

4.8.24 am

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Date: 04 August 2024

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [0 : 0 0] A warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see everyone. Good to see quite a number of visitors with us this morning as well. And you're especially welcome if you're able to stay at the end of the service.
- There's tea and there's coffee. And it would be good to get the chance to meet with you and enjoy fellowship together. Intimations are on the screen. There is a Sunday school for primary school children over the summer holiday period.
- There's also a creche just behind me. The wee ones are very welcome in. But if halfway through the service they're realising they want to shout louder than I can manage to shout over them.
- Please be encouraged to use the creche if you want to do so. Evening service at 6 and that will be taken by myself. We've got the holiday club this week.
- The children's holiday club from Monday to Wednesday 10 till 12. And you've seen the screen, on the screen, the poster. So for those who are able to go, who are of age, please come along.
- [1 : 0 0] For those who have graduated past that age, let's be praying for that work. Are we okay for volunteers now? So I think we're okay.
- So we can be thankful to God for many hands making the work lighter. Ladies' fellowship on Monday. I wrote to recovery on Tuesday night. And the prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven.
- And the services next Sunday will be taken by myself, God willing. And these, I think, are all the notices to draw attention to just now. We're going to begin now this time of worship.
- We'll sing to God's praise. The words are on the screen. The hymn, What Love Could Remember, No Wrongs We Have Done. And the chorus that we sing. Our sins, they are many as we confess them.
- But we are thankful that his mercy is more. So we'll stand to sing in just a moment. The hymn, What Love Could Remember, No Wrongs We Have Done.
- [2 : 1 1] Omnish and all-knowing, we can stop their song. Thrown into a sea with a bottle for sure.
- Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord, his mercy is more.
- Stronger the darkness, new and remove. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.
- What patience would wait as we constantly roam. What Father so tender is calling us home.
- He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.
- [3 : 1 5] Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. His mercy is more. Praise the Lord.
- Stronger the darkness, new and remove. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord. His mercy is more. His mercy is more. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. His mercy is more.

His mercy is more. Stronger the darkness, new and remore. His mercy is more. Our sins, they are many, his mercy is more.

[4 : 22] Let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this, your day. We thank you for this gift that we've been given, where we are able to stop work and take time to rest our bodies, to rest our minds and to rest in you.

We thank you that you're the God who calls us to be still and know that you are God. And we thank you that as we take that time in the stillness and as we seek to draw near to you, you promise that you will draw near to us.

And we thank you that as we wait upon the Lord, we find that our strength is renewed, that our spirits are encouraged and that we are enabled to keep on keeping on as you call us to follow you.

So help us, Lord, we pray, to do that. We thank you that we're able to come together this morning in this way. We thank you for the invitation, for the call of Jesus to come in worship, to come to him, to receive the mercy that we can find in no other place.

[5 : 43] And we praise you for the words that we have sang together. We confess with the hymn writer that our sins, they are many.

And even as we think back over the last week, we can in our minds remember things that we have said and things that we have not said. We can remember things that we have done, things that we have left undone.

We can remember things that we have thought, hidden from everyone else, but seen by you. And Lord, we take a moment to confess our sin.

We take a moment to tell you, Lord, and to agree with you that we are guilty of sinning against you in many different ways. But we thank you for the mercy of God.

We thank you for the promise that when we confess our sin, you remember our sin no more. You're the God who is faithful and just to forgive us, to purify us from all unrighteousness.

[6 : 51] And we thank you that that work of forgiveness was done on the cross at Calvary. And so week by week, we come back to that cross.

We thank you, Father, for sending your son Jesus into the world. We thank you that he is God the Son. We thank you that he is the promised Messiah. We thank you that he is the only saviour of sinners.

And we thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are willing to come into this world, knowing that you would be despised and rejected, knowing that you would head to the cross to take our sins upon yourself.

And we thank you that as we confess our sin, that they are transferred to Jesus. And we thank you that not only is that true, but the righteousness, the perfection of Jesus is gifted to us.

So give to us, Lord, we pray, the assurance of sins forgiven. Give to us the joy of your salvation, of knowing that we are accepted if we are in Christ, that we are adopted into the family of God, and that we are brothers and sisters with all who are in the Lord.

[8 : 11] So give us also, we pray, that sense of fellowship, that sense of unity, of oneness. There are many here in the service who, even we haven't met, who have come on holiday and who are taking time here.

We thank you that when we are believers in Jesus, although we have never met, we have that instant connection, the blessing that comes from being together for Jesus' sake.

And so we pray for all those who are visiting here with us today, that you would bless them, that you would bless the congregations that they've come from. And Lord, that you would be with those also who have gone out from this place on holiday to different places across the land, wherever they are, wherever your word is open, Lord, whatever Christ crucified is preached, we ask, Lord, that you would be blessing and that you would be drawing many more to yourself.

We thank you for the message of the cross, but not only that, but the message of resurrection, that Jesus went to the grave for our sin, but on the third day he rose and promised that all who trust in him will share in that resurrection life, that eternal life.

So help us, Lord, we pray, to meditate upon these things, to know the joy that comes from the message of the gospel, the good news about Jesus.

[9 : 33] And we pray that if there's anyone here this morning who's never yet come to Jesus, who's never yet confessed sin, who's never yet trusted in the Lord, we pray that even today they would hear the voice of Jesus saying, and that they would not harden their hearts, but that they would come and experience for themselves the blessing of being in a relationship with God.

We pray for all that is before us in this week. We pray especially for the holiday club. We thank you for the children. We ask, Lord, that you would draw them to the club and that their hearts would be open.

We pray that these days would be days where we have fun, when we're kept safe, and where we know your presence with us. We thank you that the message of the gospel is a message that the youngest child can take hold of.

And it's a message that the greatest mind in the world cannot get to the bottom of. And so we ask, Lord, that you would be at work in the holiday club, drawing many of the young ones to yourself.

And even, Lord, that you would draw their parents through them, through the messages that they take home. So help us, Lord, we pray, as we reach out to this community for Jesus' sake.

[10 : 53] And help us to do that in all our conversations. Give us opportunities in this week to tell people about Jesus, to tell people that there is hope in Christ.

We see as a nation, Lord, that the further we drift from you, the more turmoil there is. Even on our news screens, we see violence, we see disruption, we see so much brokenness.

And we see, Lord, that this is in direct correlation with us moving away from the word of God and the presence of Christ. Forgive us, Lord, we pray.

Have mercy upon us as a nation. And we pray for all those that you've allowed to be in authority over us. Give them wisdom, we pray. And the humility to recognize that policies and education and politics will not fix this country.

But we need to turn back to the Lord Jesus. Be at work. We see, Lord, that this is such a far-fetched prayer. It seems so far removed from where we are as a nation.

[11 : 59] But you are able with a reviving touch to bring us back. So, Lord, we pray that you would be at work to draw us back, Lord, for the salvation of souls, for the stability of the nation, and for the glory of your name.

We pray for all those today who are in the service, who are struggling with different issues. We perhaps have loved ones who are sick. We pray for those who are sick, those in hospital, those at home.

We ask that your healing touch would be upon them. We pray for those who are anxious and those who are cast down in their souls. Help them, help us, Lord, we pray, to trust in God and to trust all the anxieties of our lives to the Lord.

We thank you that your word says, cast all your cares upon him, for he cares for you. And for those who are grieving, for those who are troubled, for those who may be worried about the week to come, even as we think about exam results coming.

Pray for our teenagers that they would be trusting in you. And, Lord, that you would help each one of us to remember that our identity is not locked into our achievements, whether academic or sporting, our popularity, our materialistic wealth.

[13 : 20] Our identity is found truly in Christ. Christ. So we pray that each one of us would know that and know the blessing and the security of being in Christ.

So hear our prayers and lead us and guide us in worship we ask this morning. We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please?

You don't have to. Visitors, if you want to come forward, you can come forward.

If you'd rather sit, you can sit. I won't come and chase you. How are you guys today? Good, good.

You got your thinking caps on? Well, I've got some things to show you and these things all have something in common.

[14 : 20] So I want you to think, what do all these things have in common? A box of mince pies, Christmas mince pies, bag of donuts, an old iPad, a newspaper, a newspaper, and an island bites menu.

What do all these things have in common? They're hundreds of years old. You got it right first time, Michael, as usual.

I thought you were going to say something like, you know, they can eat them or whatever, but the iPad we've thrown it off. The thing I want to highlight about these things is they're all out of date.

They're not hundreds of years old, but they're all out of date. So it's a Stornoway Gazette, amazing news in here, but the date for the Stornoway Gazette is the 18th of April, 2024.

And then we've got an iPad, an iPad mini, and if I try and, oh, it does switch on, it's still got charge, but if I try to use it, nothing works because it's too old and it's out of date.

[16 : 17] And then there's some mince pies and the date for the mince pies, and I went looking for them, the 8th of February, 2024.

Do you want one? No? Then there's some donuts. How fresh do you think these donuts are? Listen. They're absolutely solid.

You could use these for the foundation of your house. Thank you. Not many people laugh at my jokes. 30th of May, 2024.

They're absolutely, you break your teeth with these donuts. And then, the Island Bites menu. How out of date is this now, Russell? Two years.

Eight months. Eight months out of date. So, none of these things actually would do us any good now, would they?

[17 : 23] In the donuts. If we were to eat them, they wouldn't make us strong, would they? They'd probably make us sick. Same with the iced mince pies.

They're past it. Probably gives us a sore tummy. This thing is pretty useless now. There's nothing works in it. This newspaper on the day that it came out, it was helpful because you could learn what was going on and storing away in the islands.

But today, it's all old news. And the Island Bites menu got tears in my eyes when I read this.

This used to make me very happy. And now it just makes me sad. Makes him feel guilty. And it makes the chef feel guilty and he knows what to do about that.

All right, retirement, Russell. So, next thing to show you. What's this? It's a book.

[18 : 29] It's a book, yeah? A Bible. It's a Bible. When was this written? Do you know? Finley?

When sin came. When sin came. That's a very good answer, actually. It's a very deep answer. Because in the Bible, this takes me a bit off track.

Let's just go there a wee bit. Who speaks to us in the Bible? Whose book is this? It's God's book. And God is the eternal God.

He's the God who always has been and who always will be. And in this book, he's speaking and he was speaking to people thousands of years ago.

and in this book still, he's speaking to us today. And when we think about the very beginning, God made the world and we read about that in Genesis, that God made the world and in Genesis chapter 3, it's firmly said, sin came into the world and everything that was good started to go wrong.

[19 : 47] But God said in the Bible, even though things were going wrong and sin had come in, he was going to send someone who would take the curse of sin away and would give us life.

So, has there ever been a time, boys and girls, where there have been people in the world ever since Genesis 3?

Has there ever been a time when there's been people in the world who are not sinners? No. Every one of us, all through the ages, we are sinners.

We all need forgiveness. And who is the only Savior? Jesus. So, this is a book that tells us as we open it that we are sinners and this is a book that tells us as we open it at whatever time and whatever place that Jesus is the Savior.

And that's a message that has never gone out of date and it will never go out of date. All these other things are news for a while but then they're old news so they're past their cell by date.

[21 : 06] In the Bible we hear the good news about Jesus and it will always be good news. And it's good news today. So, in this book God is saying to us because he loves us he's saying you, David, are a sinner.

But because I love you I sent my son to you and to all of you so that you can be saved from your sin if you trust in him.

So, boys and girls the message is the same almost every week eventually, isn't it? It's trust in Jesus. So, let's pray and trust him. Lord God, we thank you for this day and we thank you for the good news about Jesus.

We thank you that even though we are sinners you sent your son Jesus into this world to take away our sin if we ask for forgiveness and we thank you that we experience and receive everlasting life when we trust in him that we escape the punishment that we are due and that we are given forgiveness and peace and joy and eventually a place in heaven.

So, help us, we pray, whether we're very young or whether we're older to hear your voice to believe the good news and to accept Jesus and we pray these things in Jesus' name.

[22 : 31] Amen. We're going to sing now and we're going to sing about how up-to-date the Bible always is and it's a hymn that begins Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word.

Amen. Speak, O Lord, as we come to you to receive the food of your holy word.

Take your truth plant it deep in us shape and fashion us in your likeness that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.

Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us all your purposes for your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience holy reverence to humility.

[24 : 06] Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity cross our greater eyes cross our eyes to see your majestic love and authority works of power that can never fail let their truth prevail over on me speak, O Lord, and renew our minds help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.

For us choose and change from the dawn of time that will echo down through eternity and by grace we'll stand on your promises!

And by faith we'll walk as you walk with us speak, O Lord, till your church is built and the earth is filled with your glory Okay, boys and girls, if you head to Sunday School now as they go remember to pray for them and if we could turn in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 9 Matthew chapter 9 and we'll read again from verse 1 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 thoughts said why do you think evil in your hearts for which is easier to say your sins are forgiven or rise and walk but that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins he then said to the paralytic rise up 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 arose 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 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 a worse tear is made 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

[29 : 11] I will be made well Jesus turned and seeing her he said take heart daughter your faith has made you well 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 they 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 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

Amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us we're going to sing again to God's praise we'll sing this time from Psalm 117 Psalm 117 just two verses of the psalm and we'll sing in Gaelic but I'll read the verses in English O give ye praise unto the Lord all nations that be likewise ye people all accord his name to magnify for great toward us for great to us word ever are his loving kindnesses his truth endures forevermore the Lord O do ye bless these two verses the whole psalm we sing in Gaelic and we remain seated to sing in Gaelic to God's praise NINGNINGNING Oh, Gugmabe, more for you, that your hand is left.

Oh, Gugmabe, more for you, that your hand is left.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32 : 45] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[35 : 17] that you were close and that we would come. Not harden our hearts, but that we would come. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in Inverness and I was in a shop in Inverness and I picked up a pair of trousers and headed in the direction of the changing room.

And as I was heading towards the changing room, there was a woman who was standing just at the entrance to the changing room and she had one of these badges on a cord around her neck.

And she kind of looked in my direction and I paused before I went in and I said, do you mind if I try these trousers on? And she looked at me up and down and she said, not really.

She paused and then she went, but why would I? I don't work here. And I kind of felt a bit embarrassed and I mumbled something uncomfortably and then just wandered in past her to the changing rooms.

[36 : 29] It was a bit embarrassing, a bit awkward, just for a moment. You know, I got her identity wrong. But it was no big deal. You know, no great consequence.

I haven't seen her since. I don't expect I'll ever see her again. If I did, I wouldn't remember what she looks like. Getting her identity wrong was no huge deal.

But as we turn back to Matthew 9, the question that I want to return to as we come into this passage is the question that we finished on last week.

I just want to touch on this to recap. It's the question of who is Jesus? Who is Jesus? And there are two answers to that question that fit together.

He is the saviour of sinners and he is the Lord of all. So just to recap on this, Jesus, he is the saviour of sinners.

[37 : 32] And that point comes through forcefully in the first eight verses of the chapter. So if you've got it in front of you, you'll find it helpful. We see a man and he's taken by his friends to Jesus.

And this man is paralysed. So his friends realise that he needs physical help. He needs medical help. They've heard about Jesus and the miracles.

And so they bring their friends to Jesus. They think he needs physical help as a priority. And he does need physical help and he will get physical help.

But Jesus makes clear that the priority was not physical. The priority was spiritual. So before he does anything, Jesus forgives this man's sins.

He's making the point that the key thing, the reason he came was to be the saviour of sinners. Who is Jesus?

[38 : 41] He is the saviour of sinners. And you might say, you know, aren't we going back over old ground here? Didn't you say this last Sunday?

And I did say this last Sunday. But the thing is, God in his patience has given us another week in time.

And I want to ask the question of everyone here. In that last week, have we asked Jesus to forgive our sins and to be our saviour?

Our week has passed since we saw this exact thing. Jesus, he's the saviour of sinners. We are sinners. Have we asked for forgiveness?

Maybe there's someone here who's never asked for forgiveness. Your sin is still heavy on you. Jesus is the saviour. Come to him.

[39 : 52] Ask him for forgiveness. Maybe there's someone here who wants to walk close with the Lord Jesus, but sin has come in.

And now there's a huge barrier. And we're far away. Why are we far away? Because we've stopped asking for forgiveness. We've stopped repenting.

So will we repent? Will we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, whether for the first time or for the hundredth time? Will we ask him now?

Who is Jesus? He's the saviour of sinners. And secondly, we see in his identity that he is the Lord of all. That's verse 9.

The illustration is given to us in the testimony of Matthew. Matthew's there at his tax collector's booth in the hustle and the bustle of a busy day.

[40 : 57] And Jesus, unannounced, without appointment, he comes to Matthew. He calls Matthew to drop everything, stop his work midday, cancel all his remaining appointments, and follow him.

And Matthew does just that. Why? Because Jesus is Lord of all. C.T. Studd, the England cricketer and subsequent missionary, he said this.

He said, If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him. So we see Matthew sacrificing his salary, his fat tax collector's salary, sacrificing all the appointments in his diary, turning his life upside down because he has heard the call of Jesus to follow him as Lord of all.

Are you and I following Jesus in that sacrificial way? Are we seeking first the kingdom of God?

Who is Jesus? Savior of sinners. The word for all of us. So all of us are sinners. Is he our Savior? He is Lord of all.

[42 : 32] He is the one who demands our time, our talents. He is the one who is worthy of all glory. Are we following him in that way?

Everything else is a lower priority. He is Lord. First point, who is Jesus? Second point, and we'll major on this today, is what did Jesus come to do?

What's his purpose? What's his mission? And that would have been the huge talking point, especially in his own city. We know that already the people in his own city, they knew that Jesus was a carpenter.

He was recognized as one who had been brought up in that place. The people there, they knew his family. They knew that he had been a carpenter.

He'd worked for the family business for 30 years. But at age 30, well maybe he's not been working for 30 years, been working for a number of years, but at age 30, Jesus, he changed his career.

[43 : 44] He puts down the tools, and he seems now to be out and about in the mode of a rabbi. And he's preaching, and he's teaching, and he's healing, he's performing miracles.

He's talking about the kingdom of God. And so the people in all the regions, and especially in his own city, they're asking the question, what exactly is his mission? What is he trying to do?

What did Jesus come to do? And the answer to that question becomes clear over the next two scenes. And so again, if you have your Bibles open, you'll find it helpful.

We have two scenes between verse 10 and verse 17. scene one is where we see Jesus and he's reclining at table. He's at a dinner party with all sorts of people.

And in scene two, we hear Jesus as he's pulled into a kind of religious debate. So if you're taking notes, what did Jesus come to do? Well, the answer comes in two scenes.

[44 : 50] Scene one, reclining at table. Scene two, religious debate. So first of all, verses 10 to 13, we see Jesus and he's reclining at table. Verse 10.

And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, that was in Matthew's house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

So what's going on here? Well, Matthew, the tax collector, who was now trusting Jesus and following Jesus, Matthew, he wants to introduce Jesus to all his shady friends.

He's told the tax collectors, he sent a WhatsApp message on the tax collectors WhatsApp group chat. I've met a man, I've met this amazing person, I've met the Savior, I've met the Messiah, and I want you to meet him, I want you to be introduced to this Jesus.

And so Matthew, he opens up his house, he hosts this dinner party, Matthew had plenty of money, so it would have been quite the party, and he wants all his friends and his colleagues to meet Jesus, to hear about Jesus.

[46 : 12] And that's an evidence of being saved. Maybe there's someone here this morning and you're wondering, am I a Christian or am I not a Christian?

One of the evidences that we have come to saving faith in Jesus is that we will want those that we love, those that we work with, that we will want them to hear about Jesus.

We will want them to meet Jesus. we will want them to be introduced to Jesus. It's an evidence of being saved.

If we truly believe that Jesus is the Savior, if we believe that there is a heaven and a hell, and that Jesus came into this world to die for our sin, to give us forgiveness, so that we can be saved from hell, so that we can be assured that we have a place in heaven, that we can be given eternal life, if we believe that, if we have received that salvation, if we have benefited from that good news, how is it possible for us to keep quiet about it?

Surely we want those that we love and those that we work with to hear about this Savior. If we're silent, how much do we really believe?

[47 : 59] One commentator leg says, he says this, Matthew is an example to us, although he is now a disciple of the Holy Teacher, Jesus, he has not rejected his friends.

Instead, he invites them to meet Jesus. He keeps links with them, not because he hankers after their old lifestyle, but because he wants them to be saved too.

So, as we see Matthew, following Jesus, then opening up his home, holding this party, introducing all his friends to Jesus, let's be challenged by him, and encouraged by Matthew, to open up our homes, to open up our lives, to reach out to the people that we love, for Jesus' sake.

So, moving on, we see Jesus, he's reclining at the table, all these characters are around him in this party, as Matthew has invited them.

But it seems that it's not just the tax collectors who come to this dinner party, the Pharisees crash it too. And so we read in verse 11 and 12 about this conversation with the Pharisees.

[49 : 18] And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, why does your teacher eat with 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.

So the religious leaders, they're asking the question, why is Jesus mixing with this kind of people? We can just imagine them sticking their heads on the door, seeing this party, recognizing all these disreputable characters, and they want to speak to Jesus and say, why are all these people here and why are you in this party?

What are you doing with this type of person? Tax collectors were the gangsters of the day. they were dishonest, they were disloyal, they were hated, they were consumed with greed and selfishness, they were the epitome of what it looked like to be sick with sin.

They were the dregs. And so the religious leaders, they wanted nothing to do with them. They were too busy with all their religious duties, they were too preoccupied with making the right kind of religious sacrifices.

And so Jesus, when he's confronted by them, he challenges them about all that. And Jesus says to them in verse 13, go and learn what this means. Go and learn what this means.

[50 : 49] I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. and we can imagine the Pharisees all of a sudden going quiet.

What was Jesus saying to them? Well, he was saying to them, and he's saying still today to us, where is your compassion? Where is the mercy of God?

that reaches out to sinners, and calls them to be saved. Jesus is saying to these religious Pharisees, your sacrifices and your religion mean nothing.

If you don't have a heart, to reach out with the mercy of God, and if you don't have a desire, to see sinners saved.

You know, the song that we began with this morning, we're not just supposed to sing that song in here. We're supposed to take that song into all the darkest corners of the world and sing it out there.

[52 : 25] you know, there are people all over this country and there are people in Tarbert this morning who are waking up feeling hopeless and feeling lost, and they need to hear the good news.

there are people who are waking up this morning with a weight of sin upon them, and they need to hear us sing out this message that our sins, yes, there are many, but the mercy of Jesus is more.

So what did Jesus come to do? What's the lesson that we take from this scene as Jesus is reclining at table at this party with all these shady people?

The thing that we see here is that Jesus came to seek and save sinners. And that's good news for all of us.

Jesus came to call those who know that they are sick in their hearts. Jesus came to offer heart healing to all who will come to him.

[54 : 00] Jesus came not to condemn the world, but to offer to us the mercy of God. It's an offer that costs us nothing, to accept but it cost Jesus his life.

Jesus had to go to a cross to take our sin away so that we could be offered the mercy of God. Have you and I received the mercy of God this morning?

We read about the two blind men. what did they cry out? They said have mercy on me. That's a prayer that saves us.

Have we cried out asking for the mercy of God? That's what Jesus came to offer. And if we are Christians are we going out from here and telling people, maybe the least likely people in this place that our God is merciful and he is gracious and he offers to save all who will come to him.

So we see Jesus, he's reclining at table and we learn there that he came for sinners. That's what he came for. He came to seek and save sinners. And the second scene here under the heading of what did Jesus come to do becomes clear in the midst of this religious debate.

[55 : 38] Verse 14, the disciples of John came to Jesus saying, why do we and the Pharisees fast but your disciples do not fast? Now who were the disciples of John?

Well again they were religious people. Remember, if we go back to John chapter 1 at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, John says in John chapter 1 verse 29, behold the Lamb of God.

John sees Jesus and he points to Jesus, he says, behold the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world. Already John is pointing people away from himself.

John in John chapter 3 verse 30 says, he, Jesus, must increase, I must decrease. My ministry is coming to an end. That's what John was saying.

But here at this scene we see that there were some die-hard disciples of John and they weren't listening to what John was saying anymore. They liked the old religion.

[56 : 44] They liked the way things used to be. And they wondered why Jesus wasn't keeping on with all the old religious practices like fasting. verse 15.

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.

And so Jesus, in this answer, he takes the disciples of John away from this religious debate about fasting and he pulls them into this discussion about a relationship with God.

He takes them away from religion and he starts to pull them into the realm of relationship. The disciples of Jesus in his answer are portrayed as the bride and Jesus is the bridegroom.

And Jesus is saying the bride and the bridegroom are together at this time, so this is not the time for fasting. But soon, says Jesus, there will be a time for fasting when the bridegroom is taken away.

[58 : 04] There's violence in that kind of phrase in the Greek, taken away. When Jesus is taken away, when the bridegroom is taken away from the bride, that's the time for fasting, says Jesus.

That's when there will be sadness in that scene. Hendricks in the commentator says this is an early prediction of Christ's death on the cross.

So Jesus is saying he's pulling them away from the old religion and he's pulling them into the realm of relationship with God. And then to cement that, and Jesus goes on to use two examples from their old world.

Verse 16, Jesus says no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment for the patch tears away from the garment and a worse tear is made.

And we understand that illustration. We're not repairing our clothes as much but we understand enough to know that you don't repair an old pair of ragged jeans with a new bit of unwashed cloth.

[59 : 11] You can sew it on but one wash at 40 degrees and the whole garment will be ruined. And so Jesus says, you know, sensible people know this.

You don't put a new patch on an old garment where everything's ruined. Neither verse 17 says Jesus is new wine put into old wine skins.

If it is, the skins burst, the wine is spilled And the skins are destroyed! But new wine is put into fresh wine skins! And so both are preserved.

And back then the people understood this better, I think, than we do. We're not making wine, but in that world they were making wine in each house and new wine is still fermented and it's been made.

Old wine skins are hardened, they're stretched to the point of being brittle and if you put new wine that's still fizzing into old wine skins just bursts.

[60 : 21] Everything is lost. Everything is ruined. So what's Jesus saying? Using these two illustrations, what is Jesus saying?

Well, he's saying to these religious disciples of John the Baptist, I haven't come to patch up your old religion. I haven't come with a message that's like a patch that you can incorporate onto the old garment of your religion.

I haven't come to extend the old covenant, Pharisees. I haven't come to perpetuate the old laws. I have fulfilled them. I have come, says Jesus, to do something new.

So what did Jesus come to do? Well, he came not to certify and approve the whole hard, cold, brittle religion that the Pharisees were holding on to.

Jesus came to bring us into relationship with God through the new covenant, sealed with the wine of his blood.

[61 : 46] So where does this leave us today? What do we do with this to overhear this religious debate?

what do we do with this? Well, I suppose to some extent, all of us here today share something with the Pharisees and the disciples of John.

All of us here today are to some degree religious. That's why we're sitting in a church service. but the question that Jesus is asking us through these pictures in this debate is, are we in a relationship with God?

Or let me put it this way, do you love Jesus the way a bride loves her bridegroom? do you have a saving, living, vital relationship with Jesus?

But when you pick up the Bible, you're not ticking a box, but you're saying, will you speak to me, Lord? I need to hear your voice.

[63 : 20] And when we pray, we're pouring out our hearts and when we come to this place, we're coming, yes, to be encouraged by the faces of the people that we see, but we're coming to meet with the God that we know.

Do we have a relationship with God? God? And if the answer to that question is no, if we're here as part of some religious ritual where we just come week by week, tick the box and get on with life, how can we enter into a relationship with God this morning?

That's the question. And that takes us to the final point and I'm just going to touch on this. Time is gone. I think patience is exasperated.

Who is Jesus? Saviour of sinners, Lord of all. What did he come to do? He came to call sinners to be saved. He came to give healing to those who were heartsick.

He came not to perpetuate the old religion. He came to bring us into a relationship with God. How can we enter into a relationship with God? Well, it's all about a response to Jesus.

[64 : 44] And in the remaining section, we have case studies given to us of what it looks like to have faith in Jesus. How can we enter into a relationship with God?

The children tell us. Just trust Jesus. Believe in Jesus. Have faith. faith. But what does it look like to have faith?

Well, let me just give you the headings and then we'll come back to this next week. Faith equals coming to Jesus.

And if you've got your Bibles open, let me just give you the headings and the verses. And you can think about this and we'll come back to this. to have faith means that we have to come to Jesus.

In verse 18, we see the distraught father of a girl who has died. He's decided as the ruler. And he's distraught, he's grieving, and what does he do?

[65 : 52] He comes to Jesus. And in verse 20, we see a woman who's sick. For 12 years she's been sick, it's made her unclean, it's made her a social outcast.

What does she do? She comes to Jesus. So having faith isn't just knowing about Jesus, it's coming to Jesus.

We can sit in the chairs here every week and gather a whole lot of information about Jesus. We can know all about him and have no faith.

and never come to him. We want to be saved. If we want to enter into relationship with God, it's not just about what we know in our heads, it's about coming to Jesus in our hearts.

We see that in these two episodes. The second thing is faith is crying out to Jesus. Verse 27, two blind men. Desperate situation to be in that world and they hear that Jesus is passing by.

[67 : 03] What do they do? They cry out over and over again. They cry out asking that Jesus would open their eyes.

Having faith in Jesus isn't just knowing about grace. it's crying for grace until we receive it.

And having faith equates to carrying others to Jesus. What does it look like to have faith? We come to Jesus, we cry out to Jesus, we carry others to Jesus.

You see in verse 32 a demon-possessed man. And he's brought to Jesus by his friends. He couldn't come to Jesus himself because he was so disabled by the darkness that possessed him.

But those who loved him, they carried him to Jesus. He was given freedom. So having faith in Jesus isn't just knowing that he can save those whom we know and love.

[68 : 20] It's about bringing them in prayer to Jesus. Who did you bring in prayer to Jesus this morning? Who in our prayers did we bring to Jesus last night?

Names of people who maybe are lost, hopeless. Jesus can save them.

We know that in our heads, don't we? But are we exercising faith by bringing them day by day in prayer to Christ?

Asking that he will give them freedom. him. How should we respond to Jesus?

We should have faith in him. And faith looks like coming to Jesus. Faith looks like crying out to Jesus. Faith looks like carrying others to Jesus.

[69 : 33] Do you have faith? let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you love us.

We thank you that you are the saviour of sinners. We thank you that you are the Lord of all. We thank you that Christianity is not about rules and regulations and hard code religion.

we thank you that in Christ we are brought into relationship with God. We thank you that we know you as our father. We thank you that we know Jesus as the saviour and the friend who sticks closer than our brother.

We thank you that we have the Holy Spirit living within us, opening our eyes, unblocking our ears, helping us with all the things that we know in ourselves we are not able to do.

So we pray Lord that at this day each one of us would know the blessing of being in Christ. We pray that we would know that our sins are forgiven.

[70 : 50] We pray Lord that you would help us to follow Jesus as Lord of all. That we would seek first your kingdom and that we would know the blessing of being in Christ and that we would take that courage as we are called to reach out as those who have received mercy to tell others about the mercy that is offered to them in Jesus.

Hear our prayers, help us we ask in Jesus name, Amen. We'll sing to conclude the hymn Mission Praise 396 just as I am without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me come to thee O Lamb of God I come.

Amen. for me for me that thatNINGNING We come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

O stars I am, I'm waiting not to rid my soul of one dark plot, to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

O stars I am, though tossed around, with many a conflict, many a doubt, I takes within and fears without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

[73 : 15] O stars I am, though wretched blind, sight-witches, feeling of the mind.

Yea, all I need in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

O stars I am, though wretched, sweet, wilt welcome, pardon, blest believe.

Because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

But thus I am, thy love unknown, has broken every barrier down.

[74 : 31] Now to be thine, yet thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

And 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.