saw the story On Facebook We were thinking about The poor dog Up on the hill We were probably thinking And we were praying That Bryce would come back But After a few days Did we forget Some of us I I I didn't think about Bryce much Over the last A few while Sometimes But a lot of days I would forget But Who didn't forget About Bryce Any Your grandpa And your dad Was there a day

[17 : 36] That they forgot About Bryce Not one day So every day Alistair and Peter Were out On the hill And they were Shouting for Bryce And out with their Binoculars And looking for Bryce And leaving out food So that he would Come a bit closer And a bit closer And he wouldn't Be starving And week by week What happened to him?

He started off Way away Far away On the hill But week by week What happened? He got closer And he got closer And he got closer And then What happened At the beginning Of last week?

He came home Didn't he? So Bryce I think we've got Some pictures And maybe a video On the screen So Not working?

You guys get The privilege then The rest of the Congregation See nothing So If you want to Come down here I'll come down And sit with you And I'll just Show you I'll just show you Some pictures Of Bryce Talk amongst yourselves Right We're going to A little bit So I can just Show you Call him right There he is Can you see him?

Does he look happy? He looks quite happy Doesn't he? Another one Here he is On the quad bike All ready to go There he is All wrapped up Getting ready To bike with a sheep And the wind Of our magic So Did you see him?

[19 : 49] Did you see him? Did you see him there? So there's Bryce And there's Alistair And Tell me Henry What's Bryce doing now?

Yeah Not right now But what's he been doing Since he came home? She's been getting To know his master Hasn't he? I saw a picture of him Watching the football With you sitting on the couch And then he's sitting On the back of the quad With Alistair Your grandpa And he's going around The croft And he's just getting To know the place And he's getting to know His master And he's getting to know How much He can trust His master So after all that time away Now Bryce Is home And I was thinking Does that remind you Of anything?

Who does that Remind you of? Michael What's that story That reminds us of? Reminds us of us Isn't it? Because A bit like Bryce We're Quite bad For running away From God Aren't we?

And we can go far Away from God Sometimes And sometimes We can forget To be in the Bible We can forget To be praying And we can even forget That God is there But just like Alistair And like Peter What is God doing Every day?

He's calling us Every time we open The Bible Every time you go To Sunday school Every time you go To jam And connect In these clubs As we open The Bible And as we hear The stories That Jesus told Jesus is calling us And every day Henry And Callum And Joseph And family And everyone Jesus Is calling us And even when we go Far away Jesus Is still calling us And even when we're Not looking for him It's like he's looking Out On the hill To see us If we're going to Come back today So Do you think If we've been away From Jesus For a long time And today We decide to come back Do you think Do you think He would take us back?

[22 : 28] Or do you think He would say No We're done with you now What do you think? You feel me? He would tell us To come back Wouldn't he?

After all these weeks And all that hassle Out on the hill On the day That Bryce came back They didn't say Off you go dog All that time You wasted They said No Come on inside And sit on the couch And watch rangers Getting beaten On the telly Come back in And that's what Jesus says to us He says Come And have your sins Forgiven Come And be My children My sheep And don't Ever go away He holds us Close When we come to him And we can trust him So let's Pray And thank him For all That he has To us Heavenly father We thank you That you love us We thank you That you sent Your son Jesus To be the good shepherd The one who calls Us to come The one that we can trust The one who laid down His life on the cross To take our sin away

[illegible]

And we'll sing verses 8 and 9 in Gaelic. I'll read these verses in English. The Lord is very gracious, in him compassions flow. In mercy he is very great, and is to anger slow.

We don't have a presenter callum. Sorry to put this on you. Last second, I thought this was covered. And the Gaelic singers, please make sure you're singing out loud today, with poor Callum having to be put on the spot at the last second.

[32:55] .

Thank you.

Thank you, Carl.

We pray that you would send the Holy Spirit, that he would be our teacher, that we would see, that we would hear, that we would understand, that we would be moved in our hearts and that we would respond in faith to the message that you have for us in your word.

We ask, Lord, that you would bless them and that they would hear, that they would be interested, that they would understand and that they would grow up to know that Jesus loves them and that they would hear the call of Jesus to come and to trust them.

[37:06] We thank you that the message of the gospel is often a message that the children understand and respond to more readily than we do in our later years in life.

And we pray that you would give us that childlike faith, both us and the wee ones, that we would see, that we would believe, that we would be saved. We pray for other congregations as well, those who meet around us in the community here, different denominations, wherever Christ crucified is preached.

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We pray for Stuart as he preaches in the High Free this morning and this evening. Bless him in his preparation and in preaching. Speak through him, we pray.

[38 : 12] And we pray for those in Liverpool as they prepare to gather around the Lord's table even in just a few moments. And we ask that you would bless them and that they would know your grace as they gather, as Jesus has called them and each one of us to take the elements when we are offered to do this and to remember and to believe in all that Christ has done and shedding his blood and laying down his body for our salvation.

Hear our prayers. Help us, we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I'm not sure if this is just my phone or if this is everybody's phone, but for some reason it's every Sunday morning I get a notification from Apple, I presume, to tell me if my screen time over the last seven days is up or down.

And it was down 8% this week. I can't remember what the number was, but it was down 8% this week. And screen time is something which is a big part of our lives today.

I read a statistic the other day that the average person in the UK spends almost 4.5 hours a day watching television or on screens, watching YouTube and whatever reels that might be put in front of us.

So it seems that on average in the UK at this point, at least 4.5 hours a day are spent at leisure on these or on these.

[39 : 58] I was thinking about that. And I was thinking, if Jesus had come into the world, not 2,000 years ago, but today, if Jesus had come into this technologically advanced world, I doubt that the screen time would have been as high as 4.5 hours a day.

I doubt that he would have had a subscription for Netflix. I doubt that he would have had the time to justify taking out a monthly commitment to Sky Sports.

I doubt that he would have had a monthly commitment to Sky Sports. I doubt that he would have had a monthly commitment to Sky Sports. He probably wouldn't have had many apps on his phone. Because as we look at Jesus in the Gospels, it's very clear to see that Jesus came into this world not to relax and take it easy and be and be sure to take masses of time for leisure.

Even though the world was his. Even though he made it. Even though he is Lord over it. What we see, as Jesus came into this world, he came in not to relax and take it easy, but he came into this world to work.

And to work for our salvation. So as we track Jesus through the Gospels, as we're doing in Matthew's Gospel at present, we can see that he's never so busy that he doesn't have time for people.

[41 : 54] People come to him and he always has time for people. He's never so busy that he doesn't have time to be with his Father and doesn't have time to pray.

These are priorities. But we never see him idle. We never see him scrolling through Instagram.

We never see him just wasting time. From the age of 12, where we see Jesus in the temple, through to his last breath, on the cross at Calvary, Jesus is very clearly about his Father's business.

He is the working Savior. That's the first point that we have today. As we go to verse 35, we see Jesus as the working Savior.

We'll just step through the verses as usual. Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.

[43 : 12] So as we look at verse 35, we get the sense that there's a, we get a real sense of movement and activity. Jesus, he is, he's going throughout the whole area.

He goes into, verse 35, the cities, where there's industry, and where there are crowds, and where there's hustle and bustle, and where all the movers and shakers are, Jesus is in there.

He's moving through these places, and yet he doesn't bypass the villages. When we see important people, whether they are politicians, or they're some kind of world singers, they tend to tour the stadiums in the cities.

They don't come anywhere near the countryside. But Jesus doesn't bypass the wee villages. He reaches the kind of country people that others may overlook. As he's moving throughout the whole area, so what's Jesus doing as he's moving throughout the whole area?

Well, he's teaching in their synagogues. So there's dialogue with the academics, the professors, the churchmen. Jesus is dealing with them.

[44 : 25] He's speaking to them. He's listening to them. He's reaching out to them. And yet, he's continually proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

To the ordinary people on the street. So we see crowds of ordinary people, and they're all gathering around Jesus. And Jesus is reaching out to them.

And he's speaking to them. He's telling them stories that they can understand about fishing and plants and all the kind of things that they have in their own lives. And it says he's healing every disease and every affliction.

So we can glance back and we can see that Jesus, he's giving life to the dead.

And with the ruler, whose daughter is dead, he comes to Jesus. He's desperate for help. And Jesus can raise the girl up.

[45 : 32] He's giving sight to the blind. Verse 30, we heard last week the two blind men who could not be shut up at the side of the road.

They're desperate to meet with Jesus. And Jesus meets with them and he gives them sight. And he's giving freedom to those that Satan has a hold of.

Those who are trapped in a dark prison. In their minds and their hearts. And no one can unlock the door. And yet, this man is brought to Jesus in verse 33.

And Jesus is able to cast out the demon. And the man is free. And right at the very beginning of chapter 9, we see that the paralytic who's brought to Jesus, his friends think that he needs his legs healed.

And he does need his legs healed. And Jesus heals his legs. But Jesus, as a priority, first of all, forgives his sin and deals with his heart. And so Jesus, he's moving throughout all the areas.

[46 : 43] Cities, villages, academics, common people. He's healing every disease, every affliction. from the eyes, to the legs, to the heart.

He's the working Savior. There's some people that we see working. And we wonder what drives them.

I can think of one person. I won't tell you who the person is. But whenever I see this person, he's working. Doesn't matter if it's day or evening.

Doesn't matter if it's weekend or weekday. Doesn't matter if it's New Year's Day or Christmas Day or holidays or whatever. This guy, I've never seen him do anything but work.

And I've often thought, what drives him to work as furiously as he does? You know, is it money? Is it love of the job or what? I don't know. What was it that moved Jesus to be a working Savior?

[47 : 59] what was it that moved Jesus never to be taking me time? Never to be wasting his time.

But always to be to be giving of himself to those who were all around him. What drove that work ethic?

Well, we're told in verse 36 it was compassion. When, verse 36, Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

So what is compassion? Well, to have compassion is to see someone in need and to feel deeply for them in their need and then to act, to do something, to reach out and to help them.

That's compassion. compassion. Now, we can walk down the street in a city and we can see somebody who is sleeping in a cardboard box in a terrible state in desperate need and 99 out of 100 times we walk past and we feel very little.

[49 : 31] compassion. To have compassion is to walk past that person and to feel deeply for them and to stop and to reach out to them.

And Jesus in verse 36, when he saw the crowds, he was full of compassion.

And when we think about Jesus' incarnation, when we think about his life, when we think about his death, everything was driven by compassion.

It was compassion that took Jesus from heaven to earth. We could have sang this morning Love Divine. Love Divine or Love's Excelling Joy of Heaven Jesus to earth come down Fix in us thy humble dwelling all thy faithful mercies crown Jesus thou art all compassion pure unbounded love thou art visit us with thy salvation enter every trembling heart.

So as we see Jesus coming from heaven to earth and we ask the question why, the answer to that question is compassion. He saw us in our need, he saw us in our sin, he saw us in our brokenness, he saw us in our hopelessness and he left heaven to come to this world to live, die, rise so that we can be forgiven, so that we can be saved.

[51 : 23] We trust in him. The root of our salvation is finding the compassion of Christ. as we see Jesus in verse 35 and 36 moving and working it's compassion that is behind the work of Christ.

As he teaches, as he proclaims the gospel, he is moved with compassion. as he heals all these people who are continually coming to him.

It's because he is full of compassion and that compassion that moves Jesus to work in these verses that we're reading here would drive Jesus to keep on working, to keep on giving of his time and his energy until eventually he would give his whole life on the cross to save us from the disease, the affliction of our sin.

So we see the working saviour. Now what's the application here? What are we to see as we reflect for a moment on the working saviour?

I think the main thing that we're to see and the main thing that we're to feel is the love of Jesus. We're very quick to pick up the Bible and look at some verses and say, you know, what does this tell me to do?

[53 : 16] And the Bible tells us to do lots of things, but the first question we should ask is, what does this tell me about God? What does this reveal to me about Jesus?

And as we think about these verses, what this reveals to us is the depth of the love and the compassion of Jesus. Maybe that's what we need to see most clearly this morning.

The fact that Jesus loves us. I don't know how you feel about Jesus today, but what we see in Christ and what we feel from Jesus in these verses is love and compassion.

And yes, we see Jesus heal the bodies of those who came to him all these years ago in a place far, far away. But today, Jesus, through the word of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, who carries the words of Scripture from the page into our hearts, us.

In a sense, Jesus, in the same way that he was reaching out to all those who were around him back then in that place, he reaches out to us today and he offers healing of the soul.

[54 : 54] He offers to take away the sickness and the affliction of our sin. And he will do it if we believe the gospel that he was proclaiming.

He will do it if we will simply receive the healing that he offers. To be saved, you know, if there's somebody here today who's not a Christian, or if there's someone here today who has lost sight of what it is to be a Christian.

To be a Christian, to be saved, we are to believe and we are to receive. We believe in Jesus, who he said he was, and we receive from him the grace that he offers.

we don't work at religion to save ourselves. The work of salvation was a work that only Jesus could do, and he has done it.

He did it on the cross. For us, we'll sing at the end of the service, lifted up, lifted up was he to die. It is finished, the work is finished, was his cry.

[56 : 30] And now in heaven, exalted high, hallelujah. What a savior. He offers to be your savior, and mine.

we have to believe in him, and receive the salvation that he offers. The working savior, point number one.

The second point is the waiting harvest. Verse 37. Then Jesus said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

I used to look forward every year to the harvest of potatoes. Now, Shennard and Stornalee, used to plant potatoes every year, and over the course of time, we would see the shaws growing up, and after a while, it was time to pull up these wee new potatoes.

It was harvest time, we'd have these lovely, beautiful, sweet potatoes. I would eat 47 of them with every plate of mince that I was offered. You still love it when it was harvest time for the potatoes.

[57 : 48] Now, Jesus in verse 37, he uses these simple pictures that they can identify with and we can still identify with, and he paints a picture for the disciples of a waiting harvest.

So the gospel that Jesus was proclaiming was likened to good seed. This is an example that he'll carry on forward. And for a time, Jesus has been sowing that seed as he goes throughout all the cities and all the villages, he's sowing that seed of the gospel.

And now he says to his disciples, it's harvest time. And I don't think the disciples were seeing any of that. What was Jesus seeing that made him say to the disciples, the harvest is plentiful, it's harvest time.

Well, thinking back to Machinac's potatoes, there were signs for the potatoes of the harvest being ready. If I remember rightly, the shaws would grow up and they would grow tall and they would be these wee white flowers, if I remember rightly, that would start to form at the top of the shaw.

And then the shaws would start to flop over. And they would go kind of yellow and dead looking. And that showed, apparently, that it was time for the harvest.

[59 : 12] These were the signs of the harvest of the potatoes. Now, what were the signs of the spiritual harvest that Jesus was seeing? Well, it was a harvest of people.

So what did the people look like? What was Jesus seeing in the people that made them say it's harvest time? Well, he was seeing people, verse 36, who were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.

So harassed, the word in the Greek, means troubled or distressed or weary. he saw people who were harassed, they were troubled, they were distressed, they were weary.

He saw people who were helpless. Again, the literal is they were dispersed, they were lost, didn't know which way to go.

And he says to the disciples, he's seen people like sheep without a shepherd. shepherd. And he says to his disciples, these are the signs of a waiting harvest.

[60 : 41] The potatoes are all flat, shaws are all flat, they're bent over, they look sad. And yet underneath, there's this harvest. harvest. Jesus says, I'm seeing people who are harassed, and they're helpless, they're confused, they're like sheep without a shepherd.

These are the signs of a waiting harvest. That was what Jesus said to his disciples 2,000 years ago. Fast forward 2,000 years to today, what do we see?

What do we see in our culture today? We see people who are harassed. We don't have to go far. There will be numerous people even in this building today who are harassed, who feel weary, and troubled and burdened.

We see people who are helpless, and who are lost and confused. Never in living memory has there been such a high level of confusion about everything, even our identity.

The things that were so fixed and normal in days past, there's utter confusion about everything. about everything. And how do we respond?

[62 : 12] We tend to respond by saying everything seems so bleak. People seem so resistant to Jesus. People seem so lost, we say, as we shake our heads in defeat.

defeat. And Jesus, I think, challenges our despondency. He rebukes us in our despair, and he says to us, open your eyes.

These are the signs of a waiting harvest. are you here this morning and you feel harassed and helpless and lost and weary?

You don't know where to go to get rid of this burden. You don't know where to go to recharge, to receive life and peace and direction.

to go to recharge, to and peace and you've tried this and you've tried that. Jesus says, come to me. All who are weary, all who are burdened, all who are troubled, all who are lost, Jesus says, come to me.

[63 : 33] I will give you rest. I will give you heart healing. You're part of the harvest that I came to gather.

the working saviour, the waiting harvest. The third point, very, very short, just in passing, is Jesus says to his disciples, wait and pray.

So he's opened their eyes, you could say. He's sat down with the disciples and said, open your eyes, it's harvest time. But what happens next?

Does Jesus say, off you go out into the fields and get busy? Well, no, he doesn't. He says, pray. What are they to do when they see the signs of the harvest? What are they to do when they see all these people who are lost and confused and weary and burdened like sheep without a shepherd?

Well, he says, verse 38, therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest, to send out laborers into his harvest. So what Jesus says to his disciples, and there's a big number of disciples at this point who are listening, he says to all of them, wait and pray.

[65 : 01] And there are some things that we need to be told over and over again, and this is one of them, pray. I had a driving instructor, there back in the day in poetry, Johnny Campbell was his name, and I was thinking about him this week.

How many times did he say to me, mirror, signal, maneuver? Every junction that I was coming up to, every maneuver, mirror, signal, maneuver, and every time he said it, I needed to hear it because I wasn't doing it.

And Jesus says here to the disciples what he had said many times before, and he was going to say it again and again, he says pray. Don't just charge off and make a hash of things.

Wait and pray. Pray earnestly, he says, which means beseech, beg, the Lord of the harvest, to send out laborers.

Oswald Chambers, just to apply this, he says, we tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defense. We pray when there's nothing else we can do, but God wants us to pray before we do anything at all.

[66 : 17] So Jesus says, harvest is plentiful, workers are few. Before you do anything, pray.

And so they pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest. And the last thing we see here is point number four, willing disciples.

So Jesus begins this conversation about the harvest with an instruction to pray. But that's not where the conversation ends.

I think we have to note that. Often when we think about the need to reach those who don't know Jesus, and think about this, there are many, many people in Tarbert this morning and in Sculpey this morning and down the bays this morning who don't know Jesus.

We're encouraged to see a good number in church, but there are far more people outside. There are far more people who don't know Christ. So we have a job to do.

[67 : 37] And sometimes when we think about reaching those who don't know Jesus, someone will say, well, we just need to pray. We just need to pray. And of course, we do just need to pray.

We need to pray first before we do anything else. We need to pray. To borrow Oswald Chambers' words, God wants us to pray before we do anything at all.

But then, having prayed, it looks here like God wants us to do something. So Jesus says to the disciples, wait and pray.

And then he calls them to action. And we see that as we did on, verse 10. And he called to him his twelve disciples.

Remember being once at a prayer meeting in the East Church in Inverness. And the East Church were doing a door-to-door outreach in a part of Inverness, Regmore Estate.

[68 : 55] And the minister in the scene at the time, he was struggling to get volunteers to go out and knock the doors. They had leaflets and they had invitations. And there was just a few people who were willing to go and knock doors.

And so he raised out the prayer meeting and he said, we're struggling here. We need people to knock the doors. We need people to go out with these leaflets. So we need to be praying. And then he called me and he says, will you pray for the work at Regmore Estate?

And so I said, well yeah, I'm happy to pray. So I stood up and I prayed for the work and prayed for workers. And I had no sooner said Amen. I just kind of felt the weight of God's call.

Having prayed to take the Tuesday night and to go and knock the doors. And here Jesus commands the disciples to pray.

And now he calls 12 of them to be laborers. He's a particular call for these 12. What was the nature of the call?

[70 : 02] Well, verse 10, first of all, it was a call to him. And we've seen this before and we'll keep seeing this again and again. Jesus calls disciples to come to him.

A disciple of Jesus is somebody whose primary call, whose daily call, whose continual call is to come to him. And not until we come to Jesus are we equipped to go out and labor for him.

That's the way it was, that's the way it is. Disciples are called to come to Jesus and as we come to him he blesses us and then he sends us out into the world to be a blessing.

We can't go out until we first come in. So he called verse 10 to him, his 12 disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal every disease and every affliction.

Again, notice this is basic but it's essential. Jesus gave them everything that they needed for ministry. They didn't have it themselves.

[71 : 21] They had to come to Jesus to receive all that they needed to be as laborers. So the names of the 12 apostles, verse 2 are these.

Simon, who's called Peter, Andrew, his brother, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector, James, the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus, Simon the Caninian, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Just a passing point, but notice it's all twos. We're very used to in this culture, one man ministry, the minister. It's all twos here.

And that's what we see in Paul's ministry as well. He goes out, they go out in twos. So we have the names of this team of disciples.

What can we say about the disciples that's impressive? Not that much. We'll get to know them a bit more as we read through the Gospels, but there are no ministry superstars here.

[72 : 38] There are no celebrity preachers. They don't look like an amazing team, but Jesus called them with all their flaws and all their weaknesses, and they were willing disciples.

Willing disciples. It's all we can really say about them in terms of plus points. They weren't that able, but they were available.

They didn't look like winners, but they were willing. So are you and I willing disciples? Because if we are willing, Jesus can still use us.

But you need to be willing. I have a guitar in the house and I'll just finish with this. It's not a great guitar and when I pick it up and play it, it really doesn't sound great at all.

The only thing it seems to provoke is Mary to leave the room every time I move in the direction of it. Not a great guitar, doesn't sound that great. one day, going back a few years, a guy that I know, probably an acquaintance more than a friend, he came to visit and he picked up my guitar, his name was Stephen McLeod, he was a singer-songwriter, and he began to play it and it sounded amazing.

[74 : 18] My guitar, sounded amazing. So what had changed? Well, in relation to the guitar, nothing.

It was still hugely ordinary. But what had changed was that it was now in the hands of an extraordinary musician.

are you and I willing to put our hands, our lives in the hands of Jesus?

That's the question just to take away with us. He is able to use even the most ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

if we are willing to come to him, if we are willing to be laborers for him. The harvest is plentiful.

[75 : 28] There are people who are harassed and helpless everywhere. The workers are few. And Jesus is calling.

let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and we thank you for your Son, our Savior.

We thank you for the compassion for the love of Christ as we see how he reached out to those who were around him as he went through the country and the cities.

we thank you that today still the Lord Jesus reaches out to us in the word and in the power of the Spirit. We pray that you would heal us in our hearts.

All of us are sinners. Perhaps some of us have never yet asked for mercy. We pray that even in these moments we would ask for mercy, that we would ask for forgiveness, that we would feel and know the healing touch of Jesus.

[76 : 37] We pray that you would help us to be prayerful. We confess that often we rush off. We want to do things in our own strength and we can do nothing. Help us to pray.

Fill our prayer meeting with people week by week. Before we try and do anything else in terms of all the outreaches, we would be committed to pray earnestly.

We ask Lord that as we seek to make ourselves available, that you would use us for your glory, for the glory of the name of Christ.

We pray these things in his name and for his sake. Amen. We'll sing to conclude Mission Praise 458, Man of Sorrows.NING!

NING To reclaim, hallelujah, what a Savior.

[78 : 05] In shame and sorrow they were, In my place condemned these two, Sealed my pardon with his blood, Hallelujah, what a Savior.

Guilty, violent, helplessly, Strongless Lamb of God was He.

Full atonement carried me, Hallelujah, what a Savior.

Lifted up was He to die, It is finished, was this dry, Thou in heaven exalted high, Hallelujah, what a Savior.

He comes our glorious King, All His runs and hope to bring, Then a new song will sing, Hallelujah, what a Savior.

[80 : 02] And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, The fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.