

Discouragement & Despondency - Then The Lord Steps In

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Date: 16 February 2025

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[0 : 00] Well now welcome to our evening service of worship as again we seek to come before the Lord and we're going to begin our time of worship by singing to praise of God in Psalm 139.

So Psalm 139, Psalm 139 and we're going to sing the verses marked 1 to 10. So Psalm 139, verse 1 to 10, O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, thou knowest my sitting down and rising up, yea, all my thoughts afar to thee are known.

My footsteps, my lying down, thou compasses always, thou also most entirely art, acquaint with all my ways. For in my tongue before I speak, not any word can be, but altogether, lo, O Lord, it is well known to thee.

Behind, before thou hast be set, and laid on me thine hand, such knowledge is too strange for me, too high to understand.

So a picture there of the way in which the Lord knows everything about us, even as we gather together in worship, our innermost thoughts, even things that we've never shared with anyone else, that the Lord knows these things.

[1 : 21] And that makes him uniquely able to minister to us, no matter what it is that we go through in our different providences. And a reminder too there from verse 7 that the Lord is always with us, even when we try and escape him.

And there can be times when we try and do that, we try and escape him, but there is no escaping the presence of the Lord. That's a comfort to the Lord's people. It's a different thing entirely for those who haven't come to faith, who want to get away from the eye of the Almighty, but there is no escaping the eye of the Almighty.

From thy spirit whither shall I go, or from thy presence fly? Ascend I heaven, lo, thou art there, there if in hell I lie. Take I the morning wings and dwell in utmost parts of sea.

Even there, Lord, shall thy hand me lead. Thy right hand hold shall me. So we'll sing those words there to the praise of God. O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, Thou not my sitting down, God bless you.

And I am rising again, O Lord, thou hast me seen, O Lord, thou hast me seen, O Lord, thou hast me seen, My Christ, thou hast me seen, My Christ, thou hast me seen, And I am rising again, God blesses always.

[3 : 01] And also most in the very heart, And with bliss on my way.

You know everything about us. You know our rising up or sitting down. You know our thoughts. You know every action before we act it.

[7 : 59] You know every thought before we think it. You know every word before we say it. And indeed, as we mentioned earlier on, that makes you uniquely qualified and able to minister to us.

And to take from the word, that word which is sung, that word which is read and broken down. And you are able to take from that word and apply it to us.

In our different circumstances, different situations and different providences that we find ourselves in life. And we do pray to that end for everyone present here.

And perhaps those who we are particularly burdened for as well. You know the situation of all in the congregation. Those who perhaps are no longer able to make it out of the place of worship.

Those who are housebound. And maybe those for other reasons who have come to join with your people in the past, but no longer do so now. Our prayer is, O Lord, that you would work in the hearts of such people.

[9 : 01] That you would stir their hearts. Perhaps if there are any who have lost sight of the love of God and lost sight of the wonder, of the grace of our Lord and Savior.

That you would quicken them. That you would revive them. That your spirit would so work in their hearts and souls. That they might be enabled to see.

That the blindfold might be removed. That they might see the beauty of Christ as we were discussing even earlier on today. We pray, O Lord, that you would be with those who are present here as well.

You know everyone's different situations. You know the different concerns and worries and fears perhaps that people have. And we ask, O Lord, that you would undertake for all.

And even as we were thinking earlier on in the service. We not only pray for our physical well-being. Although we pray for these things. We do ask, O Lord, that you would protect us in these ways.

[10 : 00] But even more importantly than that. We do pray for the spiritual well-being of your people. Guard us and keep us. Be as a wall of fire around us.

We know that we have an enemy who seeks to roam around to devour the Lord's people. And we often hear his roaring. We often see him at work.

Even amongst the Church of Christ. We see him at work. But our prayer is that we might stand firm. And that we might look to the one who is far greater than the one who is opposed to us.

And the power of our Lord and our Saviour. And to that end we give thanks for the wonder of Calvary. And there we see the great conflict. The great battle between the enemy of our souls and our Lord and Saviour.

Come to that wonderful climax on the cross. As we see Jesus bearing the sins of his people. And taking the curse that is due to sinners like us.

[11 : 02] And dying there. Giving his life as an atoning sacrifice. To atone for our sins. And help us when we think of the cross. To as it were see our sins nailed there.

To realise that our Lord went through all of that. Because of his love for us. And help us in response to that. Even as again as we were thinking about earlier on today. Help us in response to that.

To ourselves to get up and seek to serve. Seek to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice. We know that we no longer are commanded to come before you with the sacrifice of blood or animals or bulls.

But we are asked to give the sacrifice of our own lives. Just living sacrifices. Offering ourselves up. Offering our energy. Our time. Our resources.

To the things of the Lord. And help us to do that. And we know that even as we gather in worship. We're doing that. We're serving you. We're coming collectively. To seek to lift up our worship.

[12 : 07] And to offer our worship. And we know that our worship ascends into glory itself. Not because of our righteousness. But because of the one in whose name we come.

That we come through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The one whose blood was shed. The one who took that veil of that temple. And tore it from top to bottom.

In order that we might now have access into the holy of holies. Through the righteousness of another. Through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what a wonderful truth that it is to know.

That when we put our trust and faith in Christ. That we are those who are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Because we are aware. So aware of our own sinfulness. So aware of our own lack of righteousness.

Aware of our own lack of holiness. We know that if it was merely left to ourselves. To get into your presence. And to earn a place in the holy of holies.

[13 : 03] That we would never have managed. We would never have been able to climb the hill of holiness. Through our works and our ability. But we give thanks that instead. Through the grace of the gospel.

You take that robe of righteousness. And you place it around us. And therefore. And in that way. We are able to come. So for those of us here who are your people.

Remind us of these things. Because we know that the devil will be at us in lots of different ways. Telling us how unworthy we are. And how we have no right to come before a God who is so holy. But rather.

Let us listen to your word. That word that commands us to come. That welcomes us. And that reminds us of that wonderful clothing that we have.

Of the righteousness of Jesus. So we pray that you would again be with the community here. Be at work here in the community. We pray for the congregation as they go out with the gospel.

[13 : 58] As they share the good news. As they make Christ known. Even in small conversations that are had. Help them to share something. A word in season. And maybe a short word of testimony.

Whenever we are given the opportunity. To be able to tell others. About the wonder of Christ. And we know that in the day and age we live in now. We have surrounded all our communities in the islands here.

We are surrounded by people who. Have very little by way of gospel background. Very little by way of church background. And in some ways. That presents an additional obstacle.

To us. When we are seeking to communicate the wonder of the gospel. But help us to. To understand how to do that. In this new day and age that we find ourselves. Give us wisdom.

As we seek to make Christ known around us here. Be with the surrounding congregations as well. We are acutely aware of a number of vacancies. Here in this part of the presbytery.

[14 : 55] We ask oh Lord. That you would provide. And provide in your time. And in your way. Help us always remember. You are the one who is in control of all of these things. So go before us now.

And cleanse us from sin. We ask it all for Jesus sake. Amen. Just before our next thing. I just want to read a short passage in Isaiah.

Isaiah chapter 6. Isaiah chapter 6. This encounter. That Isaiah has with the holiness of God. And we see his response.

To the holiness of the Lord as well. Isaiah chapter 6. Reading from the beginning.

So let's hear the word of the Lord. In the year that King Uzziah died. I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne. High and lifted up. And his train filled the temple.

[15 : 57] Above it stood the seraphants. Each one had six wings. With twain he covered his face. And with twain he covered his feet. And with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another.

And said holy, holy, holy. Is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved. At the voice of him that cried.

And the house was filled with smoke. And then said I woe is me. For I am undone. Because I am a man of unclean lips. And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.

For mine eyes have seen the King. The Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me. Having a live coal in his hand. Which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.

And he laid it upon my mouth. And said lo, this hath touched thy lips. And thine iniquity is taken away. And thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord.

[16 : 56] Saying whom shall I send. And who will go for us. Then said I. Here am I. Send me. And he said go. And tell this people. Hear ye indeed.

But understand not. And see ye indeed. But perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat. And make their ears heavy. And shut their eyes. Lest they see with their eyes. And hear with their ears.

And understand with their heart. And convert. And be healed. Then said I. Lord how long? And he answered. Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant. And the houses without man.

And the land be utterly desolate. And the Lord have removed men far away. And there be a great forsaking. In the midst of the land. But yet. In it shall be a tenth.

And it shall return. And shall be eaten. As a tail tree. And as an oak. Whose substance is in them. And when they cast their leaves. So the holy seed.

[17 : 54] It shall be the substance. Thereof. Amen. And we pray for God's blessing. In that portion of this holy word. Now we're going to sing. In a Psalm 100.

Now Psalm 100. Psalm 100. All people that on earth do dwell.

Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. And serve with mirth as praise forth tell. Come ye before him. And rejoice. So we'll sing the whole psalm there.

To the praise of the Lord. O people that on earth do dwell.

Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. In service of the Lord.

[18 : 57] In service of the Lord. His grace forth tell. Come ye before him.

And rejoice. Know that the Lord is God indeed.

With a dirty, he did just make.

We are his Lord, he does us feed.

And for his sheep, he does us take.

[19 : 55] O enter then, his gates with praise.

Approach with joy, his golden day. Praise God and praise, his name always.

What it is seen, we so did you. For quite an hour, our God is good.

His mercy is forever true. His faith and love shall in firmly stay.

And shall from it to it endure. Well, if you can now open your Bibles to the next chapter in Luke, in Luke chapter 5.

[21 : 24] So Luke chapter 5. And just that first section there. So just reading the first 11 verses, which is what we'll look at this evening.

So Luke chapter 5 and that first section again. Let's hear the word of the Lord. So just picking up really from the narrative where we left it in the morning.

And it came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret and saw two ships standing by the lake.

But the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land.

And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship. Now, when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draft.

[22 : 22] And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing. Nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net.

And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes and their net break. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them.

And they came and filled both the ships so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he was astonished, and all that were with him at the draft of the fishes which they had taken. And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all and followed him.

[23 : 25] Amen. And we pray for God's blessing on that portion. So we'll turn to look at that section in a moment. But first of all, we're going to sing in Psalm 32. So Psalm 32.

Psalm 32. And verse 1 to 5.

So verse 1 to 5. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned all the transgression he hath done, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, and in his spirit there is no guile nor fraud is found therein.

So our sin, they are not being imputed to ourselves, because of course our sin is imputed to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my tongue, my bones then waxed old, because I roared all day long.

So amongst this feeling of the conviction of sin, when he tried to respond in silence, there was a heaviness. Feeling the hand of the Lord heavy as well. You see that. For upon me both day and night thine hand did heavy lie, so that my moisture turned us, and summer's drought thereby.

[24 : 39] We're under that sense of conviction of sin and the heavy hand of the Lord upon us. It can be draining. It can be draining when we remain silent. When we don't respond. But then the answer is not to remain silent.

The answer is to confess our sin. And that's what the psalmist does. I thereupon have unto thee my sin acknowledged, and likewise mine iniquity I have not covered. I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses, said I.

And what does he find when he confesses? Well, he finds the forgiveness of the Lord, and of my sin thou freely didst forgive the iniquity. So we'll sing those verses there, to the praise of God.

O blessed is the man to whom his freely pardoned hate.

All that the temptation he has done, is soon his job by day.

[25 : 51] And that's what the psalmist does, and of my sin.

O blessed is the man to whom his life is done, and of my sin.

Because I hold it all, they long.

For upon me all day and night, Thy hundredth day I die.

Though not my moisture's are vivid, In summer's dark that I, I there upon the duty, I should acknowledge it.

[27 : 56] And likewise my iniquity, I have not covered it.

I will confess unto the Lord, My trespasses and I, And all my sin I've been created, Forgiving iniquity.

Well, you can turn back to Luke chapter 5 there, And just reading, Looking at the whole section we read, But just reading again in verse 5, So the answer of Simon there in verse 5, And Simon answering said unto Jesus, Master, we have toiled all the night, And I've taken nothing.

Nevertheless, at Thy word, I will let down the net. Now, the end of a day is usually the time of the day, We sort of reflect on your day, And think about how your day went, And sometimes you can, At the end of the day, Look back on the day and think, Well, you know that the day went well, Managed to get done what I was intending to do, Managed to make some progress, On some of my to-do list, I managed to achieve a few things, That was a good day, Today was a good day, And sometimes, Perhaps not as often as we would like, Sometimes when we come to the end of a day, That's how we assess our day, But we know that there's other times, And it's not like that, There's other times you come to the end of the day, And you think to yourself, Today just did not go well, And that was a bad day, And maybe you tried to get various things done, And you didn't get them done, Maybe just things happened out of the blue,

That maybe threw your whole day upside down, There's all sorts of things, That can cause our day to be turned upside down, And sometimes when we reflect on a day, That's what it's like, You slouch back on the couch, And you think to yourself, Well, that was not a good day, That was a bad day, And we all know what that feels like, As the saying goes, A bad day in the office, And when things don't go to plan, That's how it can be, Instead of making progress, It can almost be like we're going backwards, Instead of making a couple of steps forwards, We're maybe even further behind in the day, At the end of the day, Than we were at the beginning of the day, And that's very discouraging, You know what it's like, When you have those kind of days, It's incredibly discouraging, And it takes away your energy as well, It takes away your motivation, And we can have a spiritual version of that as well, You know, Times, Maybe even days, Or periods, Or seasons, When we're just flat, Again, Where it feels like we're just not making any progress,

[31 : 16] In the journey of faith, Not making any progress in this life of faith, That we are on, And the antidote to that is always the same, The antidote to that is always, To seek to take our eyes away from ourselves, And to seek to lift our eyes to Christ, Because Christ is the one who sees us in our discouragement, He sees us when we're despondent and downcast, And he has that unique ability to be able to lift us, And not just lift us, But to be able to lift us to incredible heights, Spiritually speaking, And this passage that I want us to think about this evening, Is a passage just like that, Because here you've got the disciples here, You see them in the beginning of the chapter there, In chapter 5, And they have had what you would call a bad day at the office, They have had a bad day, Or more specifically actually, They've had a bad night at the office, Because they've been fishing all night long, And they haven't caught a thing, Imagine that, All that energy and labour, Fishing,

All night long, Nothing, So much effort, So much energy, So much time, And they've got nothing to show for it, At the end of the night, That's quite something, To do that, And not have any pay, As it were, At the end of your shift, Whatever that shift might be, And not just that, But you see them there in verse 2 there, And you see them washing their nets, So, Not only have they not caught anything, Not only have they got no reward, For all the labour, All the energy, That they've put into the previous evening, As they've gone out fishing, But now, They're having to do all the duties, You know, Washing the nets, And all the other duties, That are required after a fishing trip, They're having to do all of these additional duties, All these things, When there's been no benefit, You can imagine, If they had a massive haul, That they'd be skipping around, Cleaning their nets, And doing all this work, But not having caught anything, It's going to be a difficult, A difficult while, Just cleaning your nets, And going through all the different duties, That you had to go through, So you can imagine them here, At this point in the narrative, Being pretty discouraged, You can imagine them pretty downcast,

But, Unbeknown to them, Obviously, At that point, Their day was going to turn around, Dramatically, And drastically, Because Jesus, Is about to come in, And Jesus is about to lift them, Out of the spirit of discouragement, And out of the spirit of despondency, That they're in, And they're going to witness, Something of the power of Christ, Something of the glory, Of the Lord as well, In this miracle, That was going to take place, But as well as that, They're going to receive, A new purpose in life, They're going to become, A different kind of fisherman, They're going to become, Fishers of men, So their day, Starts, With discouragement, Despondency, But, The Lord is about to come in, And the Lord is about, To change things, All together, And, When you think of that, That narrative there, Of being discouraged, Having had a bad night, Things just not going well, And then all of a sudden, The Lord coming in, And lifting us,

That can be the case, With ourselves as well, That's, That's something that we can experience, And often it can be, At those times where, You really are at your low, You really are at that point, Of being, Incredibly discouraged, And the Lord just steps in, And he lifts us, And you can actually think of that, Even in terms of conversion, You know, Becoming a Christian, Everyone's story is different, Obviously, But very often, What you find is, What precedes, Somebody actually coming to faith, In Christ, Is this period of just discouragement, This period, Almost of disillusionment, With life, It's like they realize, You get to the point, Where you realize, You're on this treadmill, Of life, And just sort of, Running and running, And running, And doing all these things, That you thought you had to do, And it's like, You're getting nowhere, And there becomes, A sense of disillusionment, You know,

The world has been saying, This is what you have to aim for in life, And you've maybe, Tried to, To get these things, This idealized version of life, And you've been striving for it, But, When the Lord begins to work, In your heart, It's like he opens your eyes, And you realize, That that's a lie, That this idealized version of life, That the world pushes us, To search after, And to go for it, It's a lie, It's a lie, A lie that we've been chasing, Most of our lives perhaps, But when the Lord opens our eyes, We see that, We see that's a lie, And you get this sense, Of incredible discouragement, And sometimes, At that point, When the Lord's working, Sometimes people can get, Very, Very low, But, Often, That's when the Lord comes in, Often, Again, Not always, Everyone's story is different, So don't think you have to have, This exact pattern of events, Before you can, Become a Christian, I'm not saying that, But very often, That, It's at that point, That point when your eyes are open, You've got this, Spirit of discouragement,

[36 : 21] And despondency, Very often, It's then that the Lord, Opens your eyes, To, To your real, Purpose in life, He opens your eyes, To the reality, Of the joy, And wonder, And fulfilment, Of life in Christ, The purpose that we can have, In the Lord Jesus Christ, He opens your eyes, To all of these things, Eternal life in Christ, And here, In this narrative, These fishermen, They're despondent, They're discouraged, But the Lord is absolutely, Going to give them a new purpose, That their lives, Are quite literally, Going to be turned, Upside down, And, For those of us as well, Who are already the Lord, You know, I mentioned there, People coming to faith, Having that kind of experience, But also those who are already Christians, We can have that as well, And that can happen multiple times, When we hit these kind of local dips, The local lows, When we're, We are very discouraged, In the life of faith, You know, We often describe the journey, In the wilderness, Like, You know, Peaks and troughs, You go through the valleys, And, It is amazing how,

When you are, At those points, Where you're particularly discouraged, It's amazing, The Lord's timing, How he comes in, He comes in, And he lifts us, And he picks us up, Just at the right moment, You know, He knows exactly when to come in, His timing is incredible, Like that, And, You can do that in lots of different ways, It's not just a small thing, Like a wee encounter with someone, Or a word in season, Or just something, That just lifts us, Just when we need it, And just at the, The right time, So, This kind of thing, Of being low, And then being brought up, Something that, I think all of us, To some degree, Can, Can, Can recognize, And here, This is all going to happen here, Basically, At an outdoor preaching, Event, That, That you have here, On the, The banks of, This, This lake, Can you see there in verse, See in verse 1 to 3 there, You've got this, Crowd, And they're, They're gathering round Jesus, And they're all wanting to, Hear Jesus, Preach and teach, And you can imagine, Like the crowd gathering,

And they're at the shore, And Jesus sees the boats, And he sees Simon's boat, And he jumps into Simon's boat, And he asks Simon, Or Peter rather, To take the boat out a little, And then he, He preaches to the people, So you can visualize the scene, It's quite amazing really, It's, The boat becomes this pulpit, And he teaches, This, This crowd of people, Who are, Who are gathered on the shore, And he's preaching about the, The kingdom of God, He's preaching, The good news, So as he's preaching, Peter, James and John, Who had a terrible night, Fishing, They're, They're listening to this as well, They're hearing this, They're hearing, That the word of God, Being proclaimed, And that in itself, Would have lifted them, You know, After a bad night, That in itself, Would have picked them up, No doubt, Hearing Christ, And preaching, And proclaiming, But actually, In many ways, What's most striking, About the narrative, And the scene here, Is what happens, After the sermon is over, Because that's when, The miracle really, Takes place, You know, They've heard, The people have heard, The power of the word of Christ,

But after the sermon, They're going to see the power, They're going to see, This power of the word of Christ, Actually, On display, And you see that, In verse 4, Jesus, After the sermon, He turns to, Peter there, And he says, Launch out, Launch out into the deep, And let down your nets, Go out, And let down, Your nets, So Jesus is, Telling Peter here, Really, How to fish, Telling Peter, How to fish, And, Peter, No doubt, Is thinking to himself, At this point, Now Jesus, I acknowledge that, You know a lot of things, You are an intelligent man, You know much about, The word of God, But I know what I'm doing, When it comes to fishing, You can imagine Peter, Thinking that, Peter knows, How to fish, Peter knows, When to do it, What time to do it, Where to go, What the best spots are, And all these things, And now Jesus is here, And he's asking him, To drop his net, In this relatively random, Place, In the middle of the day, Because Peter knows, That's not the best time, To catch the fish,

That's why they were out, At night time, That was the best time, To catch the fish, And you can imagine, Peter thinking to himself, What's the point, I know what I'm doing, Jesus, What's the point, In me going out, I've been out all night long, Not caught a thing, I'm not going to catch anything now, What is the point, So he thinks he knows better, Than Christ, And I think, If we're honest with ourselves, I think we can understand, Something of the, The thinking of, Of Peter, Here, As well, Often, Too often really, We can think, That we know better than God, Which is ridiculous, When you actually say it, But actually, Very often we can think like that, That we know, Better than the Lord himself, And perhaps, Sometimes we can respond, Like, Like Peter would have been, Thinking there, What's the point, You know, The Lord commanding us, To do something, And us thinking, What's the point, You know, For example, Maybe, Maybe you've been praying, For someone, Maybe for a long time, Praying that somebody, Would come to faith,

[41 : 25] In the Lord, And maybe you still haven't come, To faith in the Lord, And then you turn to the, The word of God, And you see all these, Passages that, Tell us to persevere in prayer, You know, Persist in prayer, And you can think to yourself, What's the point, I've been doing this for years, I've been maybe doing this for decades, And this person still hasn't come to faith, But the Lord says, You keep persevere, You keep persisting, We can think, What's the point, But the Lord says, You keep going, You keep going, Similarly, Perhaps, You know, You sense this, Burden, Or call from the Lord, To witness, Or to ask someone to church, Something like that, And there's lots of, Passages in scripture, Which imply that, The need for us to go out, And to witness, And to share, The good news with others, Even just simply to invite people, To church as well, And again, We can think to ourselves, What's the point, Every time I've asked someone, They've said no, Every other time, Every other past time, I've tried to do this, They've said no, Every other past time,

That I've tried to witness, In some way, And share my testimony, Or whatever it might be, It's just, It's just gone terribly wrong, You know, Things have gone, What's the point, In me doing this, But the Lord says, You keep going, The Lord says, You keep going, But yet, We can say, What's the point, What's the point, Our past failures, Lead to us, Lead to us thinking like that, What's, What's the point, And that can even, Be the case for, Those who, Aren't, The Lord's people as well, You know, I think, You know, Many people in our churches, Have attended, Church most of their lives, And yet, Many of course, Still haven't come to, Saving faith in the Lord, And then they, They come across passages, In the Bible, That say, You know, Faith comes by hearing, And by hearing, The word of the Lord, In other words, The Lord is effectively, Saying there, You keep coming under, The sound of the gospel, But, Sometimes, And I can remember, Thinking this myself as well, At times, You know, Sometimes, People think, Well what's the point,

I've been coming through, To church all my life, I've been coming under, The sound of, The gospel so often, And still, Still I haven't come to faith, And you can, You can say, Whether you say these things, Verbally or not, You can articulate it in your mind, You can think, What's the point, I keep coming, I keep coming, Keep under, I keep coming under, The sound of the gospel, And still, Still I haven't come to faith, So, Do we think like that, Whether we're the Lord, Or whether we're not the Lord, Have we had, Thoughts, Like that, I suspect that, For many of us, That is the case, And here, Peter and, Jesus is, Telling him there, Drop, Drop your net, Drop your net, And in his head, That's what he's thinking, What's the point in this, What's the point, Try this, Try this, So many times, No, No, No, No, No, Catch, No, No result, From me trying it before, What's going to change now, The Lord says, You drop your net, And importantly, When you read the rest of what, Peter says there, Crucially,

Even in his hesitation, Even in his hesitation, And in his reluctance, Because there is, An element of hesitation, And reluctance, But even in his hesitation, And reluctance, He still does, What Jesus asks him to do, Even though he doesn't agree with it, He thinks it's not going to, Yield any results, But he still does it, He does it, And we read there, The whole other saying, He says, Master, We have toiled all the night, And have taken nothing, Nevertheless, At thy word, I will let down the net, And when they had done this, They enclosed a great, Multitude, Of fishes, So, Peter, He shows, Obedience, To Christ, Even though, He didn't think himself, That there was going to be, Any good result from this, Even though he thought himself, What's the point?

He still did it, So even in his hesitation, Even in his hesitation, Even in his reluctance, He puts that net out, And how is he rewarded? Well he's rewarded, With that miraculous, Catch your fish, And that, That absolutely, Ought to be how, How we are as well, To, To learn to trust, And obey the word of God, Even when we perhaps, Don't quite understand, What it is that the Lord, Is asking of us, Or why he's asking this of us, And when he's asking us, To do something, That we don't understand, Why he's asking us to do it, In a sense, It's easier to trust, And obey, When you do understand, It's easier to trust, And obey, When you're in agreement, With God, Over what he's asking you to do, It's much harder, To trust and obey, When you're not in agreement, With what it is, That the Lord's asking you to do, When you're thinking to yourself, Well what's the point, I know you're asking me, To do this Lord, But what's, What's the point, Much harder, To trust and obey, But the call is to trust, And to obey, The Lord, Even at those times,

[46 : 16] So we must learn, To trust, Be obedient, In these hard situations, Maybe, Maybe even especially, I think we can say that, Especially, In those hard situations, When, When, Wrongly, We think we know better, At those times, We can't listen to ourselves, We must seek to listen, To the Lord, Because God knows, Exactly what he's doing, And his way, Is always the right way, Always, The right way, We're never, Going to be smarter than God, That's, Clearly true, But very often, That's how we, That's how we think, That's how we, Act as well, And, You know, If we're to apply this to us, You know, Obviously here, It's about fishing, And putting your net out, But what is it, That God asks us to do, What is it that he's commanding, Us, Today, Where do we find, His instructions, Where do we find, His commands, That's obvious, I hope the answer is obvious, Anyway, The answer is here, In the word of God,

This book, That we have before us here, This is our manual for life, This manual, That leads us to faith in Christ, A manual that, That leads us to put our trust, And faith in him, And then after that, Once we put our faith, And trust in him, Then it becomes this manual, That shows us, How we are to live, How we are to live, The Christian life, Full of, So many practical instructions, So many, Very helpful, And practical, Commands as well, And all of it, Is for our good, And the Lord, He turns to us, And he says, I want you to do this, Live this out, This is your manual, This is the manual, That I am giving to you, Live it out, And sometimes, Sometimes, There's going to be, Parts in this, This book, This manual, And you're not going to understand, Why it is that God is calling on you, To live in a certain way, Or to do a certain thing, You know, Sometimes we might read it, And think, Oh, I think you're wrong there God, I think I know better, Often, Often,

We find that, The word of the Lord, Goes against, The wisdom of, Of the world around us, Very often as well, We see the word of God, Going against, Maybe the wisdom of, The science of the day, And things like that, And we can read, The word of God, And we can question, And we can think to ourselves, Is this right?

Seems to go against, What the world is saying, Seems to go against, What the world is saying, Is right or wrong, Seems to go against, What the world is saying, Is good for me, Or bad for me, What should I listen to, The world, What the world is saying, Or what the word of God, Is saying, Of course, The answer is obvious, Again, The answer is, The word of God, Is always right, The word of God, Is always true, And at times, We're going to be asked, To be obedient to it, When we don't always understand, Why it is that God, Wants us to live in a certain way, Why it is that God, Wants us to do, Certain things, But the beauty of the, The word of God, Is that it remains true, At all times, It remains true, And remains accurate, And it remains, As the right way to live, And that is true, Throughout every era, You think of all the eras, That have ever been, In every era, In every culture, Surely different cultures, Every context, The word of God, Is always right, And always true,

And that means, That we can, Confidently, Seek to, To live in obedience, To the word of God, Without worrying, Are we doing the right thing, Or not, Am I believing the right thing, Or not, We don't have to worry like that, We know, We know that this instruction manual, That we have before us, Is designed for our good, And that is, Tremendously helpful, Especially in our day, Because, You know, We live in a, Society, And what society tells us, To do, Or not to do, It changes with the wind, You know, You see that, With every new, Study that comes out, Every new scientific finding, That comes out, We're told to do one thing, And then we find out, A few years later, Oh it turns out, That's not good for you, Do the opposite thing, What we're told to do, Is always changing, It's so confusing, People are so confused today, Young and old, Confused over what it is, That we're meant to be doing, How it is, That we're meant to be, Living, But the word of God, It never changes,

[50 : 42] That's the wonder of it, That's the beauty of it, You don't have to worry, Are you doing the right thing, This is a manual, That has remained unchanged, And will remain, Unchanged, Throughout the whole, Of history, As long as, The Lord, Allows the world, To continue, Until the end of time itself, This word, His commands, They remain, True, We cannot, Let our own wisdom, The wisdom of man, Or the wisdom of the world, We cannot let those things, Dictate what our values are, And what our morals are, Because if we do that, We'll be changing, All the time, We'll be changing, Left, Right and centre, We must always, Take our guide in life, From the word, Of God himself, This tried, And tested word, Of the all, Wise God, That gives us, A great sense of, Of security, And certainty, And foundation as well, And I'll tell you this, That's what people out there, Are looking for, People are, Are crying for, Just solid foundation,

A truth, Something that's not going to change, Left, Right and centre, Something that's not going to change, Next year, Or the year after, Just something that remains true, That's what people are after, And we have that, In the word of God, And that should be, An encouragement to us, To share the good news, Realising that, That's exactly what it is, That people are after today, And it's not always, Easy, To, To trust, And obey God's word, At all times, But that is our calling, To trust, And obey what it is, That the Lord is saying, Even, Those things that, We don't fully understand, Why it is, That God is, Asking us, To do these things, God's way, God's way is, Always the right way, Always, What is, What is best for us, And that's why, You know, When Peter's basically saying here, What's the point, Really, We should never say that, Whenever the Lord is asking us, To do something, He knows, He knows best, He knows exactly, What's right, He knows exactly, What it is, That's good for us, And here,

Even though Peter's, Put out that net, Multiple times, That night, At the, At the instruction of Jesus, There, He puts it out, He puts it out, And, He gets that, Of course, Miraculous, Hall of fish, And what's this response, How did Peter, Respond to, To this catch, You see that in verse, Eight there, And we read there, When Simon Peter, Saw it, He fell down, At Jesus knees, Saying, Depart from me, For I am, A sinful, Man, Oh Lord, So that was his response, Depart from me, Depart from me, I am a sinful man, So, He's, Seeing there, It's like his eyes are open, To something of the glory, And, And power of, Of, The Lord himself, And he sees that, This is one who's even sovereign, Over the fish in the sea, Sovereign over everything, And, He's very much aware, Of, Of the sense of the glory, And power, And the immediate response from Peter is, Get away from me, Depart from me,

I am a sinner, How can, How can I, How can I be, In the presence of, Of, Of, Of such a, Such a, A mighty figure as this, Depart from me, I am a sinner, And, Nothing, Nothing highlights, Your sinfulness to you more, Than, Than an encounter, With the glory of Christ, You know, When you encounter something of, The holiness of, Of God himself, You, You, You, You, You're struck by your own sinfulness, You, You might, Certainly before you come to faith in Christ, You, You might not think that you're particularly sinful, Um, I know I never, When, You know, Before I became a Christian, Before the Lord really started working, I never thought of myself really as, As particularly sinful, I, I, I knew the theology that we're all sinners, So I, I knew that I was a sinner, I, I, I acknowledge that, But I didn't really, Uh, Feel that bad, You know, I wasn't a criminal, I didn't feel, Uh, Very much, Uh, Like, Like a sinner, But, Once,

Once your eyes is open to the glory of Christ, I distinctly remember this, It was one night in, In church, My eyes being open to something of the glory, Of the Lord Jesus Christ, And something of the holiness of, Of God, And when your eyes are open to that, It's, It's like there's this light shining on you, And you, You, You see everything that's wrong, Previously, I didn't think I was a sinner, Well, Now, Seeing the reflection of the glory of, Of Christ, You cannot but, You cannot but be, Be aware of, Of your own, Uh, Sinfulness, Your own failings, Your own lack of righteousness, Your own lack of holiness, All of these things, They become incredibly, Uh, Apparent, Uh, To you, Uh, And you feel, When that happens, You feel as though you've got no right, Really, To be in the presence of God, Um, And that, That is what it's like, It's like, You want to hide your face, Um, You've got no right, You know, It's like, It's like you're exposed, It's like you're naked before the Lord himself, And all your sin is, Is, Is there, And you want to hide, That's, That's the, The natural response,

[55 : 46] And that's exactly what you see here with Peter, And there's lots of examples of that, In scripture, You know, When you think, Maybe, Especially in the Old Testament, You see quite a lot of it, Um, Where, Where people have an encounter, A visible encounter, With the glory of God, And their instinct is to hide, You know, Um, Moses, Uh, The burning bush, You know, There's this, There's this, There's this desire in Moses to turn away, To, To, To, To look away, To hide his face, From, From something of the glory, Of the Lord himself, We, We read earlier on in Isaiah, The same kind of thing, Thing, You know, Woe is me, For I am undone, I'm a man of, Unclean lips, He, He encounters something of the holiness of God, And, It's, It's like he's, He's so aware of his uncleanness, Um, And even for ourselves, Um, You know, When we come, When we pray, Um, When you come before God, Whether it's in public prayer, Or whether you're, Praying privately, There's this, There's this instinct, To just bow, To bow our heads, Um, Before the Lord, And, That's not,

Just a learned behavior, That we've, Seen other people do it, Therefore we do it, There's something more in that, Um, It's an instinct, It's, It's your instinct, When you come before our holy God, It's your instinct, To actually bow before him, Um, Uh, As we acknowledge our humility, Before our majestic God, A God who is, All powerful, And, And sovereign, And we're sinners, We know we have no right in and of ourselves, To come before him, So you, You, You bow, And that's, That's what's going on here, With Peter, It's some of these, Thoughts here, And Peter's saying, He's, He's kind of filled with a sense of conviction, And he's saying there, Jesus, Depart from me, In other words, He wants to get away, You know, That's his way of solving this, You know, I'm so aware of my sin, Besides such a holy being, I need to get away, I need to get away, Depart from me, Now, Is that the right response?

You know, If you put yourself in that situation, And you feel that, Sense of conviction of sin, And all these things, Is that the right response? You know, When you see something of the glory of Christ, Whether it be, In the preaching of the word, In the reading of the word, As you gather together for worship, When you see something of the glory of the Lord, Whilst at the same time aware of your own sinfulness, The way in which you, You break the law of God in so many ways, Is the right response in that kind of situation, To say, Depart from me, I need to get away from the Lord, I need to get away from this place, That's the only solution, Is that the right response?

Is that the right response? Well, It's not the right response, I think we all know, That's not the right response, But, Our instinct might lead us to think like that, Again, That's certainly true for me, Perhaps, For you as well, You know, Before you came to faith, Maybe you've, You've had this kind of thinking, Of, The answer here is to get away, But we have to remember, That, The beauty of the gospel, Is that, Christ has come, To draw people to himself, To save, And to heal, He's not come as the holy being, To scare everyone away, To highlight everybody's sins, And failings, And to make them run away from him, That is not, Why the Lord has come, He has come, To gather, To gather, His people, He reveals his glory to us, For that reason, So that we would actually, Be drawn towards him, Not so that we would say, Get away from me, I need to, I need to run away, It's the opposite, He's come so that, We would be drawn, Towards him,

Now, The funny thing is here, Solemnly, Sometimes when, When we find ourselves, Having this sense of conviction, And again, Maybe I'm thinking here, Before we actually come to, To faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, But we have this sense of, Of conviction, Sometimes we do, Think to ourselves, Not just I need to get away, But we do, We just go away, And again, Maybe you've done that in the past, You've had that sense of conviction, And you've said, I just need to get away from this, I need to put my fingers, And my ears, And just ignore God, I don't want to pick up the word of God, I don't want any of that conviction, I don't want to feel bad for my sin, I just need to ignore all that, And the strange thing is, That does actually work, It does actually work, For a time, And if any of you have had that experience, You'll know that, You know, When you just get away from the Lord, And as it were, Put your, Spiritually speaking, Obviously, If you put your fingers, And your ears, And ignore, Ignore the word of God, The sense of conviction does die down, And that way in which you feel bad,

[60 : 18] For your sinfulness, That does, Get quelled somewhat, It does actually work, For a time, But as we know, That's just masking the issue, That is just, Masking the problem, It's the equivalent of sticking your head in the sand, And pretending everything's fine, When it's not, And a lot of people do this spiritually, When they sense this, This conviction of sin, Head goes in the sand, And it's just like, They just pretend it's not there, Until they no longer feel, That sense of conviction, And that kind of head in the sand approach, It's never the answer to anything in life, And we can be bad for that, I actually think in our culture, Especially, In the islands here, We can be bad for that, You know, Head in the sand, When it comes to any kind of difficulty, That is, That is absolutely not, The answer to anything in life, Especially, Especially, When it comes to these, Spiritual things, Putting our head in the sand, And ignoring the thing, Oh yeah, It might make you feel okay, For a little while, But that does not solve the problem, That does not solve the issue,

Don't run away, And ignore these things, Don't ignore your sin, Instead, Go towards the Lord, Go towards Christ, The one who washes, The one who cleanses, The one who will make you new, It's not the one that you're, You're to run away from, It's the opposite, He's the one that we are to, To flee to, And here, When Peter is saying here, Depart from me, Get away from me, Jesus is not going to depart, Jesus is not going to leave, Peter, James and John here, In fact, It's the opposite, Peter might be saying, Depart from me, But in actual fact, What's going to happen is, Jesus is going to bring them to him, And they're going to become workers of his, Messengers, Of the Lord Jesus Christ, They were going to become fishers of men, A new kind of fisherman, Fishers of men, So he says, Depart from me, And Jesus says, No, No, The very opposite, You're going to come to me, And you're going to be a fisher of men, And here, Then you have that miraculous,

Hall of fish, And Jesus is, It's like, He's saying this is a sign, A sign of a far greater hall, A far greater, A spiritual hall, That is coming, A spiritual hall, Of a multitude of people, Who I have come to save, This is what my mission is all about, And it's like, He's saying to Peter, James and John, Come on board, And I want you to be part of this, I want you to be part of this mission, That I am on, You think this was impressive, This physical hall of fish, That is nothing, Compared to the spiritual hall, That is coming, The multitude, Men and women, Boys and girls, Who are going to come, To saving faith, In the Lord Jesus Christ, And what do they do, What do they do now, When they're basically told, About this new mission, That they're going to receive, Are they hesitant again, Are they reluctant, If they're not, See at the end of the passage there, We see they, They just drop everything, They forsake everything, They leave it all, It's remarkable, They leave it all,

And they follow Jesus, And I know that, That is maybe, Specifically, True in terms of, When you think of, You know, Ministers, Or full time preachers, And people like that, Who literally come away, From their work, To engage in, The labour of the Lord, And that is obviously, True that that can be applied, In that way, But I think, There's a sense in which, This is true of all of us, As well, All of us, Who come to faith, In the Lord Jesus Christ, Because we are all called, To radically shift our lives, We're not all called, To leave our employment, That's true, But we're all called, To radically shift our lives, To shift our, We're not serving ourselves, And living for ourselves, And instead, To seek to live, For the Lord, Like we were thinking about, In the service, Earlier on today, Working in the service, Of our Lord, And again, That will look different, For everyone, As I mentioned in the morning, Different ways in which we serve, But we're called upon to do that, To reorientate our lives, To seeking, To serve, Our Lord, And our Savior,

And we are part of this same mission, You know, Just like Peter, James and John are here, We're part of that same mission, That same mission continues, And, You know, When you think of that picture, That miraculous hall of fish, We long for a day, Where spiritually, We might see that again, In our islands here, And the Lord is able to do that, In a moment, He's able to do that, In a moment, You know, It's interesting, When you think of, Peter, James and John, They are, Laboring all night long, And not catching anything, That's how we can feel, You know, When we're seeking to be engaged, In the work of the gospel, Here in our islands, We're soldiering on, But it feels, Is it not as though, We're not catching anything, You know, Spiritually speaking, Of course, But the Lord can come in, Just like that, And bring about, A miraculous hall, Just takes a moment, For him to come, To work in reviving power, And for great numbers of people, Young and old, To come, And put their faith, In the Lord Jesus Christ, Question is, Do we believe that's possible, Do we believe that's possible,

[65 : 25] Or are we like Peter, Hesitant, Don't really, Don't really think that'll happen, Don't really believe, That'll happen, Let's not be like that, Let's have the faith, To know that, With the Lord, Anything, Anything is possible, Let's not be too discouraged, Too downcast, Let us seek to go out, To spread, To scatter, To cast, To use the fishing language, To cast the seed of the gospel, Far and wide, And waiting for the Lord himself, To give the increase, And that's what we pray, That the Lord, Would do just that, Amen, May the Lord bless these, A few thoughts to us, We'll stand, And come before the Lord, In prayer, A heavenly father, We give thanks, That you are sovereign, That you are in control, Of all things, We do confess, That we are, A sinful people, And even as we bow now, We acknowledge that, Our sinfulness, But we give thanks, That you invite us to come,

And that you invite us, Not just to come, But to engage, In the work, Of the gospel, And we do pray, Oh Lord, That we might see, A miraculous hall, In our day and age, A hall, Of many souls, Men and women, Boys and girls, Who will come, And put their faith, In Christ, We know that, There is such a, Vast need, In the world, And we know, That there are, There are so many people, Who are, In that position, Of being discouraged, And despondent in life, And so confused, With, With being told one thing, And then being told another, Never having any sense, Of certainty, Or surety, Or truth, But your word, Provides them just that, And we pray, Oh Lord, That you would open their eyes, To that, And that they would come, And that they would see, The wonder of Christ, And that they would come, And not just marvel, But that they would put their faith, And trust, In the Lord Jesus, To the salvation of their souls, And use us to that end, All of us, Not just those who are, In a formal position, In the church,

But all of your people, Use us, As we seek to, To cast that seed, And we ask, Oh Lord, That you, Would provide, The increase, So cleanse us from sin, We ask for Jesus' sake, Amen.

With Zion's bondage, God turned back, As men that seem wary, Of this heard heard
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heard heard heard heard heard heard heard heard And there the Lord Great things for them
abroad

That mother gave in patience And going forth And going forth He does the best thing In
blackest dreams Rejoicing child Return We'll stand for the benediction Now may the grace
Of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship And
communion of the Holy Spirit Continue with you all

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