

14.3.21 am

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Date: 14 March 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to know that there are some people tuning in so those who are watching online, those who are listening in on the telephone, once again it's good for us to come together on the Lord's Day and to worship him together.

Intimations, just to remind you first of all this evening the service will go online at six o'clock and that will be a testimony service this evening. We've been having one testimony a month over the last few months and tonight we've got two for the price of one. We have Cammie and Cazalda who are both sharing testimony, speaking about how they came to know the Lord and how the Lord has worked and is working in their lives. So be encouraged to come to that this evening, perhaps to make others aware as well of that who may be interested in tuning in.

The prayer meeting will be on Wednesday at half past seven on Zoom as usual and the YF will meet again online tonight at half past seven. The AGM, which is well overdue but with all these restrictions that's understandable. We hope to have an AGM on Wednesday the 24th of March. Again that will be on Zoom and we'll give maybe more details on that in due course. These I think are all the intimations.

Other than to say a word of congratulations, this is Adrian and Ina Glenn's 60th wedding anniversary and so we celebrate with them as a congregation. We wish them our best and congratulations on 60 years, 60 happy years of marriage. So these I think are all the intimations and with these intimations and good wishes we will come now to worship God and we sing to his praise to begin by singing from Psalm 111.

The first four verses of the Psalm. Psalm 111 verses 1 to 4. Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart. I will God's praise declare where the assemblies of the just and congregations are. The whole works of the Lord our God are great above all measure, sought out they are of every one that doth therein take pleasure. His work most honourable is, most glorious and pure, and his untainted righteousness forever doth endure. His works most wonderful he hath made to be thought upon. The Lord is gracious and he is full of compassion. So Adam will sing to God's praise and we can be encouraged wherever we are to sing to God's praise. Psalm 111 verses 1 to 4.

[3 : 0 1] Praise ye the Lord with my whole heart. I will God's praise declare.

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The Lord is gracious and he is full of compassion.

Well let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father we thank you for this your day.

[5 : 0 4] We thank you for this day that's been set aside and has been gifted to us as we've thought about in past weeks. A day where we are commanded to stop work and to find both physical and spiritual rest as we take time to be with you.

We thank you Lord for who you are and even as we've heard the psalm being sung we thank you for the last line of that psalm that gives us such encouragement to come to you.

The Lord is gracious and he is full of compassion. Lord if it was not for your grace we would have no hope we would have no hope because we are those who are sinners.

If it was not for your compassion we would have no encouragement to come to you. We thank you Lord that you are gracious and when we deserved punishment you have made it possible for us to be shown mercy and grace through Christ.

And we thank you for your great compassion. You're the God who did not leave us to sink into sin and death but you came from heaven to this world Lord Jesus in order to seek and save those who are lost in order to bring health to those who are spiritually sick in order to bring grace to those who had no hope otherwise.

[7 : 00] We thank you for the cross of Jesus whenever we hear the word grace our minds go to that acronym what is grace it's God's riches at Christ's expense.

And once more we find ourselves at the cross the place that we must not drift from. And we thank you for that wonder of your love that the sinless one would die in the place of the sinner.

And we thank you for the promise that whoever believes in him whoever trusts and takes hold by faith of that finished work of Jesus is promised forgiveness of sin and everlasting life.

So we praise you Lord for who you are and what you have done for us. You are the God who is great as we have sung in the psalm the God whose works are honourable and pure.

You are the one who is righteous the one who is wonderful the God who is eternal. You are wholly worthy of all our praise.

[8 : 12] And we ask that you would help us even if we are in our own homes most of us even though we may be distracted by things going on around us. We pray that on the Lord's day you would enable us to be in the spirit of worship.

Help us we pray to bow in your presence help us to worship you in spirit and in truth. And forgive us Lord for the fact that so often we don't.

So often our eye is caught and our hearts drift and we give honour to things which are not deserving of honour. We chase things that do not satisfy we look to things we look to people for the satisfaction that only you can give.

Sometimes we seek honour for ourselves and Lord we know that only you are worthy of all honour and praise and when we deviate from that we sin so we pray that you would forgive us and help us to be still and to know that you are God and help us to be worshipping you in this day and with our lives.

We thank you that you are the God also who comes alongside us in compassion and teaches us to cry out to you for help and we pray for that help just now as we think about the country that we live in we pray for your help.

[9 : 49]

We see so many things that disturb us whether we look at those in authority over us the royal family the first minister those in politics we see so much turmoil we see so much unrest we see man's inhumanity to man we turn on our TVs we hear reports of murders we hear reports of all kinds of horror we see civil unrest in our streets even and we ask Lord that you would help us we pray Lord that you would enable us as a nation that have drifted far from you to return to you give to us we pray that spirit of repentance that we would again seek your face that we would humble ourselves and that we would know your healing touch upon our land and we pray for ourselves as a community we ask that you would help us at this difficult time we thank you for answered prayer we thank you that the the cluster of covid cases has not escalated at any great speed we pray that you would continue to hold this virus back we ask that in your time lord we would be able to come back together as a people in community and as a people in worship we ask that you would take this virus away lord that you would enable us once more to to know your presence with us as we fellowship together both physically and spiritually we pray for those who are grieving today we're conscious that on mother's day it's a day for joy for many as they speak to and spend time with with our parents we know that others find this a difficult day we pray for those whose hearts are sore that they may know your comfort that they may know your strength we pray for those who have all kinds of struggles those who are sick those who are battling with addictions those who feel the pain of loneliness and isolation whatever our need is we pray that you administer to us we thank you that you're the

God who comes alongside us in trouble you're the one who weeps with those who weep and we thank you also that you're the God who rejoices with those who rejoice and so we we pray for Adrian and we pray for Ina we thank you for 60 years of marriage we thank you for all that they mean to each other that they mean within the family and in this community and in the congregation we ask that you would bless them and that they would know your continued hand upon them for good we pray also for Andrew and for Iona as they prepare to be married in even the next couple of weeks we ask that you would bless them in their preparations we pray that they too would know your hand upon them for good we thank you that you're the God who is gracious we thank you that you're the God who works in every detail of our lives and we thank you that you're the God who works continuously through our lives what you begin you see through to completion on the day of

Christ Jesus and keep us ever in mind of that day help us to remember as we would have remembered had we been able to meet together in normal times we would have remembered our Lord's death today and taken the bread and taken the wine and we would have remembered that we do this only until he comes so help us we pray to have our focus on Christ help us never to forget the cross and help us to live each day in anticipation for the day when Christ will return or call us home to hear our prayers take away our sin help us to fix our eyes upon Jesus for we pray these things in his name and for his sake Amen Well boys and girls it's good to know that some of you are behind that screen this morning we've had a slightly different week this week passed because we were out of our house the matts and

Peggy let us move into her holiday house over at Meevig so thank you Peggy for that it felt a wee bit like a holiday but only just a wee bit like a holiday because there was still lots of homeschooling and everything that had to be done so why were we out of the manse you might be wondering and the reason we were out of the manse was because there was some work being done in the house but if you were to have gone in for a look on Thursday or Friday after they had finished all the work you'd hardly have known that any work had been done in fact I can actually show you the only bits of work we can see so Stuart's going to show you just a few pictures now of all we can see of the work that was done this week well you saw these pictures I think and you could tell from these pictures that almost all the work was done behind the walls and under floors you can't even see that at all because there's no carpets over that and in the ceiling you could see the holes in the ceiling but almost all the work is done underneath the surface underneath the places that you can see but it's really important work it's plumbing work it's called and plumbing is all the pipes in the house the water goes through pipes and these pipes have to be connected and they've got to be tight and they've got to be going in the right place and if pipes aren't connected right if they're not solid if they're not secure then when you turn on the taps you know what happens the water it doesn't come through the taps it comes through the ceiling it comes through all kinds of places and makes a big mess of the plumbing's not right so that's the work that we were getting done it was work that was underneath the floor and the ceiling behind walls and you know that kind of work which is really important but which gets done on the inside it makes me think of God's work that's what I was thinking about when I came back in and had a wee look at what had been done it reminded me of the way that

God works yes he works on us but first and most fully he works in us he works under our skin he works in our hearts he's interested in what's going on in the deepest place of our hearts remember the Pharisees and I've talked about the Pharisees a few times in the last few weeks the Pharisees were all about the outside they wanted to look good and they wanted to make sure that everybody could see how holy they were how good they were so they were always thinking about how they looked on the outside but Jesus told them and he told us that on the inside the Pharisees their hearts were a bit like rotten pipes and sin was leaking out everywhere boys and girls when we trust in Jesus we don't usually look very much different

[18 : 28] I can remember the day that I trusted in Jesus I was about 10 and the day after I trusted in Jesus I was still wearing the same clothes still had the same haircut I didn't really look any different I don't think when we trust in Jesus we don't look that different on the outside usually but our hearts change when we trust in Jesus we ask him to take our sin away to wash our hearts as you so often tell me but we ask him to come into our hearts don't we and we ask him to start to work in us and he does he actually he makes everything new we're told in Ezekiel chapter 36 and verse 26 that when God comes to work in us he gives us new hearts tells him

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you so God when we trust him he does change us and we do look a bit different because we do different things we talk differently sometimes if we said swears before we're not going to say swears after if we're always doing selfish things before with God's help we don't want to be doing these things afterwards and so over time as we stay close to Jesus he does change us we do start to look different we might not wear different clothes we might not look different in our faces but we should hopefully look more and more like Jesus over our whole lifetime but the work God does he doesn't change us from the outside in he changes us from the inside out he works in our hearts he works under our skin so let's be trusting him boys and girls that's the message that I so often say and I say it again today trust in the Lord

Jesus ask him to come and take your sin away and let's ask him to be coming into our hearts we've never done that before and working in our hearts to make us look even on the outside over time more and more like Jesus so we'll pray Lord God we thank you for the fact that you do work in our hearts when we trust in you we thank you that you take our sin away through the work that Jesus did normally we would have been taking the wine today which reminds us of the blood of Jesus which washes us from all sin when we trust in him but we thank you that you don't just save us from sin Lord Jesus but you save us for yourself and you come into our lives you come into our hearts and you work in us every day so we pray that you would carry on that work if we are trusting you and that you would be changing us to make us more in our hearts and with our whole lives to be more and more like

Jesus and we pray these things in Jesus name and for his sake amen thank you boys and girls for listening I hope you were listening I can't see you and we're going to sing now before you perhaps go through and do your Sunday school lesson and we're singing from Mission Praise 1008 which is a version of Psalm 23 the Lord's my shepherd I'll not want he makes me lie in pastures green he leads me by the still still waters his goodness restores my soul and I will trust in you alone so Adam will lead us in this praise the Lord's my shepherd I'll not want he makes me lie in pastures green he leads me by the still still waters his goodness restores my soul and I will trust in you alone and I will trust in you alone for your friendless mercy follows me your goodness will lead me home he guides my ways in righteousness and he anoints my head with oil and my cup it overflows with joy I feast on his pure delights and I will trust in you alone and I will trust in you alone for your endless mercy for your endless mercy follows me your goodness will lead me home and though I walk the darkest path love

I will I will not fear the evil one for you are with me and your rod and staff are the comfort I need to know and I will trust in you alone you alone and I will trust in you alone for your endless mercy follows me your goodness will lead me home home well let's turn now in our bibles to

[25 : 58] Luke chapter 7 we'll actually read in from the last few verses of Luke chapter 6 so we'll read in from Luke chapter 6 verse 46 and we'll read the first 17 verses of Luke chapter 7 this is God's word Jesus says in in verse 46 why do you call me Lord Lord and do not do what I say I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice he is like a man building a house who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock when the flood came the torrent struck that house but could not shake it because it was well built but the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without foundation the moment the torrent struck that house it collapsed and its destruction was complete when Jesus had finished saying all these all this in the hearing of the people he entered

Capernaum there a centurion servant whom his master valued highly was sick and about to die the centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him asking him to come and heal a servant when they came to Jesus they pleaded earnestly with him this man deserves to have you do this because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue so Jesus went with them he was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him lord don't trouble yourself for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof that is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you but say the word and my servant will be healed for I myself am a man under authority with soldiers under me I tell this one go and he goes and that one come and he comes I say to my servant do this and he doesn't when

Jesus heard this he was amazed at him and turning to the crowd following him he said I tell you I have not found such great faith even in Israel then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well soon afterwards Jesus went to a town called Nain and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him as he approached the town gate a dead person was being carried out the only son of his mother and she was a widow and a large crowd from the town was with her when the Lord saw her his heart went out to her and he said don't cry then he went up and touched the coffin and those carrying it stood still he said young man I say to you get up the dead man sat up and began to talk and Jesus gave him back to his mother they were all filled with awe and praised

God a great prophet has appeared among us they said God has come to help his people the news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we'll pray again just for a moment our heavenly father we thank you once more for your word we pray that the same Holy Spirit who inspired it would be our teacher even now we ask that you would open our eyes to see that you would open our ears to hear that you would work in our hearts that we may be raised from the deadness that we are by nature and transgression and sin to the life that is given as we trust in Jesus so work amongst us we pray and what we pray for ourselves we pray for the children and their

Sunday school lessons we thank you for them we pray father for those who meet around us in other churches in this place or virtually in congregations in this place and further afield whatever the gospel of Jesus is preached we ask Lord that you would be working that you would add your blessing that you would build your church as you have promised and we ask these things in Jesus name and for his sake Amen well if you could have your Bibles open in front of you that would be helpful if we want to know what someone is really like we don't learn that in one moment through a brief conversation or in a short space of time and perhaps just one fleeting encounter we learn what someone is really like over a period as we watch and as we listen to that person for those who watch football when a new talent comes into focus the pundits they love to focus on this new person and talk them up and they gush with excitement over this new talent that might be able to play for the country but there's one pundit

[32 : 02] Roy Keane and before he gives any great praise he always says of this new player let's just watch them for a while let's not get overexcited at this point let's just watch them for a while we want to see quality we want to see consistency over the season not just for one or two games now what we are doing in Luke's gospel is we're watching and we're listening to Jesus that's the purpose of the gospel account Luke has prepared this orderly report and he's not writing about himself Luke has the camera focused firmly on Jesus all of the time over these three years of ministry and Luke shows us how Jesus relates to his disciples with such love and with such patience grace and truth and truth and such truth he shows us the character of

Jesus when things are going well and when the crowds are applauding him and he shows us the character of Jesus when the crowds start to turn as they very quickly do and oppose him and in Luke 7 we have some more scenarios we have some more windows into the life and character and deeper deeper than that the heart of Jesus and I want to look at two of these today we see in the first few verses of chapter 7 we see from verses 1 to verse 10 Jesus healing the servant of the Roman centurion and then in verses 11 through to verse 15 we see Jesus raising from the dead the son the dead son of the widow of

Nain so these are the two scenarios that I'd like us to look at together today we see Jesus in the way that he relates to in the way that he reacts to the way that he works within these two lives these situations so first of all we see in verses 1 to 10 the centurion's faith and that's our first point the centurion's faith because in verses 1 to 10 that's the portrait that Luke paints for us it's faith in Christ so still the camera is on Christ but Luke gives us this picture of what faith in Jesus looks like but before he paints the object of this man's faith in Jesus he sets it against a dark background we have a picture in our house in the living room Margarita gave it to us when we moved into the manse and it's a print that's got a kind of light background but when she put it in a dark frame it became all the more striking as a portrait as a picture and that's what Luke does here he sets the bright faith of this Roman centurion against the dark background of the

Pharisees in verse 1 of Luke chapter 7 it says when Jesus had finished saying all this in the hearing of the people now when we read that we sensibly ask well what has Jesus just been saying what has he been teaching that's what we read in from chapter 6 and if we glance back at these verses at the end of chapter 6 we see that Jesus has been teaching about the importance of having right foundations see the Pharisees who were clashing with Jesus in the previous chapters and who will continue to clash with Jesus they were all about forms of religion what could be seen in terms of religious practice they were all about traditions they were all about the thoughts and the opinions of scholarly men that was their foundations and in Luke chapter 6 Jesus he drills down into that and he drills down into that to show them and to show us how rotten that was to show how unstable a foundation man-made religion is it won't withstand the flood the torrent of God's wrath that's the dark background that Luke gives us in the end of chapter 6 so what's the sure foundation what will withstand the flood of

God's wrath well what will withstand the flood of God's wrath is faith but not just any faith faith in Christ and so Luke now introduces us to a man who's a bright example of what it looks like to have faith in Jesus so let's look at some of the marks of faith in this man's life and I'm just going to step through the verses rather than give you various sort of subheadings verse 1 says he that's Jesus entered Capernaum and there verse 2 a centurion servant whom his master valued highly was sick and about to die so that's the context we have this centurion he's in some state of distress because he is a servant whom clearly he loves and he values and he was sick and he was about to die and I think the first thing

[38 : 07] I wanted to note there is that faith often begins at a point of crisis and yet that doesn't cheapen faith in any way it doesn't make faith any less real I've been with people over the years as many of you will have been as well people who have been in desperate need who were sick and about to die and I've been in deathbeds where I've encouraged people to look to Jesus and yet they were hesitant even at that desperate critical point because of the fact that they were in such great need how could they go to Jesus at this point that they would say when they were in such great need I remember one lady not from here but in past ministry saying to me on her deathbed I didn't come to Jesus before now how can I come at this late stage can I come at this late stage in this time of crisis can I ask for his help even now in spite of the way that

I've lived before this and the answer was yes you can come and you must come to him else can you go at this stage see Jesus doesn't turn us away when we come to him at a point of great crisis crisis whether it's late on in life or whether it's earlier in life in some time of difficulty Jesus doesn't push us away when we come to him in a time of crisis we see that in this passage and maybe there are some listening today maybe there are some who are watching who are at some kind of crisis point maybe there are worries about health maybe there are worries about money maybe there are worries about relationships that seem to be fracturing and breaking down and it's that crisis time what should we do well we're taught here we should turn to

Jesus as the centurion did verse 3 the centurion heard of Jesus so he's in this crisis point he's in a place of great need and his servant is in a place of great need and he heard of Jesus and that's another mark of faith there he heard of Jesus his ears are suddenly opened to the fact that there is this Jesus who is healing the sick who is casting out demons who is teaching with such authority he hears about Jesus now he's a Roman centurion so he's a man of some status he's a well-connected man so what he would have heard about Jesus was likely to have been people's critical opinion what he heard about

Jesus from those in positions of power would likely have been spun in a derogatory way but none of that seems to deter him his ears were open to hear about Jesus his heart seems to be moved to believe that Jesus could help he could heal his servant and so he acts on what he heard and he makes an approach to Jesus verse 3 he sent some elders of the Jews to him to Jesus asking him to come and heal his servant so he hears about Jesus he believes that Jesus is able to help and he acts by sending out these elders of the Jews to seek the help of Jesus these are evidences of faith and again

I wonder do we see these evidences in our lives we've certainly heard of Jesus I think if we're listening or watching this service today we've heard of Jesus or we likely wouldn't be tuning in and it's probable that we've heard much more about Jesus than this century never had most of us have had faithful people over the years telling us over and over again about Jesus we are privileged to have likely heard much more about Jesus than this man had but do we believe that's a stage on do we believe that he can heal and not just our bodies but do we believe that he can remove the sickness of sin that is in our hearts so that we are able to sing as we will at the end that is well with my soul and if we are those who have heard about Jesus if we are those who believe that he is able to help that he is able to heal that he is able to save have we acted on that belief and come to Jesus seeking the salvation that he can give you think about this account how tragic it would have been for the centurion and more so even for the centurion servant for this man to have heard about Jesus and believed that Jesus could help and yet never acted on that it would have been a tragedy and yet

[44 : 20] I fear that there are some who are watching and listening today who are in that position you've heard about Jesus perhaps for decades you believe actually that he is who he says he is the son of God you believe that he is able he has the power to save and yet there are some who perhaps have never asked him to come and save you and I would urge anyone who's in that position this morning who's hearing this not to neglect such great salvation but act on this offer today verse 4 when they that's the elders of the Jews came to Jesus they pleaded earnestly with him this man deserves to have you do this because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue and so

Jesus went with them now I don't know what's going through your minds just now but I think on first reading of this the question that comes to us at this point is why did the centurion not go himself to Jesus he's heard about Jesus he believes that Jesus can help he knows he needs to act so why does he not put his shoes on and go out and seek Jesus was it pride as a centurion was he too big a man to go looking for Jesus was he thinking about his battalion and what they might say if they hear that he has gone out seeking this Jesus now that's I think what we might be tempted to think as we're going through the verses following the verses on first reading but that's not the truth it's not pride that caused him to hesitate to come to Jesus it was actually humility verse seven he

Jesus was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him lord don't trouble yourself for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof that is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you but say the word and my servant will be healed for I myself am a man under authority with soldiers under me I tell this one go and he goes and that one come and he comes I say to my servant do this and he does it now as we listen to this man as he speaks to Jesus or as he gives us a window into his heart as he considers this man Jesus he's such a contrast to the Pharisees the Pharisees swagger up to Jesus to confront him without a second thought the Pharisees sit there in meetings with their clipboards taking notes that they can use as evidence against

Jesus and even these elders of the Jews that are sent by this man to go and make an approach to Jesus they think that this man deserves to have Jesus do this for him because of how great a man the centurion was but the centurion himself he is so in awe of Jesus he is such a grasp of the authority the greatness of Christ and he has such a sense of the reality of his own smallness and his own sin that he does not feel worthy to come to Jesus or even to have Jesus come to him but he believes that such is the power of Christ that if Jesus only speaks the word from a distance his servant will be healed and here's another mark of faith that we see in this man's life it's a it's a mark that's perhaps perhaps a less seen today and it's that humility that reverence that sense of awe in relation to the person of Jesus and the work of

Jesus this man has such a high view of Christ and such a realistic and low view of himself he feels his unworthiness he has a deep humility and reverence and these are marks of real genuine faith so do we see that in our lives as we hold up the mirror of God's word is there that deep reverence is there that sense of awe as we think upon Jesus is there that true humility that drives us to our knees and causes us to say with the centurion Jesus I deserve nothing from you but punishment for my sin but I'm coming to you anyway asking that you will show me mercy and show me grace one commentator

[50 : 34] Milne says a sense of personal unworthiness in Jesus presence is paradoxically the sign of genuine faith in Jesus it's a standard response of all sincere believers I'm reminded of the story that I've told before communion Sundays the story of the minister Rabbi Duncan he was known as and one communion Sunday as the elements were being passed around he saw a woman in the congregation who was clearly a believer and who knew her sin and who was broken by her sin and overwhelmed with that sense of reverence for who God is and as the elements were passed to her she passed them on she didn't take them he got down from where he was he got the bread he got the wine he passed it to her again he said tack it take it it's for sinners and that's the kind of attitude that we're seeing in the centurion a sense of his own sin a sense of the greatness of Christ and when

Jesus saw the sinless centurion he was amazed at him he was thrilled by the faith that he saw in this man and he responded to that faith by making the servant well verse 9 when Jesus heard this he was amazed at him and turning to the crowd following him he said I tell you I have not found such great faith even in Israel then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well I do wonder what happened next in the life of this centurion but Luke doesn't tell us that and perhaps the reason he doesn't tell us that is because the crucial thing for us to consider is not what happened next to him but what will happen next in my life now we may not all be at crisis point although some of us may be but we all need

Jesus we are all sick at heart level because of our sin and sin brings death but Jesus is able to forgive he is able to heal those who hear his voice those who believe in him and those who humbly reverently call upon his name asking that he will give to us the grace and the salvation that we do not deserve but that he loves to give so we see the centurion's faith first of all and secondly here and finally we see the compassion of Jesus in the next episode verse 11 soon afterwards Jesus went to a town called name and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him I've underlined the word with him in my bible so many times this is a little reminder that we're given over and over again where should a disciple be well a disciple should be with him with

Jesus and so let me ask you the question as I'm asked the question myself through the text how has your week been have you been with him how about today will we spend the day scrolling through social media will we spend the day in and out of rooms looking at tv screens or will we spend the day with him because that's what makes all the difference in the life of a disciple verse 12 as he approached the town gate a dead person was being carried out it's very stark isn't it a dead person was being carried out we almost want to say to Luke do you want to perhaps soften the language here a wee bit that's bordering on the offensive here a dead person it's not all that tasteful and we as a culture are just not comfortable with this kind of stark language we're not comfortable with death at all so we have these euphemisms that we use to sort of soften death we talk about people having passed on or being at rest or departed or no longer with us almost to obscure the reality of death but the thing is death is a painful reality and that comes through in the text here we're dealing here with real death we're dealing here with intense grief that accompanies death death so who was this dead person well he was verse 12 the only son of his mother and she was a widow so for that widow living in that culture at that time this was devastating not only had she lost her only son but she had no husband to grieve with her and to care for her dear

Ralph Davis says no husband but now the only son that was surely her support had died so this was more than loneliness says Ralph Davis it meant almost certain poverty there were no social security payments no retirement accounts no life insurance no pensions in one sense we might say that her life had ended though her existence continued so this is a desperate place for this woman to be verse 12 a large crowd from the town was with her and we could say the crowd brought some comfort on that day but they didn't grieve like she grieved the crowd and she would have known that the crowd wouldn't be with her for long they were professional mourners many of them and when the funeral was over they wouldn't be there for her and so even in this crowd likely this widow of Nain would have felt absolutely alone and it's such a tragic picture of the reality of death and grief she was broken hearted but what do the psalms say well psalm 34 verse 18 says the lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit psalm 147 verse 3 says he heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds and that's what we see Jesus do next he comes close to her as savior he ministers to her wounded broken heart and her crushed spirit when the lord saw her verse 13 his heart went out to her and that's an amazing phrase his heart went out to her Barclay the commentator says Jesus was moved to the depths of his heart there is no stronger word in the Greek language for sympathy and again and again it is used of Jesus Milne the commentator says Jesus embodies the love of God in its mysterious depths unlike the gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon who indulge their own passions at the expense of human beings Jesus shows a God whose very being is love a love that reaches out to his creation in need and pain his heart went out to her the heart of God the God of heaven and earth saw this woman this individual one singular woman in her need and the heart of God went out to her and when we grieve when a community gathers in a home or at a church or at a roadside even as we've seen in past months to stand with a family whose hearts are sore the Lord Jesus sees and his heart of compassion goes out to us and through the Gospel Jesus speaks words of hope in verse 13 he said don't cry now why would Jesus say that don't cry Ralph Davis says don't cry anymore

[60:16] are among the cruelest of words unless jesus can do something about the reason for her sorrow and we know as we read through this that jesus words don't cry anymore are not cruel words to try and stifle what was genuine grief but they're words of deep compassion and more than that they're words that bring a real sure certain solid hope they're words of saving intervention verse 14 then he went up and touched the coffin and those carrying it stood still he said young man i say to you get up the dead man sat up and began to talk and jesus gave him back to his mother can you imagine that scene a funeral procession stopped abruptly a word spoken coffin touched and a dead man who has been carried to his grave to be buried sits up in this open coffin and begins to talk you know this is a miracle of the highest order one commentator i don't know who it was said jesus claimed for his own what death had seized as his prey and this actually is a picture it's a story in history it's a real life miracle but it's a picture of what happens every time someone becomes a christian and we are dead in our transgressions and in our sins we're told that in ephesians 2 isn't it and yet when the bible is read when christ crucified is preached what happens is that dead people hear the voice of jesus saying get up you yes you i say to you get up leave your sin behind receive my forgiveness receive life sometimes people say i think actually cammy says it i haven't got much of a testimony and we know what people mean when they say that there's no great drama no flashing lights there's no audible voices but you know every testimony no matter how gradual no matter how gentle it may be it's a miracle because it's the story of a spiritually dead person being brought to life through the word and the work of jesus so we see a miraculous work of christ here as this dead man rises up and yet it was a it was a sign that pointed forward to a more miraculous work that was coming when god the son jesus would willingly go to a cross to die to pay the wages of our sin so that we would have

resurrection everlasting life if we trust in him and i wonder if there might be someone who's watching or listening today who's hearing the voice of jesus saying i say to you get up turn away from sin turn away from death and follow me into life that is abundant life that is eternal can you imagine the tragedy back in that scene if that man that young man had heard the voice of jesus and yet continued to to lie down in that coffin and be buried missing out on the years of life that christ was offering missing out on the joy of reconciliation with his mother and and those he was close with what a tragedy that would have been how much more a tragedy for anyone who is hearing the voice of jesus to pretend that you're not to resist him to remain lying down and to miss out on the eternal life that's been offered because that's the choice we're being given today we're hearing the voice of jesus he gives us the strength of faith to rise up as we hear him and receive eternal life and to neglect that to refuse that is to choose eternal death so this account finishes and i must finish with a mother whose broken heart is bound back up whose crushed spirit is revived and whose grief is displaced by such deep joy and that's a picture of the comfort that's promised to those who are in christ it's a picture of how things will be for those who are in jesus believing mothers and sons and daughters and husbands and wives and brothers and sisters and friends who have been separated by death will be reconciled through the resurrection of jesus if they have believed in him it's a beautiful picture perhaps even more beautiful on mother's day as we see this mother's sorrow being turned into joy and yet it's an offer extended to all who have ears to hear so what happened on that day did everyone believe was everyone converted well sadly no that's not what we see here it just goes to show that even a miracle where someone is risen from the dead even a proof like that witnessed by so many hundreds of people in such a crowd will not be enough for some to believe but enough about them what about you what about us do we believe

that's the question and will we receive the heart healing the resurrection life that Jesus offers to those who will put their faith in him we'll pray heavenly father we do pray that you would be working the Holy Spirit would be moving amongst us and that many would be able to hear the voice of Jesus saying today rise up follow me and we pray that every one of us who hear may respond in faith by acting upon the invitation that Jesus extends in the gospel we pray that we would know the reality of souls that are eternally well through Jesus and all that he has done for us in living for us in dying for us and in rising for us and we pray these things in Jesus name amen we'll conclude with the words of the hymn 757 in mission praise when peace like a river attendeth my way when sorrows like sea below's row wherever my lot you have taught me to say it is well it is well with my soul when peace like a river attendeth my way when sorrows like sea bellows row whatever whatever my love thou has taught me to see it is well it is well with my soul it is well it is well with my soul with my soul it is well it is well with my soul though

Satan should buffet though trials should come let this blessed assurance control but Christ hath regarded my helpless estate and hath shed his own blood for my soul soul it is well it is well with my soul with my soul it is well it is well with my soul my soul my sin oh the bliss of this glorious thought my sin oh the bliss of this glorious thought my sin is not in part but the whole is nailed to the cross and

I bear it no more more praise the Lord praise the Lord oh my soul it is well it is well with my soul with my soul it is well it is well with my soul and Lord haste the day when the faith shall be with my soul the faith shall be sight the clouds be rolled back as a scroll the trumpet shall resound and the

[74 : 32] Lord shall descend even so it is well with my soul it is well it is well it is well with my soul with my soul it is well it is well it is well with my soul And I 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 forevermore.

Amen.