

Rooting out the rot

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Preacher: Rupert Evans

- [0 : 0 0] Debbie, it's great to have you. Where have you come from tonight? So I've come across from Henley on Thames, which is rowing central. All right, OK. But Yorkshire was your home. You grew up there.
- Yorkshire's not exactly... Yorkshire's not exactly... You know, we haven't really got the rivers for rowing, have we? No, it's not exactly renowned for its long, straight rivers.
- It's more rapids than bends. In fact, the place that I did learn was 500 metres long, so I got good at turning around, and that's pretty much it. All right, OK. But somehow you got into rowing. But let's backtrack a little bit.
- You lived in a town called Guiseley, famous for Harry Corbett, sooty and sweep, and Harry Rounds and Fish and Chip shop. That's correct. Which I'm sure you and I have been to many, many times.
- And was it a Christian family? Yes, so I grew up in a Christian family and also a very sporty family. Right. And so I got into sport from a really young age.
- [0 : 5 6] She was encouraged to, you know, to get out, use my energy, do sport, and absolutely loved that side of life. Your grandparents were missionaries, weren't they? Yes, so my grandparents were missionaries in Africa, in Liberia.
- So, you know, I grew up in that Christian family. They were going to church. All right, so up until the age of 15, what sports were you into? So up until the age of 15, I loved sport.
- I mean, I used to watch the Olympics and think, wow, they're superhuman. You know, but... That's what we think about you, Jen. You'll soon know that I'm not. But, you know, I was also really passionate about sport and thought, I wonder if one day you'll ever make those steps to be able to eventually be able to represent my country.
- So tried loads of different sports. Loved sport. Running was my first love. And then got, eventually got involved in the judo. And actually, you know, I was in the British junior team at that point.
- I never knew that. Yeah, yeah. But actually, my sights were short because I just wanted to go to Sydney. And I knew that in the judo, was I going to make it, was I not going to make it?
- [2 : 0 4] But actually, part of our training for the judo was fitness. So we were on a rowing machine. And someone just came up to me in the gym one day and said, Oh, are you a rower? And I was like, no. What's that?
- No, it wasn't on the telly in those days. It was not in the public eye at all. This was like 97 kind of time. So it was way before, you know, it was in the public eye.
- And I just, I said, why? And he said, well, you're doing really good times on the rowing machine. And I was like, ooh, I wonder if this could be my sport. But I was certainly not an actual, you know, I went on a learn-to-row course actually in London at Tide Race Scholars.

And I pretty much spent my week swimming because I spent it so much. Yeah, so it was not a good start. It was not a good start. And even I was told that I wasn't going to be much more than an average club rower.

Your coach told you that. Yeah. That's pretty devastating, isn't it? And again, at the same time, I was the only junior at a club because it wasn't a popular sport. I was too keen.

[3 : 03] And he said, you're a bit keen. And you're doing your A-levels. But, you know, realistically, you're not going to be much more than an average club rower. I go to this at the time. So why did you persevere?

Well, I mean, I went home at night, you know, pretty upset. And my dad said, look, do you enjoy it? And I was like, I do. I actually really, there was something about it that I just really enjoyed. And he said, well, at the end of the day, you don't try, you'll never know.

And again, you know, I could talk for hours, by the way, on a few Yorkshire, but you've got brownies in the line and then anyway. But God just put the right people in my path.

And he often does that. And I got introduced to the chief coach of the British junior rowing team. Now, that would never happen. I'd literally just started.

I'd only been doing it for a few months. I was terrible, so I'm lasting on my races. But it got arranged that he was going to come and have a look at me. And then he took me on. And then, you know, I was already fit and strong.

[4 : 02] So it was a technical side that he put into the training for me. And then I progressed really rapidly. Amazing. Is it the only sport where you, sorry, where you turn your back to the finishing line?

Do you know what? I think there is another one. I've seen this as a quiz question. Back straight. I used to mean back straight. But yeah. It's not ideal, is it? No, it doesn't seem right. But then it's a long way. If you look at the finish line from the start, it looks way too far.

So it's actually probably a good thing. All right. Okay. And obviously there are different numbers of people in one of these. Yeah. How many? What sort of team were we? So the boat that I was in the Olympics in was a quad.

So with three other girls. But, you know, it works in... You're really based on your single in selection. So you hit... It's a strange environment. Are you... The three girls are you competing against as well as with.

So actually for seven months of the year, you're competing against your teammates for positions because there's too many of you to get into the team. You know, not all of you are going to make it. But yet you train together day in, day out.

[5 : 04] As a full-time athlete, we train two or three times every day. No weekends, no lie-ins. You know, it's... When you say you train two or three times every day, how long is a training session?

So a training session would be about an hour and a half to an hour and 40 minutes. So you're doing four and a half to five hours of training a day. Yeah. And that's not including, you know, warming up, warming down, looking at the video analysis, eating, obviously.

You can say, how much do you eat? Yeah. Yeah. How many calories do you burn? Actually, I just had the question earlier when we were eating off, please. And I'd say, you know, the question was, do I have to be careful?

You know, do I have to be careful? I'm like, I have to be careful now because I'm not burning it off. Yeah. How many did you have to... So we would, I mean, as a female, I would eat six to five, well, five to six thousand calories a day.

And what's an average? I don't know. Well, I think the recommended is maybe two to two and a half. All right. So you're nearly three times as much. Yeah. Because you're just burning off. You know, we would drink eight to ten litres of fluid a day because you're sweating it out.

[6 : 03] You're burning it off. And actually, you know, you'd think that we're the fittest and healthiest people ever doing all that training, but actually it really runs your immune system down. So you have to be really careful about making sure you are eating enough at the right times, looking after yourself.

Amazing. Yeah. All right. So this is your life. Now, you became known as a Christian when you were interviewed for a rowing magazine. Yes. So what happened there? Yes. Yeah.

That was a long time ago. Yeah. So I actually, because when I did start to progress, I kind of burst onto the scene from nowhere. I actually got interviewed by James Cracknell, who was one of the top rowers at the time.

And you would not know it now, but when I was a junior, I would not say boo to anyone. I mean, I would not, I was hardly spoke at all. I was really shy. And this like top rower interviewed me and I was so nervous.

And he was just asking me questions about where my favourite rowing venue was. And he pretty much disagreed with everything I said as well. He was like, how can that be your favourite? I was like, because I love experience. And anyway, so he'd asked me what I did in my spare time.

[7 : 10] So I mentioned that I went to church and I was involved in my, in like a youth group during the week and not even thinking that he'd put it in because I didn't expect that he would.

And then the next thing I knew, this went out to every single row in the country and rowing every gata magazine, that I was a Christian. And actually to start with, that was, I was really nervous about that because, you know, I was quite young in my faith and, you know, it was a new world to me.

But actually it ended up being an amazing blessing because so many people actually asked me about it or questioned me about it. And, you know, that came in different forms. Some people who were, who were interested or who maybe were Christians.

And then some people who had lots of questions. And some people, you know, were, almost came a bit more hostile towards me asking questions. But, you know, it was an amazing blessing.

And actually there was lots of banter as well. You know, I, especially to start with, I got Debbie's in our boat today. That means God's on our side. And also, I was, it was, again, you know, people that God's placed in my path and my coach wasn't a Christian.

[8 : 17] Um, and, and he, but he could see that that was actually an integral part of my life and, you know, of priority to me. So he, he allowed me to go to church second session.

So I get Debbie says she's going to church, but she's just shirking that second session. Now Debbie, just because you brought up in a Christian home with grandparents, as well as your parents, doesn't make you a Christian.

How, how did you come to that point where you were going to put your personal trust in Jesus Christ? And then, like I was saying, growing up in a Christian home, actually, when I was younger, I did think it was automatic.

So if somebody had asked me, I'd have said, yes, I believe in God. I go to church and my parents are Christians. But actually it was when I was 15, as I joined the youth group and I, I started to listen and hear about who Jesus was and why he came and the life we lived.

And I suddenly realised that actually being a Christian is a choice that each one of us have to make. And I realised that, yes, God, because I, there was something in me that knew that God existed.

[9 : 21] Hopefully each one of you in here would know that you are not just a bag of chemicals, that you are precious, you are creative, precious, and you are more than just, you know, the chemicals that, that, that are inside us.

And, you know, for me, I knew that. And I knew that God blessed us all with abilities and talents and, and like, you know, purpose in life and capacity. And I was quite willing to take that and enjoy my life and do my sport.

That was my passion. That was my life. But then I suddenly realised that actually, yes, God creates us with purpose and ability. But first and foremost, he wants a relationship with us. And I suddenly realised this.

And I thought, wow, how do I do that? Because I realised that actually I hadn't acknowledged him in my life. I'd been doing my own thing, living my own way. And the whole point of Jesus, you know, coming down to this earth was God reaching down to us to give us a way back to him to restore our relationship with him.

So, for me, I would say as a 15 year old, I acknowledged that I needed Jesus to, to restore my relationship with God. I needed to acknowledge him and say sorry.

[10 : 30] And that was to the point that I became a Christian. That was a youth club meeting, wasn't it? Yeah. Yeah. I think in, I don't know everybody here by any means, but I think it's very easy, you know, in a nice sort of area, which this is, to feel, well, as long as I'm doing my best and I'm doing good, I don't particularly need, now I'm not a really wretched person.

Why do I need to trust Jesus Christ? What would you say something about that? Yeah. Well, I would say that, you know, we are created for a relationship with him. We are made for that. There is something within us that I think is, is searching, isn't it, for, for something more than just maybe successes or things that we can achieve in this life.

Like what, what do they ultimately mean if there isn't a purpose beyond, you know, this world? And I would say, you know, not one of us would ever say that we're perfect.

You know, not one of us could say that we've never had a wrong thought or, you know, done the wrong thing. None of us can say we're perfect. And actually that breaks our relationship with God.

And we can't actually earn our right to have a relationship with him. I think often, you know, our culture in a sense is that we're trying to be good enough, but actually we can never be perfect.

[11 : 46] And God knew that. So he did it for us. He didn't leave us on his own, our own and say, oh, nevermind. They're, they're just not, they're not following me. They're not acknowledging me.

I'll just leave them to it. Actually, he loves each one of you enough to come down into this world himself in Jesus. Right. I want to go on to rowing. So you won the Commonwealth Games.

Yeah. We got medals at the Commonwealth. And the World Championship. And you got a goal for that. How does that compare to going into the Olympics? So for us in rowing, actually, the Olympics is the pinnacle of our sport.

So for most international rowers, if you said, you know, I'd swap your Olympic medal for all your World Championship medals, they'd take the Olympic one. Because the World Championships are extremely important.

They're amazing events for us. Sounds pretty impressive. Yeah. No. Yeah. But, you know, they, they, in a way, they are stepping stones to the Olympics.

[12 : 47] And the Olympics is the be all and end all in rowing. It is. All right. So you're on your journey. Which was the first one you went to? Well, actually, I was a spare in Sydney.

Spare's not a very nice word, is it? And really, that was a big point in my life, both rowing-wise and faith-wise. Because, you know, we all make life plans, don't we? My life plan, when I finished my A-levels, was that I was going to row full-time for two years, go to Sydney, tick the Olympic box, then become a veterinary surgeon.

That was, that was the best I had decided for my life. I moved away from home, moved south, and rowed full-time for two years. And I didn't make it. I came second in the race-off for the single.

And at that point in my life, I was absolutely gutted. And I just, I really questioned God. And I said, why have I even bothered? I've just wasted two years of my life, because I haven't achieved what I wanted to achieve.

And I actually took my coach at the time to pick me back up and say, look, you've reached a really good standard. You've worked hard. You haven't gotten to where you wanted to. But you can go to the UN23 World Championships this year.

[13 : 52] You can do Henley World Regatta, which is a big event within our calendar. Like, come on, keep going. Reluctantly, I kept going that year. And I did those events. And I actually had an amazing summer.

I had an incredible summer. And it was a massive lightbulb moment for me, because I suddenly realised that actually God's plans were better than mine. Even I thought that was the best that I could ever have.

I was going to investigate that again in a minute. So you went to Sydney with just a spare. You sat on the bench, as it were. Yeah. And you never actually rode. Well, I did a spare race.

Oh, it was a spare race. To make sure the traffic lights were working. And the big people were working. All right. But not properly. Okay. So after that is Athens.

Yeah. Yeah. So were you chosen for that? I was, yeah. So really, Sydney, I thought, was going to be the end of my career. And it ended up being the beginning. Right. Yeah. So Athens was amazing. So you get a letter saying you've been selected, or what happened?

[14 : 50] You do get an official letter, but you kind of, like, from a form of director. You know before. Okay. But you all get set down together and told. I mean, it's, again, when they're all your, you know, people, the friends that you've kind of been spending time with.

It's a tough time. Okay. But it was incredible. Yeah. So you get that news, you're elated, and eventually fly off to Athens. And how did you do? We got a silver medal, and that was actually my first ever senior medal.

So it was an amazing experience. And the three girls that I rode with, they're still, like, my best friends now. We meet up every year. We have such a bond as a crew. And also the Brits are such amazing supporters.

Like, there's just a sea of British flags everywhere. I mean, you may as well have won. Like, our friends, like, jumped the barrier and gave us flags and GB umbrellas and silly hats and all sorts.

I mean, the photos look ridiculous, but it was just an amazing time. So eventually you're on the podium. Yeah, yeah. And you get the medal. Have you got it with you? I have, I have. Is it my GB sock?

[15 : 53] It's clean, it's clean. Let's have a look. Yes, okay. And let me have a look. It's quite heavy, isn't it? So they're solid silver, the silver medals, yeah.

So they're heavier than they look. Oh, look at this. All right. So there we are. It is heavy and it's got something Greek on the back. You are an Olympian, 2004.

How much does this mean to you? That is just, it's really precious. It's so precious. And the memories associated all around it in terms of the crew, you know, our experience at the Games, my first competitor to the Olympics.

It's pretty special. The home of the Olympics being Athens was a wonderful place to be, yeah. Four years later, Beijing. Yeah. And you were chosen again. Was it a close thing to be chosen again?

It's always tight. It is always tight. It's like my parents will, I'll bring my parents up and be like, I've been selected. And they're like, of course you have. You won last year or whatever. It's like, it doesn't work like that.

[16 : 51] You know, you have to get selected each year. So it's always tight. But again, actually that whole year, there was such a different almost mentality. We'd won a silver in Athens.

So it was like, well, of course, we're going to want to become Olympic champions in the next one. So the whole mentality was the gold medal mentality. Gold medal training. Gold medal eating. Gold medal rest.

You know, all, everything. So you really went there with great expectations. And it's one of the favourites. We were world champions. I wasn't in the boat in 2005, but I was in 6 and 7. The world champions, 2005, 2006, 2007.

So running into Beijing, like current world champions for the whole of the Olympiad. Extremely one of the favourites. Big pressure. Now, if I can be the commentator for a moment here.

Because I've seen the film footage. And you really go out into the lead, don't you? Yeah. Almost to the last, oh, 100, 200 yards. You're in the lead. Yeah. And then you look carefully and you see the Chinese put an outboard motor on.

[17 : 50] And suddenly overtake you. Don't they? But they do. But they may not be the outboard motor. But they do suddenly overtake you. Yeah. Did you see it coming? Well, you know, they were always a good crew.

They had beat us in a previous race that year in a World Cup series. So we knew that they were going to be good. Home territory. You know, there's so much, you know, that can carry you. And, you know, there's a lot.

So we were leading the race for six minutes out of about six minutes and 17 seconds. And, yeah, they just kind of came through us in that final bit. You know, they were a good crew. You know, they were tall girls, actually, both Chinese athletes.

And, you know, they were a strong crew. They rode well. And we didn't do anything wrong. We had a good last 500. So our profile in rowing goes, like, really fast. And then you're steady, steady, and then faster again.

And we had a good profile. But they went faster than we went faster. And your reaction to that? Because you still got silver. Yeah. But what was your reaction? The thing is, in rowing, it's not over until you cross the line.

[18 : 49] So you're still going. You're still believing. You're still racing as if you could win until you cross that line. That beat goes. And it was just awful. We were just absolutely gutted.

And, you know, our interviews on the telly live, we were all crying. And, like, our medal ceremony. Like, we need to get our pictures redone because they look terrible. Like, we just looked so miserable. And at the time, we were, you know, no words could console us.

We were absolutely gutted. Like, the girl who was the spare that year, she actually had to leave me to my parents. Because I would cry so much. I literally, I couldn't actually see. But I, it was so intense.

I still haven't cried. So I got a silver. Amazing. You know, looking back on that race, like, that is sport. Someone goes faster than you on the day.

And that is sport. Let me ask you, do you, we're looking at your silver from Beijing in a minute. Do you pray before a race? No, if everyone was Christians in a race, what would happen there?

[19 : 42] Are we going to be dead people? We could pray there. The Chinese were sick. You know, for me, and particularly by that point in my career, you know, as in anything, like, you, we grow and learn.

And God had taught me. But I'm going to say something a little bit more serious. Yeah. In the sense that, did God let you down? No, no, definitely not. And, you know, I would always pray that I could do my best. And I'm always thankful for being there.

Because actually, you know, it becomes your normal. But it is an amazing blessing just to even be there. And you don't think that when you're sat in the start line, I'm just glad to be here. Obviously, you're going out to win.

Yeah. But, you know, prayerfully wise, like, I just want to honour God in doing it. I want to win, no question. But I wouldn't pray to win. Like, you want to win because you're good enough to win.

And as a Christian, Debbie, do you meet with other sports people who are Christians? Do you have this sort of contact when you're out in the Olympic village? A little bit. But it's not a lot.

[20 : 41] Because once you're out in the village, you're just focused in your own zone. You know, you've got a job to do. And you're focused on each day and the preparation you need to do or the training you need to do. And you do know other Christians are that within the sports world.

Like, it's really great to be connected with other Christians. And actually, you can feel quite isolated if you're the only Christian in the team. And it's wonderful to be able to share your faith and be able to pray with each other.

Did you talk to the Chinese girls who won the race afterwards or not? No. I mean, there was definitely a language barrier there. Yeah. To be fair, the only thing the word boo translates.

I mean, you do get to know the athletes because you actually race against the same people every year. Yes. But we didn't know the Chinese athletes so well. We don't because we're more, we've come across the more European rowers in the European circuit.

And who came third that time? I have no idea. I think it was journey over journey. It was, yes, it was. It's fascinating.

[21 : 40] Let's see the medal, shall we? And here's the other one. I'll give you a sock back. So, no ribbon on this one. There's a reason why there's no ribbon. There's a reason behind that. There is.

I noticed there's a crack in the J at the back. Come on, confess. I'm not superhuman. This is part of how you'll realise. Yes. Well, I actually did lose this one. How many times?

Twice. Yes, okay. And so I had to, yeah, they made a replacement. And this is why I carry it in a bigger box now.

Because I used to just have them in socks. And then I'd put them in my pocket. And you'd go to lots of different events. And you'd just hand them out. And they'd come back. And then you suddenly realised, I started with two. And I've got one. And then I dropped down my kitchen floor.

And the day fell out. And cracked in half. And, yeah. But it is beautiful. We can see these later on, can't we? Now, after that, of course, London. Yeah. So, were you involved with the London Olympics?

[22 : 35] I was. It was a wonderful Olympics to be involved in. Started with the torch relay. Which got the exciting game. Go on, let's have a nice look at this. Because you were one of the people chosen. How many were chosen? 8,000 or something, was it?

Yeah, so a few things. So, this has got 8,000 holes. To represent 8,000 miles of the torch travelled around the country. And also 8,000 people carried a torch. It's got three sides.

To represent the three times the London Health Games. And then the emblem at the front. And then it's got a superhuman handhold at the bottom here. Which is, as you now have discovered, is not true.

I actually shut this in my car door. So, it's uniquely mine. So, where did you carry it? Well, I was supposed to carry it in Yorkshire.

Well, you should have done it. I know. But our training camp dates got changed. So, I had to do it three days earlier in Morecambe. Oh, dear, dear. On the other side. Wettest, windiest day ever. But, you know, thousands of people still came out.

[23 : 30] And how long did you carry? What was that? Only for about 600 metres. So, I ran as physically slowly as I could. Like, zigzagging the road, high-fiving on kids.

Although, I did look a bit silly. It was like live hands. And the two security guards outside of them were walking. But a great moment. It was an amazing time. Yeah. Why were you chosen?

I was nominated by the rowing team. Because I did lots of other charity things outside of rowing. All right. Wonderful. So, go on. You go to the London Olympics. Did you get to the final? Oh, we scraped into the final.

Yeah. You had a sort of checking time leading up to it with hell, etc. We weren't going to do all of that. Yeah. Yeah. Injuries led to lots of destruction. Yeah. So, you got to the final. And what happened?

Yeah. We... Well, you know, when you get into the final, even if you've been in the slowest time into the final, you can still sit on that start and say, we're starting level. This is our one opportunity to, like, have the best race we've ever had.

[24 : 29] But because of destruction, and also when you're rowing, you're on the edge of your physical capacity, but you're also on the edge of your technical capacity. And one of the girls in our boat caught what we called a crab, which is where the blade doesn't quite go in, like, square.

And so it dies down. It gets caught. And it's like handbrake. So this happened quite early on, and that was just... He never really recovered. It's really difficult to recover from that.

Yeah. Yeah. So it was a really challenging and tough time, but we, you know, we pulled in as a crew together, because you can't just... It's important not to blame one person, because actually, it could have been called for anything.

You know, our blade work, we're moving together. It doesn't matter. So you've trained for... You know, for that girl, it was the girl I started with in 97, so, you know, we wrote it for 15 years, and you just...

You know that that's going to be cutting, and you just pull in together. So that was a tough way to finish. You know, considering I'd finished Beijing on that, on the silver experience there, and then I was like, wow, no-brainer.

[25 : 32] Home Olympics, Olympic champion, let's go. But you did get on the top deck of the double-decker bus going through London. We did. That must have been it. Going through London on the double-decker bus. Wonderful, I know.

It's great. You look back, and you're looking back as a Christian. What does it mean to you now? You know, it's great to hear these stories, because not... I don't know. Most of us have never been involved like that.

But what does it mean to you now? It's precious. It's precious time. And I... It's just... I've loved that part of my life.

Like, I feel so thankful for it. And it was an amazing, amazing time. But also a time where God taught me a lot about me, who I am as a child of God. And also His faithfulness in, you know, being with me through the ups and downs.

And also, actually, that that's not where my identity is. For a sports person, it's very easy for you to feel like your identity is in your results. So when you're doing well, you can feel like you're winning in life, and everything is great.

[26 : 31] And when you're, you know, you're injured, or you've lost a race, or you've had a bad result, you can feel like a failure. But actually, for me as a Christian, it just gives you a whole different perspective.

Because I know that, you know, my identity is in being a child of God. And actually, people's opinions of us change from day to day, don't they? And as an athlete, you know, the coaches, the media, all sorts of opinions of you.

And actually, I love that consistency. Yeah, I don't have the power. But if I did, and said, look, I could give you three, you know, successes, goals, over three different Olympics, all you've got to do is trade in your trust in Jesus Christ.

Give up Christ, I'll give you these successes. What would you do? I wouldn't trade. I knew you'd trade that, but why? Because, you know, I'm not going to take my medals when I pass away. Achievements and the successes, they're lovely, they're great, they're blessings.

But actually, I think Jesus is the most important decision I've ever made. He is the most precious thing in my life. And not just for when I pass away, but now, every single day, that has an impact in my life.

[27 : 36] And, you know, it's been an amazing time representing my country, but actually it's even more amazing being in God's family. But if somebody said, well, okay, she's clearly a bit religious, and I don't see that it's relevant for me, what would you say to that?

I would say, go back to the questions you need to ask. Does God exist? Like, is God real? And if so, what does that mean?

And what does my response need to be? Because it's a choice. Choose to do life with God or without God. But don't forget just the questions you need to answer. Yeah.

Debbie, what are you doing now? What work are you doing? Are you a veterinary surgeon? No, well, I was a prison officer, which is a whole other story in itself. But now I work for a charity called Christians in Sports, so supporting other athletes with, you know, with Christian faith.

So did you go, say, to Rio? Did you go there? I did. I should count that as a fifth Olympics, really. I was only supporting. All right, okay. Cheering in the crowd. And you're trying to encourage sports people who are Christians to be strong in their faith in the sporting world.

[28 : 42] Yeah, and just drawing alongside them, you know, as Christian fellowship and community. But also, again, they looked after me when I was in the team when it was invaluable.

Like, re-centering me on the truth and, you know, who I am and, you know, where I need to rely on. And for me to be able to encourage other Christian athletes is wonderful to be able to do that.

But also, you know, to offer to share my faith with other athletes, which I have lots of opportunities to do in my role with those that may be asking questions or want to know more about the Christian faith.

And you're no longer Debbie Flood, are you? I'm not. So what happened? I know. God had saved that till when I finished rowing. I'm now Debbie Brewer.

All right. And is your hubby a sportsman as well? Yeah, yeah. He used to be a personal trainer, so he kind of gets sport. But, yeah, he wasn't a rower, which is probably maybe a good thing.

[29 : 39] You think, okay. How long have you been married? A year and a half. And so far, okay? Yeah. Wonderful. A wonderful blessing, but also a challenge. Yeah.

I mean, you expose yourself as selfish as I am. And obviously, you spend a lot of time travelling, et cetera. And just one last question. And then, but, you know, you'll gladly sign the books.

You'll take photos with the, if people want to hold the Olympic talks and the medals, et cetera. You're available, aren't you? One last question. What, to you, is what is so precious about your Christian faith?

You know, we've talked a lot about sport. We're all intrigued as to how other people live. But what, to you, is the most precious thing about being a Christian? I would say that, actually, that's real life. That's life.

That's real life. Without God, it's ultimately death. It's ultimately not life. It's really hard to explain. But, you know, Jesus said, I am the life and the truth.

[30 : 36] And, for me, it just, it totally changes life. Great. Debbie, thank you. I think we've enjoyed listening. Shall we share our appreciation?

Thank you. I want to read a little passage from the Bible. And I'm going to focus on one particular sentence that the Lord Jesus Christ uses.

It's really Jesus speaking about himself. So, he didn't write a book and he didn't give us an autobiography. But this is a sort of autobiographical summary of who he is and what he came to do.

Now, we've put Luke's Gospels on all of the tables. If you want to follow it, you're very welcome. Just to make sure that I'm not misleading you. I think most of you will be aware.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Luke introduces Jesus as the saviour of the world. And, towards the end, he's been crucified. He's been buried.

[31 : 37] He's risen from the dead. He makes various appearances as the risen Jesus. But he appears to two people who are walking on the road to Emmaus. It was a seven-mile journey.

And Jesus walked with them. When they realised who was talking to them, they ran back. Now, Debbie probably could manage that. I would need a defibrillator after 50 yards. But, anyway, they ran back absolutely enthused about what had happened and what Jesus had said.

But I'd like to read the passage just quickly from page 78. It's Luke chapter 24. But, oh, it's 24, but I can't see a big 24. But, anyway, there we are.

Oh, there we are. Yes, Luke 24. But, 78. And, as you'll see at the top of the page, it says on the road to Emmaus. Now, that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. But they were kept from recognising him.

[32 : 42] He asked them, what are you discussing together as you walk along? They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?

What things? He asked. About Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what's more, it's the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning, but didn't find this in his body.

They came and told us that they'd seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it, just as a woman had said. But they did not see Jesus.

He said to them, how foolish you are and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter in his glory?

[33 : 51] And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, in other words the Old Testament as we would call it now. He explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued as if he were going further.

But they urged him strongly to stay with us, for it's nearly evening. The day's almost over. So he went in to stay with us. You have to read the rest later on. And by the way, if you'd like to take that copy of Luke's Gospel, you're very, very welcome to do so.

Put it in your pocket or your bag. Read it on the tube or the overground. It's a long train, isn't it, that one? But anyway, while I was interviewing, I kept seeing the train go on.

But I was listening, honestly. It's interesting. Whenever you talk about Jesus, and I want us to think about him particularly for a few minutes. Whenever you mention Jesus, there's going to be a host of reactions, isn't there?

And whatever we think, he has to be the most fascinating and influential figure in all of history. But people have different views of him. So talk to a Jewish person and they would say, yes, great teacher of morality.

[34 : 53] And perhaps a little bit of embarrassment, but sort of, yes, he was Jewish. You know, they're keen to tell you that. To the Muslim, just a prophet. Certainly not the Son of God. And they're not that keen on the person of Jesus, really.

To the atheist, of course, I think most of them would say a leader, a moral teacher. But certainly deluded if you think he's the saviour. Jehovah's Witness. You know those people who stand at the railway stations with their standards.

They always look miserable, have you noticed? But anyway, and that, yeah, a godly man and very special and from God, but not God himself.

And so you could go on, comedian, just the butt of their jokes. It seems to me, I'm sorry if anybody were hit works for the BBC. I don't mean to insult you, but it's just something to blaspheme. And so we can go on, the person of Jesus.

He divides people, doesn't he? But here he is, he's lived his life, he's taught, he's acted, he's been crucified. He's buried, he's risen, and now he's appearing to various people.

[35 : 53] And it's all in rapid succession in Luke's Gospel. And he meets these two, Cleopas. We're not told the other person's name, I suspect. But I can't prove it, I'm just guessing.

It's Mrs. Cleopas, whatever her name is. But anyway. But these two walking on the road to Emmaus, and they're talking about Jesus and all that's happened. And then this rumour, it seems to them, that people have seen him alive, but they knew he was dead.

And Jesus begins to chat, and we've just read the conversation. And then he comes out with this sentence. And it's really this sentence I want us to focus on. It's right at the bottom of page 78.

Verse 25, if you're looking for a little number. He said to them, how foolish you are. I've got it in my head with an older translation of the Bible. He says, oh foolish ones, slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Had not the Christ to suffer these things and then to enter into his glory. So he, as it were, speaks about himself and what he's done in that sentence. And if you sort of break up what he said, he's saying three very specific things about himself.

[37 : 05] And they're quite unusual. The first thing he said about himself, well I'm going to give it the heading, he says, I'm the prefigured Christ. Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

I would argue that Jesus is the only one in all of history whose biography was written before he was born.

Now I love biography, I'm always reading biographies. And I relish them. If I can find a new one, as I did yesterday when I went to a good second hand depot, a second hand bookshop depot nearby.

I was just sort of thrilled. Yes, I've got all these new biographies. But all of them have been written after the birth, often after the death of the person. And, you know, Prince George has a biography about him, which is amazing really.

But it still wasn't written before he was born. We could guess, but we really don't know. But Jesus, his biography was written by the prophets. So, if you go to the very beginning of the Bible, you have God creating everything.

[38 : 12] And of course he makes the first man, the first woman. And we read what happened, that they rebelled against God. Sin wrecked all of creation. But hot on the heels of that act of rebellion, God immediately speaks.

And he promises somebody is going to come and, as it were, bruise the head of the devil, Satan. Well, it's a sort of vague prophecy to begin with. But as the drama of the Bible unfolds, that vague prophecy becomes more and more specific and clear.

So the prophets told us all sorts of things. They said, where this coming Messiah, the Saviour, where he'd be born. And it's Bethlehem.

Well, who's heard of Bethlehem? He hadn't heard of Geisli. And that's much, much larger than Bethlehem. And it's just a little town to the south of Jerusalem.

All the places in the world that he could have been born. Bethlehem. And then he'd be born of a virgin. Well, that's unusual. Who else has been born of a virgin? But this is the God-man.

[39 : 18] And he'd be born of a virgin. And then some of the things he'd say. And the miracles he'd do. How he'd make the blind see. And the deaf hear. And the lame walk. And the paralyzed receive their strength.

He'd set the prisoner free. All written long before he was born. And then a detailed description about his death. The prophets wrote about the death of this coming Messiah.

King David, living a thousand years before Jesus was born, writes about his death. Isaiah, writing about 700 years before Jesus was born, gives us really detailed description in Isaiah chapter 53.

Zechariah, about 500 years before, gives us more information. And they say things about how his hands and his feet would be pierced. How every bone of his body would be pulled apart, but another bone of his body would be broken.

How he'd die between thieves, dying a poor man's death, but be buried in a rich man's tomb. How they'd gamble for his garments. How he'd be sold for 30 pieces of silver. Even some of the words that people standing around the cross would say, prophesied long, long before they were born.

[40 : 26] In fact, long before even crucifixion was devised as a means of capital punishment, this description, you think, oh wow, this is different. They prophesy rising from the dead.

There is something about Jesus, this prefigured character. And the Bible teaches that Jesus is the God-man. So God, this infinite being, who has no beginning and no end.

One God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Who knows all things and can do all things. Who is everywhere, who never changes. Who is holy, who is just, who is loving.

This God would come into our world. This God, I often say, was big enough to become small. God dressing himself, clothing himself in humanity.

So, Jesus, we believe, the Bible teaches, is the God-man. Not just God indwelling a man, because there'll be many like that. You know, Debbie's saying about her Christian experience, that God lives within her.

[41 : 35] And not a sort of man-deified, because that just doesn't exist, except in mythology and myths. But somebody who is fully God, and fully human.

As much God as God is God. As much human, as any human is human. He's the God-man. These two natures of deity and humanity combined in one person.

I'm not a musician, I wish I was. But it's as if you've pressed two notes on a piano keyboard, and they perfectly blend into harmony to make one note. Or, and it's interesting, I'm taking this idea from the Bible.

The idea of the colour blue and red combining perfectly into purple. Twenty-six times there's a particular curtain described in the Old Testament, and it always says it's got to be blue, purple, red.

It's always in that order. Blue, a heavenly colour. Red, an earthy colour. Combining together. Well, it's an interesting idea, isn't it? That this is God coming into our world.

[42 : 44] And I think the reason why the prophet spoke so much about this coming Messiah is God did not want anybody to miss him. Because what he was going to do was so significant.

Let me just quote from Professor C.S. Lewis. He's a man who wrote *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. He wrote *Mere Christianity*, and that's what I'm quoting from.

He was a professor of medieval English literature at Cambridge. I always think, doesn't that sound impressive? Except I'm sure all of us could become professors of medieval English literature, because nobody's ever read any.

So if you've read a part, you'd be away there. But anyway, let me quote C.S. Lewis. He says a very familiar passage from his book. He says, I'm trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Jesus, that I'm ready to accept him as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.

This is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man, and said the sort of things that Jesus said, would not be a great moral teacher. He'd either be a lunatic, on a level with a man who says he's a poached egg, or else he'd be the devil of hell.

[43 : 51] You must make no choice. Either this man was, and is, the son of God, or else a madman, or something worse. It's a great passage, and he's absolutely right, because Jesus made it very clear, that he was God, coming to our world.

And he even dared to take the very name of God, I am, or Jehovah, that I am, and he used it to himself so many times, and he said things like, I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life, I am the door, I am the vine, I am the shepherd, he once said, the good shepherd, he once said, before Abraham was, he lived centuries before, before Abraham was, I am.

And the Jewish listeners, knew exactly what he was saying, they picked up stones, they were going to stone him to death, they said, that's blasphemy, you're saying you're God. And that's exactly what he was saying. So he's the prefigured Christ, but he goes one step further then.

O foolish one, slow hearts believe, all that the prophets have spoken. must not, have not the Christ to suffer these things. He's the disfigured Christ.

Now I find this quite fascinating, again, if I can go to the idea of biography, you know, you read whatever it is, say 200 pages of the life of this man, or this woman, and you read about their upbringing, and the influences, and what they did, what they've accomplished, etc.

[45 : 15] And then maybe a page or two, maybe even a chapter, about the death of the person. And I don't know about you, but I get really enthralled with these biographies, and I'm always sort of having to fight back the tear at the end, when they die.

But with Jesus, it's very different. So we have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. John's gospel, about half of it, is devoted to the very short period leading up to his death, and then his death, and his burial, and his resurrection.

And you think, well, isn't this unbalanced? But the answer is no, because actually, unlike you and me, he came to die.

His greatest achievement was his death. You say, oh, Roger, come on, I think you're making a mistake here. But no. He came into our world with the express mission of dealing with all that is wrong in us, our sin, the Bible calls it.

It's breaking God's commandments. And you know, we're all guilty, aren't we? We may live in a very respectable place, and we may, I hope, you know, we all want to do that which is right, and be loving towards others, and yet, if we just stop and reflect for a few moments, I think, I think we'd all say, okay, I'm not, I'm not as good as I ought to be.

[46 : 30] We can sort of brush it off, but God treats sin seriously. At home as well, I have a large collection of books of quotations, and I'm always, I'm always looking out for them.

In fact, I managed to get into an Oxfam shop in Hearn Hill, and you know, to my great delight, I saw a book of quotations from Hercule Poirot.

Oh, yes, so he's there in my car now, I'm delighted. And my wife will say, not another one, but anyway, and, the, the, the, now I will tell you about quotations.

It's interesting because, normally, these quotations, they sort of, take a sentence, and, whew, that, that, that's the making of the man. And once in a while, you're, you're reading them, and you think, ooh, that's a gem.

So I have a book of quotations at home, of, of May West, 1920s, 30s actress. Listen to this. I used to be Snow White, but I drifted.

[47 : 34] That's, spot on. Or Robert Louis Stevenson, we all have thoughts that would shame even hell. Wow. And the Bible's so bluntly saying, all have sinned.

All fall short of the glory of God. There's none righteous, no, not one. And when, when you sort of, right, if that's God's, sort of summary of us, diagnosis of us, it's a sort of, it's not a wise thing to, to, to go through life thinking, well, I just hope God will be, be nice to me in judgment, and lenient towards me, and he'll let me in because I've not been as bad as, I don't know, the Kray twins.

Well, I may not be as bad as the Kray twins, but I'm not as good as Jesus. And we are all, even the nicest person here. We're all guilty of, we're all guilty of, we're all guilty of sin.

We do need forgiveness. And that's why Jesus came. He came to die, to deal with our wrongdoing. So all the books of the New Testament, apart from, there are three little postcards near the end, and they are very, very short.

Apart from that, all of them major on the death of the Lord Jesus. And they sort of focus on all that happened, how Jesus is celebrating the Passover, just hours before his death.

[48 : 50] And then the Last Supper is, he's with his disciples. And we hear what was being said, and the disciples go and argue, just before Jesus is going to be taken to crucifixion, there's a dispute between the disciples.

Then we see Jesus praying at the Mount of Olives, and then in the Garden of Gethsemane, with great intensities, he's agonising because he knows exactly what's going to happen. And then he's arrested, and that's described, and betrayed, sold by Judas.

I often think, you know, he sold him for 30 pieces of silver. He didn't even have 30 days in which to spend it. He goes out and takes his own life. And then Peter denying him three times, and the mockery of, of the trials before Pilate and Herod, and how he's beaten.

And he's made on that beaten back, there was like a ploughed up field with furrows in it. He's made to carry a rough, rugged Roman cross. And he's hanging there, crucified.

And two thieves on either side, and what they say, and what the centurion says, and what the crowds are saying, and then the words that Jesus speaks. All this detail given, because when Jesus came to earth, he came to die, and to carry on himself, the rebellion of all the world.

[50 : 11] Like a magnet, he attracted everything which was opposite and contrary, onto himself. It seems as though those, those hours, a sort of holy ground, if I can put it like that.

I, I don't know whether any of you, saw a very moving film, starring Sigourney Weaver. I understand it was a book as well, I've not read the book. But, it focuses attention, on a Californian zoologist, by the name of Diane Fossey.

Some of you saw the film. And, she, she made her home, in Africa, in Rwanda, in Africa. And she lived, on the side, of a 14,000 foot volcano.

And the reason is, she was wanting to live, amongst, a very gentle, rare group, of mountain gorillas. The trouble was, they were threatened, with extinction, because of poachers, and they were precious, but they were being slaughtered.

1963, she began her mission. And, she lived amongst, these, these, gorillas. She, she cradled their babies. She, she named them.

[51 : 19] She cried with them, if, if one of them died. And, let me, let me quote from her, from her. She, she wrote these words. Those powerful, but shy and gentle animals, accepted and responded, to my attentions, when I, acted like a gorilla.

So, I learned to scratch, and groom, and beat my chest. I imitated, my subjects, vocalizations, their hoops, their grunts, and belches. I munched the foliage, that they ate.

I kept low to the ground, and deliberate in movement, so I could be at one with them. After 18 years, of living amongst them, she, she really became like them, in so many ways. They were her friends, and they accepted her.

And when, any danger, was facing those guerrillas, she sought to protect them. But, in the early hours, of December 27, 1985, asleep in her bed, she was knifed, and murdered.

Nobody was ever caught, for the crime, but the suspects, of course, were the poachers, who felt that their, their livelihood, was being threatened. And, I saw it, and I thought, do you know, it's, it's, it's only a sort of, miniature picture, but, isn't this like God, the one who created, all things?

[52 : 35] One hundred, billion, galaxies out there. I don't know, who's counted them all, but anyway, that's the number, they've got to. And each galaxy, has one hundred, billion, stars.

He makes, all of this. And he cares, for you and me. This infinite God, wants to become, an intimate God.

And he comes, into our world, and sets his face, to go to a cross. And do you know, out of love, for each of us, yes for Debbie, and yes certainly for me, but for you.

He goes to a cross, to die, to take our sin, to pay the penalty, for our wrongdoing. He was a willing, sacrifice, so that he might be the saviour.

And one last thing, from the same verse, if you want to look at it, you'll see, it says, all of the Christ, who have suffered these things, and to enter, into his glory. So he is, not only the prefigured, and disfigured, he is the transfigured, Christ.

[53 : 43] Christians believe, that Jesus, not only died, and was buried, but he rose. The body that went, into the tomb, came out of the tomb. He defeated death, he defeated, the grave.

Now the thing is, we can sort of hear that, and of course, Easter's coming up, and we, you know, yeah it's a nice idea, nice thought, but then people said, Elvis lives, some people said, oh I've seen Princess Diana, years after she died.

Isn't it a bit like that? Do you know, there is tremendous, historical evidence, so much so, that the Bible calls them, infallible proofs, that Jesus really did rise, from the dead, written down by eyewitnesses, and there were certainly, over 520, that we know about, in the Bible, who saw the risen Jesus, he could say, touch me, look, look, see me, see, does a ghost, have flesh and bones, like you see I have, he said.

This was Jesus, defeating death. In the book, City Lies, one of the stories here, is of Major General Tim Cross, I've interviewed him, once and twice, and if you meet him, and some of you may know him, because he lives, not far from here, he's a real army major, he fought in Bosnia, and Iraq, and Afghanistan, and in Northern Ireland, etc, so he's a real, you know, army major.

He was, he was based with his wife, in Cyprus, and a notice went up on the, the, the, the Nafi, notice board, saying that, the following weekend, which was going to be Easter weekend, an RAF plane was going across the Tel Aviv airport, if anybody wants a free trip there, well, free, you and I are paying for it, but, just sign up.

[55 : 24] Well, he and his wife had never been to Jerusalem, so they flew into Tel Aviv, and they went for the weekend, the Easter weekend, in, in Jerusalem. They weren't particularly church goers, but you know, in the army, you've got chapel services, etc, and so they thought, Easter Sunday morning, we'll go to the, to the church, and they went, and to be honest, they found it very, very dark.

They, the whole setting, and the service, they, they just, they didn't enjoy it at all, but somebody afterwards, was chatting, and said, have you ever been to the garden tomb?

And, Tim Cross said, I, I don't even know what the garden tomb is, and this person said, well, it's very near, a rock, which looks like a skull, and it says that Jesus was crucified, near, skull rock, and buried there, and there is a tomb in a garden, and he could well be, the place where Jesus was buried.

You ought to go. It's actually a bit of British territory, in Jerusalem, but that's a different matter. And so, that afternoon, he and his wife, go off to the garden tomb, and as it happens, an army colonel, was the guide, a volunteer, he just, said, I'll show you around, and he shows them around, and eventually, come to the tomb, and probably, many of you have seen a photograph of it, and, and the colonel said, look, we don't know for certain, that this is where Jesus was, was buried, but it could well be.

And, the significant thing he said is, if you look in, you'll see it's empty. And so, Tim Cross, like a child, goes and looks in. If it wasn't empty, he would have had a shot, wouldn't he?

[57 : 01] He goes in, and sure enough, the tomb is empty. And suddenly, he stops and thinks, oh, wow, if Jesus died, and was buried, and the tomb is empty, then he's risen.

I've seen death, many, many times, but I've never seen somebody, rise from the dead. And do you know, that very day, Easter Sunday, only about ten years ago, Major General Tim Cross, asked Jesus Christ, to become his Lord and Saviour.

The thing that convinced him, was the resurrection. Jesus not only died, and rose, but, we've just got to stop for a moment, and say, if all this is true, what's going on here?

This is God, saying that, a Messiah, a Saviour is coming, and he dies, and he's buried, and he rises? And it's God's great plan, as Debbie expressed it so well.

He has come, God has come, to search for us. And we, you know, the church here puts on a lovely evening, great food, and all the rest, nice atmosphere, and, it's because they know, that the most important decision, any of us can make, is what we'll do with God's great plan, to rescue us, what we'll do with Jesus.

[58 : 21] In fact, it says of the Lord Jesus, not only did he conquer death, but one day, the same Jesus, who ascended, back to his father in heaven, this Jesus, he has to return, not this time as a baby in a manger, but to wind up the affairs of this world, as Lord, as King, as ruler, to reign in righteousness, where he'll put everything together, there will be equity, there will be justice, God will have, as it were, completed, this great eternal plan, and the reward, for his sacrifice, simply, men, and women, who have put their trust in him, ask him for forgiveness, and being reconciled to God, come to know God, and, come to know God, we didn't really, dig into this Debbie, but come to know God, not just for life, but for eternity, the Bible speaks of heaven, and do you know, more than anybody else, the Lord Jesus himself, spoke about hell, and I think it's because, he who loved the most, warmed the most, and the way, to be lost, the way to hell, if I can put it like that, is just to do nothing, just carry on through life, and the way to heaven, is to receive the gift of forgiveness, and eternal life, it's not by working, it's by saying,

God, I once would never, never be good enough, to get me to you, this great holy God, but if you've come to rescue me, and you can forgive me, because of what Jesus has done, and you can make me yours, I'd like you to do that, I'd like you please, to come and live in my life, for Debbie, she did that when she was 15, I too was a teenager, in the Middle East, and somebody explained to me, that Jesus had died for me, and I thought, wow, I should trust him, let me end with a little, another, another biographical insight, this is from, a short biography I've read, of Igor Stravinsky, if you're into music, you know the name Stravinsky, brought up in a, Russian Orthodox family, and so he had a, religious upbringing, but he rejected it, and he moved away from that, and he lived, the sort of lifestyle, that these musicians did, but at the age of 44, he was converted, to Jesus Christ, and this is what he said, in his autobiography, for some years, before my conversion, a mood of acceptance, had been cultivated in me, by reading the gospels, and by other, religious books, and I came to Christ, as my Lord and Saviour, and I'd like to ask, if I may, because it's the last, of the evening events, here in Dulwich,

I know that, there are Sunday services, etc, but I'd like to ask you, if you're, if you're just investigating, the Lord Jesus Christ, I wonder, what would stop you, from saying, okay, there's a mood of investigation, but now I want a mood of, acceptance, I'd like to ask, Jesus Christ, to forgive me, and liquidate me, what would keep you, from that, if he's taking the initiative, he's come, he's died, he's risen, and he says, look just come to me, and receive what I've purchased, for you, I think it'd be, tragic, as it were, to hear from, the lips of Jesus, oh, foolish one, so hard to believe, here it is, and I'd like, if I may, and I didn't do this, I know on Tuesday night, and maybe it's not quite, what you're expecting, but I'd like, if I may, to end with a little prayer, I'll pray for Debbie, in a moment, and for us as well, but I'd like to pray, a prayer, very similar, to the one that I prayed, when I became a Christian, but really one, that you could pray, not out loud, but just to, as it were, echo, and personalise, in your heart, and mind, a prayer of saying,

I do want you God, please, to forgive me, and I do want, to trust Jesus, and with your help, I want to follow you, and if you're not there, and you don't want to pray, that's fine, but it may just be, that here you are tonight, you've been brought probably, by somebody, who cares for you, immensely, and you think, yeah, I don't understand everything, I have a thousand and one questions, but I'd like to trust Jesus Christ, and if that's how you feel, may I invite you, just to make this prayer, your prayer, so a little prayer to, to close, I'll pray it slowly, and deliberately, so that you can, personalise it, dear God, you know everything, there is to know about me, so I want to say, I'm sorry, for all my, sin, all that's wrong, and with your help, I want to turn from it, and I understand, that Jesus has died for me, and risen from the dead, would you please, forgive me, come and live within me, make me yours, become my Lord and Saviour, and help me to follow you, for I ask in Jesus name,

Amen, and Father, we do want to thank you, for our evening together, our food, the time of chatting, and just enjoying each other's company, thank you for Debbie, and her story, we do pray, you bless her and her husband, and all that they're involved in, day by day, keep them close to you, as well as to each other, and ourselves, you know the needs, that we have, and the things, that often concern us, and those whom we love, we commit them all to you, and pray you'd continue, to bless us throughout this day, and these coming days, we ask in Jesus name, Amen.

[64 : 07] Amen.