

22.6.25 pm

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Preacher: Reverend John Lachie Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Good evening everyone. A warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to have John Lachey and Carol with us tonight and John's going to be opening God's word and sharing a message and also giving us an update on the ministry in Romania. So John thank you for being with us and we look forward to hearing what the Lord has given you to say this evening. I'll hand over now.

Well a big thank you to David for the opportunity to be with you. I do feel a bit of a fraud in some ways because it was a long-standing invitation to come and speak about the work in Romania and it's taken me that long to come and report on it. You've already had a team out and back in the time and they could probably give you a more up-to-date report but there's one aspect of the ministry that I do want to share with you tonight that I don't think we've covered in previous gatherings but I do want to bring a sincere thanks from the people in Romania. They sometimes don't always express their thankfulness as much as they feel it when you're with them but I did have a phone call after the team had made their way home from VO just really appreciative and actually a bit overcome by how much work had been done and slightly worried because they have a team coming from Aberdeen and they're not sure now that they have any work left for them at the start of the summer but please be assured that the labours were greatly appreciated and we give thanks to God for what was done in that time out at Verferilli.

We're going to begin our worship tonight singing in Gaelic. I'll maybe just ask the presenter to introduce it. I'm having as much difficulty with the Roman numerals as I am with the Gaelic so we'll sing in Psalm 42 verses 1 to 2.

We'll be right back.

We'll be right back.

[3 : 0 9] We'll be right back.

We'll be right back.

We'll be right back.

Let's turn our hearts to God in prayer.

For the Lord. For the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? In a world, O Lord, we're like the psalmist, we're like the psalmist, we often hear the tauntings that ask us, where is your God?

[illegible]

Our God is for us. Our God is among us. Our God is to be glorified. Our God is to be known and worshipped. Our God is to be magnified, exalted, and worshipped with heart, soul, mind, and strength. He is the God who is to be loved with all that we are because he is the God, because you are the God who has loved us in immeasurable ways. We thank you tonight, Lord, that whether we gather in a gathering here in Harris, or whether there are gatherings in Romania, or to the very ends of the earth, that there is one glorious unifying purpose in the hearts of people from different tribes and tongues and nations, and it is that we recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. We thank you, our Father, that in a world that rejected him, he exercised his authority and power in a world which thought it could destroy him and continues to seek to destroy the message about him. You have shown your strength and your authority, your power and your glory in that our Savior could not be controlled or crushed by the power of death, but shows his victory in the power of rising and demonstrating that God is a God of endless life, and God is a God of glorious victory, a God of power and majesty and strength. And we thank you today, Lord, because we recognize our world is in a day of darkness, and we recognize we live in days of uncertainty, days of trouble, days of confusion. We thank you that in the gospel it is revealed to us that the God who comes to us in Jesus Christ is the God of light, the God of hope, the God who gives understanding, a God who can open the eyes of our innermost being, whereby things that were once dim to us become clear to us, things we could not understand or accept or believe at one period in our life become the things that become the very bedrock of our existence, the very hope of our daily life, the inspiration of our being, and the encouragement in all our warring and warfaring. We thank you, God, that tonight we can find our rest in the knowledge that whatever will transpire in world history, it will ultimately lead to the day where Jesus Christ is revealed, and everything ever created, will acknowledge that he is Lord. And so, Lord, until that day comes, and as we fear at times political decisions and the warfaring that goes on in the Middle East and the troubles that plague parts of Europe and the poverty that ravages us areas of Africa and Asia, we come to you, our God, knowing that your creation in its original intent was good. You saw it and it was good, but we thank you that we are waiting for a new creation which will even outshine the glories of the first creation, for it will forever sing of redemption. It will forever sing of salvation. It will forever acknowledge that something that was once destroyed was gloriously redeemed, repurposed, and remade for eternal glory by a God who remains good. So, Father, help us tonight as we come around your word, as we come to sing your praises, open our hearts and our minds to the wonders of your presence and your power, and may your word speak to each one of us with whatever it is you want to say to us. And that's the wonder we thank you of gathering like this, that you are a God who speaks to each person according to who they are, who you have made them, and the circumstances of life as it has shaped them. We thank you that there's such a vastness in the resources of your grace and truth to have

something for every soul that gathers tonight. And so, we pray that we will hear it. We pray that you, we will know you with us. We pray that we will sense afresh a thankfulness in our hearts that you are a God who forgives and renews. And we thank you, our God, that we can draw near to you, because the name you gave us for our Savior assures us that he saves us from our sins. So, hear us for no other reason, but because we ask everything in Jesus' name. Amen. So, let's sing again to God's praise. This time it's from Mission Praise. I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest. Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon my breast, upon my breast.

Thank you, our Lord, who groaned, who groaned, who groaned, who groaned, who groaned, who I hear the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest.

[12 : 02] Lay down, thou willing one, Lay down thy head upon my bed.

I came to Jesus as I was, Healy and warm and sad.

I found in Him a resting place, And He has made me glad.

I hear the voice of Jesus say, Behold, I freely give.

The living water, thirsty one, Stood down and drank and lived.

[13 : 04] I came to Jesus as I drank Of that life-giving stream.

My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, And now I live in Him.

I hear the voice of Jesus say, I am this dark world's light.

Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, And all thy day be bright.

I look to Jesus, and I found In Him my star, my sun.

[14 : 07] And in that light of life I walk Till traveling days are done.

Well, both our opening items of praise Have contained the theme of thirst, And how that natural experience Can reflect spiritual truth.

And we find that So clearly expressed in Scripture in John chapter 4, When Jesus encounters the woman of Samaria. So if you turn to John's gospel and to the fourth chapter, I want to read some of that encounter, Which we'll come back and make reference to later in the message.

In John chapter 4, we read at the beginning, Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, Although Jesus Himself did not baptize, but only His disciples, He left Judea and departed again for Galilee.

And He had to pass through Samaria. So He came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, Near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there.

[15 : 33] So Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, Was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman from Samaria came to draw water.

Jesus said to her, Give me a drink. For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?

For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God, And who it is that is saying to you, Give me a drink, You would have asked him, And he would have given you living water.

The woman said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, And the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob?

He gave us the well and drank from it himself, As did his sons and his livestock. Jesus said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again.

[16 : 41] But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him Will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him A spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The woman said to him, Sir, give me this water, So that I will not be thirsty, Or have to come here to draw water. Jesus said to her, Go, call your husband and come here.

And the woman answered him, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You're right in saying I have no husband, For you've had five husbands, And the one you now have is not your husband.

What you've said is true. The woman said to him, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, But you say that in Jerusalem Is the place where people ought to worship.

Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, The hour is coming When neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem Will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know.

[17 : 41] We worship what we know. For salvation is from the Jews, But the hour is coming, And is now here. When the true worshippers Will worship the Father In spirit and truth.

For the Father is seeking Such people to worship Him. God is spirit, And those who worship Him Must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming, He who is called Christ.

When He comes, He will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He. Just then His disciples came back.

They marveled that He was talking with a woman. But no one said, What do you seek? Or why are you talking with her? So the woman left her water jar, Went away into the town, And said to the people, Come and see a man Who told me all that I ever did.

Can this be the Christ? Amen. And we'll leave it reading there As we give thanks to God For His holy word.

[18 : 50] And just before we come To share together, Let's sing the hymn, Come Holy Ghost. Number 122 in the hymn book, Come Holy Ghost, Our hearts inspire, Let us thine influence prove.

Let us thine influence, The holy word, and screw source of the old prophetic fight fountain of light and love and holy ghost for whom I need the prophet taught and score unlock the truth by self the key until the sacred room expand thy range celestial dove who adored our nature's night on earth heart earth spits moon and let there now be light!

For through himself we then know! know!

!!!! All thy saints below, the depths of love divine.

Let's say a word of prayer before we turn to our message tonight. Lord, we acknowledge that as we approach your Scriptures and as we share testimony of your work, that the verse we've just sung would be the most appropriate prayer.

[21 : 53] Come, Holy Ghost, for moved by thee the prophets wrote and spoke. Unlock the truth, thyself the key, and seal the sacred book.

And so we do pray that when we come to look at the Scripture, we will sense your own teaching and guiding, your leading and speaking. And as we share testimony of what you have done in the children's work in Romania, Lord, may all glory be given to you, our Saviour.

As we acknowledge our thankfulness for giftedness and for fellowship and commitment and service in the body of Christ, we thank you for the many in this congregation who pray and who give.

We thank you for those from this congregation who have been and who have worked. And we thank you, God, that we are privileged, each in our own small way, to play a part in the great work that is happening in the world tonight, that Jesus is fulfilling his word, that he will build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

So be with us, God, as we seek you again. In Jesus' name. Amen. A number of years ago, Carol and I met an American, I think he's a church historian, he lectured somewhere, and he had a, it's always embarrassing when you meet these Americans who know church history in Scotland better than you know it yourself, but he was involved in all kinds of missions and evaluations of evangelical movements, and one of the things he was sharing with us that stayed with me, he said the average age of any evangelical movement is 50 years.

[23 : 48] And I found that astonishing, so I asked him more about this, and again, some of his information there was based on the, a lot of what happens in America.

But his basic thesis, and he had evidence to back this up, is that most evangelical movements, within 50 years, they'll start facing major threats and challenges, because ultimately, it's not a case of theologies, it's a case of the work of God, being attacked by the enemy of God.

And there are enough examples in Scripture that show us that Satan is relentless when it comes to the work of God, and seeking to discourage, to destroy, to tear down, to distract, and all manner of thing.

And the reason his words have stayed with me is because Children for Christ is reaching a stage of being 30 years in ministry. And therefore, we have to be wary of all the things that could disrupt, could destroy.

I mean, one of the common features that this man had encountered was that, you know, in a lot of evangelical movements, you would find people, you know, start compromising beliefs and compromising convictions.

[25 : 06] And that's what led to the kind of disintegration of some of the great English evangelical movements through the likes of Salvation Army and the Wesleys and so on.

It's, you know, in a heartbreak to those who maybe read and love the work of the Wesley brothers to look at much of what bears the name of Methodism today, particularly in the States, has drifted far from the Word of God.

And we've seen it in our own country. It maybe takes longer than 50 years in some cases, but once you start drifting or once you start losing vision and focus on Christ, it can be a challenge to maintain integrity and maintain faithfulness and to keep focused on the Lord.

And for children in Christ, that is definitely one of the challenges we're going through, particularly with regards to transition and leadership and so on.

But one of the things that have been at the heart of the fruitfulness of the ministry for these 30 years is what I want to share with you tonight. And it's an aspect of the counselling ministry that takes place at the camps and in the Bible clubs.

[26 : 23] I'm sure many of you are familiar with Slavic Gospel Association. And I don't know if you've had visits from the SGA reps over the years.

A number of years ago in our own church, this couple came with Slavic Gospel Association. And Mark Foster of Slavic Gospel introduced me to them.

And as he introduced me, he said to the couple, he says, oh, John's actually been to Romania. And they said, oh, what partner? I told them. And then immediately when I said, Rad, they asked who I knew and I told them and they said immediately, oh, you must have something to do with Children for Christ.

And I said, well, yes, I'm involved in Children for Christ. And the lady then, she said, that's where I came to know Jesus at the camp in Varferilic. And it was an amazing connection.

Some of you may even be praying for her work. She's the lady. She was with us and her husband was with her at the time. He sadly died a few years later. Philip Faragow, those of you who follow God's work in Romania will know the Faragow family have been a great instrument of the Lord there.

[27 : 33] Philip had cancer, never recovered. Violeta was widowed and has built a ministry caring to cancer sufferers and their families.

Casa Philip in Romania. But what really struck me was that she'd said that in the house and then after the meeting she came up to me and says, John, you know, I should have said to you, it's not just that I came to know the Lord at the camp.

I learned to serve the Lord at the camp. And we spoke a little and one of the things I wanted people to appreciate and to pray for and to give thanks for is the way in which young people from the ages of eight through to 15 as they come, as they learn and develop, the kind of mindset that the camp has sought to impart to them over the years is one of learning what it is to know God and if that knowledge of God is real it will be manifested in service and that's why many of the people still involved in the ministry today are people who came to know Christ through the ministry.

I think I have a couple of slides hopefully, yes. The first one is just an illustration no, the next one, sorry, is an illustration of our prayer points.

I don't know if you've signed up for them. We send out a newsletter three or four times a year but we also send out weekly prayer points that come directly from the team in Romania.

[29 : 06] If you haven't signed up for them speak to Peggy and she'll get your email address and we'll get you signed up if you want to pray and know what's happening from week to week especially during the summer months because the camps start very soon and they go through to September and if you are on the prayer list you'll get a copy of this prayer point every week and let you know what's happening at each camp.

But I want to focus in on one aspect of the prayer points on the next slide. you'll sometimes see something like this nine children trusted the Lord in the first camp and six children came for counselling and help in their Christian walk.

and I know that you know sometimes we might you know read something and you know say you know children gave their life to the Lord what does that actually mean and you know what's behind that statement how real is that?

I praise God I don't think the islands are as tough as they used to be but it used to be hard to be a young person and a Christian in the islands. I remember I went forward just months after I'd been converted which was quite rare I hadn't served much of an apprenticeship maybe some people would say I should have but there was that kind of attitude I don't think Harris to be fair was ever as bad as other parts but we won't name and shame but there was definitely a feeling that young people didn't really know and young people had to take time.

One of the things I've learned from times in Romania and I've seen it even with children in this country as well children's faith is as real as ours. A child who has a real faith in Jesus and a real faith in God has a faith that's as real as anything any adult has but what I wanted to share tonight is what goes on behind a statement like that.

[31 : 05] When you're reading your prayer letter nine children trusted the Lord in the camp and six children came for counselling. I want you to understand what this means to the camp ministry because there is the other side I've been in meetings and people are told to raise their hands say a prayer and then to go and walk out and just believe that they're a Christian with no follow-up no encouragement no understanding and I don't think that's helpful but what happens at camp is the children are given the opportunity two or three times a day if they want to speak to any of the camp leaders and trained counsellors to go and have time with them.

One of the interesting things I forgot to check with David what progress this was at but they're trying to make more counselling rooms because more and more children are wanting counselling year on year and some of it is in direct relation to the message sometimes it's simply issues in life and sometimes it's children who've maybe been before and so on and they want to speak to somebody and at the end of a camp at the end of the camps in September if we can see the next slide the ministry produces for its leaders only a brochure like this and I put it on the slide so you get a close-up and if we zoom in on the next one it comes it's a list of every series and you'll see that in every series for every week of the camp there's a list of names these names and their ages and then there's initials beside it and if we move in to the next slide you'll see a close-up there

I'm assuming that none of these names mean anything to anyone here and I'm not breaching any data protection I just wanted to show you the example but if you move on to the next one then we have these initials on the front of the prayer manual and each letter represents what the child came for counselling for and then all those who were involved in the counselling will continue to pray for that child for the whole year continue to remember them continue to follow up on them and the different categories there are children who come because they believe that the message has spoken to them and they want to understand the way of salvation and they want to become a Christian the way of salvation will be explained to them and time will be taken to speak with the child and if the counsellor believes that there is understanding that child will be prayed for be given a bible and encouraged to find a fellowship or a church if they don't already or to join one of the home bible clubs that the children for christ ministries run in various villages and towns some children come just seeking assurance some will have made a profession previously but worry about their walk with god and they need assurance of faith many of them belong to orthodox families so when they go home and tell their parents they've become a Christian they don't get encouragement and the ministry has been careful that we don't seek to disrupt families through young children so we try and encourage the children in these situations to go to the bible clubs and to find their fellowship and discipleship during the week but some children will struggle and because they haven't felt they've grown they want to know about assurance they want to be encouraged in their faith some will come for a discussion my Romanian is nowhere near good enough to give you the exact translations for each abbreviation there but some will come because maybe they've heard something that they're interested about or maybe they've got questions about faith and some of them will come and they won't commit faith it may just be an aspect they're troubled about or they want an understanding about and they won't commit themselves at that time but they will again be prayed for and some will come because of life issues some will come because of struggles they have at home we still have a number who come from very difficult home situations and again they'll be listened to and again all the subjects don't get discussed just the general banner you know it was it it said there's no such thing as a family secret if the

Sunday school teacher says what can we pray for and we don't seek to elicit information from children or find out but if they share things it's prayed for it's never published what the issue was just their name and the subject the theme why they came for counselling and again they will be prayed for throughout the year and again this is something this is actually the first of these brochures I got from last year it's not something that even gets distributed to all the trustees here I requested and we did ask at one of our meetings if we could see it again just for encouragement because you do see the number of children at each camp that kind of come forward for some kind of counselling but there's also a category for those who came wanted to speak to somebody and the counsellors felt they were under the age of understanding too young to grasp the fundamentals and they could tell that they were you know they might have been emotionally stirred or they saw someone that they knew going for counselling so they wanted to go to these children will never be turned away but neither will they be forced to make any kind of decision that the counsellor doesn't feel that they are ready for and I just wanted to share that because

I am conscious that sometimes we read these prayer notes and we read these messages and we might think what's behind that what does it really mean for a child at a camp in Romania to go for counselling or what are they doing for a child to give their life to Christ and of course all these things do follow the protocols that we would expect with regards to confidentiality child protection and so on and every camp has leaders from the area where the child lives so we encourage that further connection one of the challenges they've had over 30 years is having some people who seem to think that the Lord only lives at the camp and they can only be close to God when they're at the camp and we try and encourage them to know that they should seek their walk with God at every stage of life and when I was considering what I would share with you and

[37 : 55] I wanted this is one as I say one part of the ministry that I do think needs understanding and insight it struck me having preached on John chapter 4 that we see Jesus showing a very patient and understanding approach to reaching the woman at the well of Samaria Christ is the perfect counselor Christ is the one who shows us a pattern of dealing with a thirsty soul a broken life and he shows us the way in which he patiently and purposefully seeks her out and shares his life-giving power with her in a way that transforms John chapter 4 is one of the most famous encounters in terms of Jesus meeting an individual dealing with them personally and transforming their life and their situation we see the Lord purposefully going to that place in

Samaria going to that well and being there on his own all the things that seem like little coincidences in life and yet behind it all we see the sovereignty of God every commentator worth his salt will tell us that the fact that Jesus had to pass through Samaria is John's way of telling us there was some divine purpose and divine intent behind this because any self-respecting Jew would avoid Samaria anyone who wanted to keep himself ceremonially clean would have taken an alternative route whereby he wouldn't have to go through this area risk contact with the Samaritans and risk becoming ceremonially unclean it's remarkable even at the very outset of the passage to see the great intent of Christ's heart to reach the lost in

Luke 19 when Jesus meets Zacchaeus and he calls Zacchaeus to come down from the tree and again there's a great life-changing transformation takes place as that wee man hears the message of Jesus Jesus comes to his house and he transforms him and he shares his transformation in the way that he views his life and Jesus says at the end the son of man came to seek and to save the lost and it's wonderful when we think about that truth and then see it lived out in the real life testimony of this woman at Samaria that Jesus is living out here what he shares about himself elsewhere that there is a purpose and an intention in the heart of God to reach people for the woman at the well she doesn't go there thinking about the great things of life and wondering what great destiny awaits her that day from what we see of her and what we sense of her we simply have a woman who's at the end of her tethering life a woman who wants to avoid people it's one of the clear signs of depression people tell us where people want to be in isolation and withdraw from going to draw water at the hottest part of the day at noontime believing that there'll be nobody there believing that this is the time when all the normal people of society are not going to be bothering her and she can go and be on her own because her life from what

Jesus gets her to reveal about herself has been shaped by broken relationships whatever lies behind these relationships it's hurt her she toddles out to the well and there's this man sitting there this intrusion this pest I wonder if there's sometimes things in your life and you think why does this bother me and actually if you would stop and think you might discover that it bothers you because God has set it there to bother it he set these things in place to interrupt your routine to break into your isolation to get you alone in your thoughts with him and Jesus engages with that's one of the things we encourage every camp visitor in Romania to if you can if you're able in some way or another engage with the children engage with people for them to talk

I've only ever once been involved in one of the counseling situations Vio who is known to many of you asked me one time to take part in a counseling situation and it was a difficult situation and I felt completely hopeless at the end of it I felt it contributed nothing and it was only recently that I received a message via Facebook from the girl who is now a young woman married and with a child giving thanks to God for that situation so we need to remember as we go out as the Lord's people that God might be the one who is placing us in situations that we might not want to be in order to be an interruption into someone else's life or if you are here and you don't know the Lord or don't have peace for your soul and there's something that keeps coming in your way or coming out of the ordinary to kind of in order that you will stop and engage with him he has come to engage with you

[43 : 52] God has come to seek and to save us in Jesus Christ God has come to speak to us through the proclamation of the gospel God has come to convict us through the person of the Holy Spirit God is doing everything that he needs to do for us to be saved Are we?

He a Jew ask for a drink from me a woman of Samaria and John reminds us this is why it bothered the woman because the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans and note it is that way round the Jews have no dealings with Samaritans they were they despised look down on some people would say there was good historic reason for it in the way that the Samaritans had become the people separated from the heritage and covenant of Jerusalem and so on but it should never have been allowed to grow into the prejudice it had and Jesus is showing her kindness and showing her a mercy but she's suspicious of maybe she's suspicious of him because every other man she'd ever had in her life had disappointed her used her in some way or another and she has this she's who knows why are you asking me for this and then

Jesus turns it on its head he says if you knew the gift of God so immediately he's trying to get her to think beyond the physical that's one of the problem most people have when it comes to spirituality is that it's hard for us to go beyond the physical you know there's many a person would want God to help them but help them just only to get through their current muddle or their current crisis or their current illness or their current financial problem and just want help all the time for the things of this world and Jesus comes and reminds her that you know there are bigger things woman than just the water of this well if you knew the gift of God what was the gift of God well it was the son of God speaking to her it was the saviour of the world being in a situation where she had proximity to him in order to speak with him and engage with him and if you knew he said who it is that is asking you for a drink you would have asked him for a drink for living what and we see that her mind is very much fixed on the things of this world in the way that she starts referring to the well and its religious significance and the way that she starts saying well give me this water

I'll never have to come to this well again isn't that what many people want just give me something God so life never hard again give me something so I never have a struggle again give me something quick God so I never have to feel pain or loss or shame or suffering ever again and Jesus saying well I can give you something but it cannot be left stagnant in you it needs to become a spring of water welling up into eternal life or you'll still feel the pain and you'll still feel sorrow and you'll still feel difficulty a source that can be shared of a living water that gives an answer to the deeper thirst than the simple physical thirst or the things of this life give me this what and the conversation is growing and things are developing and then Jesus gets to the nub of the mat go call your husband and come here now it's interesting friends and again in terms of counseling and seeing

Christ as our counselor it is encouraging for us and challenging to us to see the way that Jesus dealt with this woman personally I think it's safe to assume Jesus knew her situation from the outset I think it's safe to assume that Jesus knew exactly who she was as she came out to the world we're given that sense of destiny in John's description of the situation so when Jesus says to her go call your husband and from what he says subsequently we know it's no shock to him but this is the pivotal moment in the conversation because Jesus is showing her lovingly and gently that he has come to deal with the depth of her life the depth of her soul and how she responds to him is going to be pivotal in what she will ultimately receive from him I have no husband you're right in saying

[48 : 57] I have no husband it's funny how you can say something that's true but it's not the truth she simply says I have no husband well that's true but it's not the truth is the truth is you've had five and the one you now have is not your husband what you have said is true so where are we going with this Jesus is saying you know the Holy Spirit is described to us as the counselor Jesus said it to the disciples I will not leave you alone I send a counselor another of the same someone of the same mind as Christ someone with the same heart as Christ with the same wisdom as Christ the same power and authority as Christ he's going to come and he's going to be with the disciples and he's going to be in them and he's going to lead them and he's going to guide them and here we see the way in which God works in the Son and in the Spirit as Jesus exposes what God to reach a place where they can be delivered from isn't that ultimately what happens to this woman in the story that here's a woman that when we first meet her is going to a well alone at noonday in order that she can be away from her whole community away from the gossip away from the chat away from the people speculating about her life and what led to!

She is away from them all and yet by the time Jesus is done with her that same woman is standing in front of her whole community saying come see a man who told me all I ever did I thought you were ashamed of all you did was it not the shame that led you to be on your own at the well yeah but this man gave her living water this man didn't just point out where things had gone wrong he brought her to a source where she could experience righteousness where she could experience peace where she could experience joy and life refreshment and invigoration as she worships the father and spirit and truth he didn't bring her into a religion he didn't bring her into a program he brought her into the presence of the living

God the father is seeking people to worship him God is spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth every sermon I heard for many years on this passage always highlighted the immorality of the woman I once read a book called Jewish Insights to the New Testament and I found it intriguing that in that book the author actually questioned whether the woman had been a barren woman and had been discarded by husbands because of her failure to produce children it may not be as graphically immoral as we think but there's a true brokenness here and that's what Jesus came to heal there's a thirst for life and that's what Jesus came to satisfy there's an isolation and that's what he came to liberate her from she becomes a missionary and one of the things that astonishes!

me about this story is we read at the outset how amazing it is that Jesus went out of his way to meet this woman in Samaria but then later on after she's testified to the town and they come to Jesus and after she said come and see this man he told me all that I ever did the Samaritans came to Jesus in verse 40 and they asked him to stay with them and he stayed there if they had followed conventional religious Jewish custom wouldn't even have gone near Samaria ends up staying there two days to lead many people to himself how greatly the Lord has loved us the depths he has gone to the places he has gone to the things he has tolerated the things he has watched the things he has presided over and waited for and patiently borne with us in order that ultimately he's our

Messiah and when they speak to the woman it's no longer just because of what you said that we believe and they're not putting her down there they're encouraging her it's not just because of your experience of Jesus but we've heard for ourselves and we know that this indeed is the saviour of the world and friends when a child comes from counseling in Romania that is the heart of the council not that the child will be recruited for camp ministry in the future though that's been a side benefit in many ways not that the child will you know feel forever indebted to a charity and give themselves to it but that child will know for themselves that Jesus is the saviour of the world and that's our intent in the proclamation of the gospel here

[54 : 45] Glasgow Romania wherever the Lord will give the opportunity is to see Christ patiently work his grace and truth into the lives of people so that they come to worship the father in spirit and in truth knowing that they do it because Jesus the saviour of the world came to seek them and save them let's pray father in heaven we thank you that you are such an intentional God that there is such purpose and direction in your ways and in your providence love that you weave!

together the strands of life that so often appear as mystery to us as you work the perfection of your testimony of grace and truth in Jesus Christ into the lives of us who are lost without you and we thank you Lord that the knowledge of Jesus is so much more than intellectual it is truly spiritual and transformational we thank you when we read that story that we see a life liberated one imprisoned by shame secure in their isolation being set free to declare with authority the messiahship of Jesus and we thank you Lord that even the little we know about her life tells us that she was fruitful in her service for the Lord so God help us every one of us tonight if we've never come to know for ourselves internally spiritually powerfully and transformationally that

Jesus is the saviour of the world then oh God in your glorious grace make it real for us make it true to us and for those of us Lord who can point to times and places that we're thankful for because they directed us to Jesus make us fruitful as we abide in Christ whatever it is you have for us whatever you want us to go whatever you want us to say whatever you want us to be whatever you want us to do oh Lord help us to do it to say it to be it to live it for the glory of your name amen well let's sing in closing hold me saviour hold me saviour lest

I wander never let me stray det Thank you.

Thank you.

[59 : 05] Holy Savior, now and ever, Lord, let your goodness go with me.

Right now, keep me, gently lead me. Your presence with me is my peace.

Christ, Savior, let your nearness cheer me every hour. Show me marvels of your mercy, wonders of your power.

Fire streams of water lead me through this land. Joy's awaiting all the way I will steer at hand.

Holy Savior, now and ever, Lord, let your goodness go with me.

[60 : 17] Guide and keep me, gently lead me. Your presence with me is my peace.

Keep me Savior to the finish, faithful till the end. When I'll sing there, never once unto a better friend.

Through the gates of glory lead me all the way. There my faith will turn to sight and prevail will turn to praise.

Holy Savior, now and ever, Lord, let your goodness go with me.

Guide and keep me, gently lead me. Your presence with me is my peace.

[61 : 31] And so may you go, your soul revived and refreshed with a life-giving, life-keeping, life-filling vision of Jesus, the one who came to seek you and to save you by the power of the Spirit to the glory of the Father.

Father, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you this night and forever. Amen.