

# The Preciousness of the Soul

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good evening and welcome to this service of worship this evening. It's lovely to be with you this evening. I don't know if you're visiting, so if you're visiting, welcome.

I'm not usually the minister here. The minister of the congregation was very gracious with me and he kindly agreed to do a pulpit swap this evening. So they sent Mr. MacLeod to Bonnie Barvis and I came to Tolstair this evening. It's lovely to be with you. It's lovely to see friendly faces again. It's lovely to worship together and we pray that the Lord would bless us as we gather together for worship this evening. There was one intimation that your minister wanted me to highlight. It was in relation to the elders that there's a Kirk session meeting after the prayer meeting on Thursday evening. So it's a Kirk session meeting after the prayer meeting on Thursday evening. Is that correct? Yes? Yeah, that's good. So let us worship God this evening. We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 25. Psalm 25, it's in the Scottish Psalter. That's on page 231 if you have the blue psalm book. Psalm 25. Psalm 25 and we're singing from the beginning. So page 231 in the blue psalm book, Psalm 25 and verse 1. All of our psalms this evening, they focus upon the theme of the soul. We all know that we have a soul. We're all made in the image and likeness of God. God has given us the precious gift of a soul. And so all of our psalms this evening and our service this evening focuses upon the preciousness of our soul. And as David in Psalm 25, as he comes to God in worship, the first words that he utters are, to thee I lift my soul. And that is how we should come to

God in worship this evening, lifting our souls in praise and adoration of the God who has made us and the God who has provided for us a way of salvation in Jesus Christ. To thee I lift my soul, O Lord, I trust in thee. My God, let me not be ashamed, nor foes triumph for me. Let none that wait on thee be put to shame at all. But those that without cause transgress, let shame upon them fall.

I'm going to sing down to the verse, Mark 7. My sins and faults of youth do thou, O Lord, forget. After thy mercy think on me, and for thy goodness great. So we'll sing these verses of Psalm 25, verses 1 to 7, and we'll stand to sing to God's praise if you're able.

Amen. To thee I lift my soul, O Lord, I trust in thee. My God, let me not be ashamed, nor foes triumph for me.

[ 3 : 1 8 ] Let none that wait on thee Deep who to shame at all But those that with the cross transgress Let shame upon them fall Jove me thy ways, O Lord Thy paths o'er teach thou me And who thou lead me in thy truth Therein might it shall be

For thou art God that dost To me salvation send And I upon thee all the day Expecting to attend Thy tender mercies, Lord I pray thee to remember And love in kindnesses for thee A beloved forever

My sins and faults of youth Do thou, O Lord, forget After thy mercy think on me And for thy goodness great Well, let us come before the Lord in prayer.

Let's pray together. Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, we give thanks this evening that we have begun our praise with those precious words To thee I lift my soul O Lord, I trust in thee And we thank thee and we praise thee tonight that there is no one else to lift our soul to in praise For thou art the God who is worthy of praise A God who has made us The God who sustains us And the God who keeps even our going out and our coming in Day by day We thank thee and we praise thee, O Lord that we have even the desire to to have this upward relationship with God that how David could say to thee I lift my soul O Lord, I trust in thee And Lord, we realize that it is all of grace because there was a day in our experience where we had no desire to lift our voices not even our soul to the Lord in praise

We were so inward-looking So inward-focused So self-consumed And yet we thank thee and we praise thee for those words that we were just singing That my sins and faults of youth do thou, O Lord, forget After thy mercy think on me and for thy goodness great It is a wonder to us that the God of heaven would have mercy upon us that he would show grace towards us But we thank thee, O Lord that thou art a God who not only loves but who has demonstrated and displayed his love to us And that whilst we were yet sinners that Christ died for us We thank thee, O Lord that thou art a God who so loved that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever would believe in him and trust in him and follow him would not perish but have eternal life And Lord, we pray that each and every one of us so we would know this gift for ourselves that we would see that it is a gift

[ 8 : 09 ] It is nothing to be earned or worked for but something to be claimed something to be confessed something to know and something to enjoy that how the apostle could say that it is by grace that you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves It is the gift of God It is not of works lest any man should boast And our boast tonight is not in self but in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone For our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness As the hymn writer said I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name On Christ the solid rock I stand All other ground is but sinking sand And help us then we pray to have that firm foundation Help us Lord to have Jesus as the foundation of our lives That we can confess with David and say that he took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay and on a rock he set my feet establishing my way he put a new song in my mouth

Our God to magnify that many shall see it and shall fear and on the Lord rely O Lord draw near to us this evening as we gather together for worship We give thanks for everyone who is here from the youngest here to the eldest We give thanks O Lord that thou art a God who calls us who calls us to worship and that we are to worship thee in spirit and in truth And we thank thee O Lord for that promise that when we meet together that where two or three gather in thy name thou art there in the midst of us and that thou art a God who promises to bless us And Lord we pray then as we gather in spirit and as we seek to read and to understand and even to sing thy truth O Lord that thou wouldst reveal thyself to us that we would see Jesus more and more that we would see him in all his beauty that we would hear him in all his care and his compassion and concern towards us And Lord that our mouths would respond in praise that we would come confessing Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God the Father

Lord remember us we pray give to us ears to hear this evening that all that we would hear thy truth that thy word O Lord would be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path that it would lead us ever to the rock that is higher than us And Lord we pray for those who have been coming to church for years for those who have sat in this building week by week who have heard the gospel through many different means and mediums and messengers and yet O Lord thou art the God who is speaking to them time and time again and Lord we pray that this evening that as Jesus said that there would be rejoicing in the rejoicing in the presence of the angels over sinners repenting that even tonight Lord we ask that thou wouldst so work in hearts and lives in young and old to draw them to thyself that they would each taste and see that thou art good and trust in thee and be blessed all thou art able to save to the uttermost that thine arm is not shortened that it cannot save neither is thine ear heavy that he cannot hear and so Lord that thou wouldst pluck sinners as brands from the burning that thou wouldst hear their cries from mercy that even as the psalmist said

Lord from the depths to thee I cried my voice Lord do thou hear unto my supplications voice give an attentive ear and Lord we pray that for any who cry out to thee for salvation this evening that thou wouldst hear that thou wouldst answer that thou wouldst save to the uttermost for thou art one who is mighty to save bless Lord this congregation we thank thee for them for their faithful witness for their desire to see Jesus lifted up in this community for their desire to proclaim Christ to this community that they love a people that they know a people that they long to see coming to salvation and so Lord we pray tonight for homes and for families that are out of Christ we pray oh Lord for husbands that are still strangers to grace and to God for wives that have no care or concern for their soul and for children our precious children that are on the broad road that leads that leads to destruction

Lord we pray that many prodigals would come home that they would hear the voice of the father that they would come to the end of themselves and return home realizing that to whom else can they go for he alone has the words of eternal life Lord bless thy truth to us we plead help us in our witness wherever we go and whatever we do in our work Lord in our worship Lord that everything would be God honoring and God glorifying and that even we as thy people that we would always be ready to give an answer for the reason for the hope that is within us because we know that we have a great hope a hope that is sure and steadfast a hope that remains always the anchor of our soul and Lord our longing is that others would know it that others would come to confess it that they too would see the beauty of Jesus Lord remember thy servant over this congregation we thank thee for him remember Donald our brother we pray for him that thou wouldst continue to strengthen him and sustain him Lord and uphold him and bless him as he proclaims thy word week by week that he would know the help and strength of thy spirit leading him and thy word guiding him that he would have the prayer as we were singing show me thy ways

[ 14 : 04 ] O Lord thy path so teach thou me and do thou lead me in thy truth therein my teacher be that thy word would always be our teacher it would be our lamp and our light to lead us and to guide us through life's journey remember Donald's wife Emma we thank thee for her bless them Lord together as they minister in this place and as they minister and work alongside the people here that they would do one another good that thou wouldst build them up as a spiritual house holy and acceptable unto thee and Lord our prayer is that people would come to salvation that thy children thy people would be built up that they would be encouraged that they would be disciplined that they would know the Lord with them and that they would be able to say each Lord's day as they meet that the Lord is in this place O Lord be near to them we pray and as we pray for them here Lord we pray for all our congregations we pray Lord for our vacancies we think of

North Uist tonight and we continue to remember them we ask Lord that thou wouldst provide for them and Lord we know what vacancies are like and we pray that thou wouldst be pleased to appoint a man over them one who will shepherd them and encourage them and equip them and even enable them to go out and to tell it to the generation following that this God is our God and that he will be our guide even unto death remember Lord our denomination we pray that all that as a people that we would seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness we would not be led astray by the fashions and the fads of the day we would not be distracted by the voice of the devil but that we might listen to the voice of the good shepherd who says about his sheep that my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give to them eternal life and they will never perish neither shall they be plucked out of my hand

Lord be gracious to us as a people Lord we know that righteousness alone will exalt our nation that sin is a reproach to any people and so our prayer is that righteousness would exalt us that the righteousness of the son of righteousness would come with healing in his wings and oh Lord that we would be restored as a nation remember our first minister remember our prime minister Lord we pray that they would have wisdom that the fear of the Lord remains the beginning of wisdom and Lord we pray that they would turn back to thy word and realize that it is the lamp it is the light for the Lord of God who is light and in thee there is no darkness at all Lord remember also thy church to the ends of the earth we're so conscious that we meet in a place with so much freedom so much freedom to gather and to worship we have no fear Lord and yet we know we have brothers and sisters not even that far away from us and yet they meet in fear they meet in worry knowing not what a day nor an hour will bring but Lord we give thanks for them and we pray for them we pray for the church in Iran

Lord in Afghanistan we pray for them as they gather together in small places and small pockets we pray Lord for the church in China for other places like Nigeria where there is so much persecution so much hatred towards those who love the Lord but Lord we bless and praise thee for the great assurance that in this world we will have much tribulation but Jesus Christ is one who has overcome the world that greater is he who is in us than he who is in the world Lord bless thy church and our prayer is that even here and to the ends of the earth that Jesus Christ would continue to build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it O Lord hear us we ask that thou wouldst not leave us to ourselves but truly revive us as a people revive us from our slumber and our sleep that how the apostle could say awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light and Lord our prayer is that we as thy people we would awake from our slumber from our lethargy and our laziness and realize that the harvest is plenteous the laborers are few the field truly is white and to harvest and Lord that we need to pray and keep praying and keep coming to the Lord of the harvest that he would thrust out laborers and that he would use us as thy people for the furtherance of his kingdom and ultimately the glory of his name oh Lord that our prayer would be like the psalmist said not unto us

Lord not to us but do thou glory take and to thy name mean for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake that thou wouldst reveal thy glory to us in the day and generation that we live in that we would have the prayer of Moses who prayed so earnestly show me thy glory and Lord we beseech thee show us thy glory that we would truly see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ Lord reveal thyself to us this evening in the gospel that we would see the glory of Jesus that we would see his beauty that we would follow him that we would fall down before him and worship him because worthy is the lamb who was slain Lord hear us and we pray continue with us as we wait in thy presence that thou wouldst be pleased to bless us go before us take away our iniquity and receive us graciously for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake Amen we're going to read the word of God as we find it in the gospel according to Mark the gospel according to Mark and chapter 8

[ 20 : 16 ] Mark chapter 8 if you have the pew bible with you this evening it's on page 792 page 792 of the pew bible Mark chapter 8 the gospel according to Mark and chapter 8 and we're going to begin reading at verse 22 Mark chapter 8 at verse 22 let us hear the word of God and they that is Jesus and the disciples they came to Bethsaida and some people brought to him Jesus a blind man and begged him to touch him and he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him he asked him do you see anything and he looked up and said I see people but they look like trees walking then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again and he opened his eyes his sight was restored and he saw everything clearly and he sent him to his home saying do not even enter the village and Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi and on the way he asked his disciples who do people say that who do people say that I am and they told him

John the Baptist and others say Elijah and others one of the prophets and he asked them but who do you say that I am Peter answered him you are the Christ and he strictly charged them to tell no one about him and he began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again and he said this plainly and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him but turning and seeing his disciples he rebuked Peter and said get behind me Satan for you are not setting your mind on the things of God but on the things of man and calling the crowd to him with his disciples he said to them if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit or lose his soul for what can a man give in return for his soul for whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels and so on may the lord bless that reading of his own holy word we're going to sing again before we consider that passage this evening we're going to sing this time in psalm 103 psalm 103 again in the

Scottish Psalter if you're using the blue psalm book it's on page 369 page 369 psalm 103 psalm 103 is a psalm that reminds us that the god we worship this evening is a gracious god he is a god who gives gifts to us and David here he's praising god from his soul he's blessing the lord for how gracious he is towards him as we said all our psalms this evening they focus on the theme of the soul and that's how David begins he says oh thou my soul bless god the lord and all that in me is be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless bless oh my soul the lord thy god and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee so we'll sing psalm 103 from the beginning down to the verse marked 5 and we'll stand to sing if you're able to god's praise oh thou my soul bless god the lord and all that in me is be still still the lord his holy name magnify and bless bless oh my soul the lord i call and not forgetful and not forgetful be of all his gracious heaven 2nd or thine diop

His sins, his soul, and pains, doth heal and be relieved.

To death, redeem thy life, hath thou to death, miss not go down.

[ 26 : 23 ] To thee with loving thine best love, my tender mercies come.

Who with abundance of good things doth satisfy thy love.

O that in us, the eacons age, reneweth thy youth.

Well if I could, this evening with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling. If I could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read. The gospel according to Mark. Mark chapter 8.

Mark chapter 8. And I want us to focus upon the words of verses 36 and 37. As we said, our theme this evening is the soul, the preciousness of our soul.

[ 27 : 47 ] And Jesus asks there in verse 36. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit or lose his soul? And what can a man give in return or exchange for his soul?

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Have you ever listened to children or listened in to children having a conversation? For the boys and girls here this evening, for the adults listening in, it's a very enlightening experience.

Sometimes a very entertaining experience. Because when we were away on holiday at the Keswick Convention, we go to Keswick usually every year in the Lake District. And if you've never been, I'd encourage you to go.

It's a beautiful place, beautiful scene, beautiful setting. And at the Keswick Convention there are all these kids clubs that meet as the convention is on. And our son, Finlay, who's about nine, he's nine years old.

[ 28 : 59 ] And he met one of his friends from the holiday club while we were down near the lake. And what always amazes me about children is that there's never this awkwardness. There's never this apprehension like there often is with us as adults when it comes to striking up a conversation or speaking to someone we don't really know but we've seen them before.

And children, they just seem to strike up the conversation and keep it going. And our son, Finlay, and his newfound friend, Josh, they kept the conversation going by playing the game, Would You Rather?

Maybe the boys and girls have played this before. The game, Would You Rather? It's a very simple game. In fact, I don't think you can really call it a game because there's never any winner. But it's all about asking the question, Would You Rather?

Would You Rather? So, for example, my son, Finlay, he's asked me all these questions already. Would you rather tea or coffee? And for me, it's always coffee. Would you rather a roast beef or roast chicken?

Always roast beef. Would you rather rangers or Celtic? Rangers is the team I follow. Would you rather Burger King or McDonald's? Always a McDonald's.

[ 30 : 12 ] Would you rather chocolate or crisps? Always chocolate. And you get the idea. You can also ask lots and lots of other strange questions like, Would you rather be a bird or a submarine?

But Finlay and Josh, they played this game for about half an hour. But as they played this game, I was sitting listening to them on the boat. And, you know, I started thinking to myself, Jesus asks us a Would You Rather question in the gospel.

And, of course, when Jesus asks his Would You Rather question, it's not a game and it's not a joke. When you look at these verses, it's actually quite a serious and solemn question because Jesus is asking us here in this passage.

He's asking us, Would you rather gain the whole world and lose your soul? Or would you rather gain salvation and save your soul?

It's a very simple question. A question that even the children can understand. Would you rather gain the whole world and lose your soul? Or would you rather gain salvation, gain Christ and save your soul?

[ 31 : 22 ] And by the way in which Jesus asks his Would You Rather question, the answer, I hope, is obvious. The answer is obvious.

And so this evening I want us to think about this passage. I want us to think about it under two headings. Because there's listening and learning from the disciples. And then there's losing and living. There's listening and learning and losing and living.

Listening and learning, losing and living. So first of all, listening and learning. Listening and learning. Look back at verse 27. We read there, And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea, Philippi.

And on the way he asked his disciples, Who do people say that I am? And they told him, John the Baptist, and others say Elijah, and others one of the prophets. And he asked them, But who do you say that I am?

Peter answered him, You are the Christ. Now the Gospel of Mark, This is Mark's good news message about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[ 32 : 29 ] In fact, that's how Mark begins his Gospel in chapter 1. Chapter 1, verse 1, Mark says, The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And then Mark, he concludes his Gospel by recording the confession of a Roman centurion standing at the cross of Jesus Christ, Saying, Truly, this man was the Son of God.

And you know, it's between those two statements, those two bookends, That Mark emphasizes and explains to us that this Jesus really is the Son of God.

And he really is the only Savior of sinners. But you know, I love the way Mark divides his Gospel into two sections. As you can see, Mark's Gospel, it's 16 chapters long.

And the first eight chapters of Mark's Gospel, they seek to answer this question, Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus? And through all the messages and all the miracles of Jesus, Mark tells us and Mark teaches us that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

But then in the second half of his Gospel, in chapters 8 to 16, In those remaining eight chapters, Mark seeks to answer another question. Why did Jesus come?

[ 33 : 48 ] Why did Jesus come? And by leading us all the way to the cruel cross of Calvary, Mark tells us that the Son of Man came not to be served, But to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

And so in a nutshell, Mark's Gospel seeks to answer two key questions. Who is Jesus? And why did Jesus come? Maybe you're asking those questions this evening.

And you know, if you're not a Christian this evening, I'd encourage you to read through Mark's Gospel. It's the shortest of the four Gospels. And Mark's Gospel, it seeks to answer these two key questions about life.

Who is Jesus? And why did Jesus come? But the turning point, or the pivotal point in Mark's Gospel, When the focus changes from considering the first question, Who is Jesus?

To considering the second question, Why did Jesus come? The pivotal point in Mark's Gospel is here, In this passage, in Mark chapter 8.

[ 34 : 53 ] But it's the pivotal point in the Gospel, Not because it's the halfway point in Mark's Gospel. It's the pivotal point in the Gospel, Because it's at this point, That there is clarity, confession, And commitment to Jesus Christ.

This is the pivotal point in the Gospel of Mark, Because it's at this point, At which there is clarity, confession, And commitment to Jesus Christ.

And what's remarkable is that, This conversation in this chapter, It's not only a pivotal point in Mark's Gospel, It's also a pivotal point in Matthew's Gospel.

Because both Matthew and Mark, As Gospel writers, They describe and they draw attention to this discussion, Between Jesus and his disciples. They draw attention to this important discussion, That took place as they were walking in the district, Of Caesarea Philippi.

Now this discussion between Jesus and his disciples, As we read it, It's all about the identity of Jesus. It's all about the identity of Jesus. Because when it came to the identity of Jesus, The disciples had been listening.

[ 36 : 08 ] The disciples had been learning from public opinion. From what other people were saying. They're always listening to what other people are saying. And they're listening and learning from other people, About the identity of Jesus.

Who Jesus is. And needless to say, When it comes to the identity of Jesus, Whether it's in the first century as it was here, Or today in the 21st century now.

When it comes to the identity of Jesus, Public opinion is always divided. Public opinion is always divided. It's always completely confused about the identity of Jesus.

Because when Jesus asked the disciples, Who do people say that the Son of Man is? Or who do people say I am? The disciples say to Jesus, Well, Some say you're John the Baptist.

Others say you're Elijah. Some think you're one of the prophets. Some think you're Jeremiah. And by listening and learning from public opinion, The disciples confess that when it comes to the identity of Jesus Christ, Public opinion is divided.

[ 37 : 15 ] They're completely confused. But you know, And this is what I love about what Jesus did. When you read it, Jesus is conversing with his disciples.

And then he probes them. And I often think that When we speak as Christians, When we speak to people about their soul, We should follow the example of Jesus here.

Because as this conversation progresses, As they're discussing and getting deeper and deeper into their discussion, Jesus probes the disciples, And then he prods them.

And he prods them very directly, Very pointedly, Very personally, And he asks them, But who do you say that I am? Who do you say that I am?

And you know, It's one of the greatest questions in the gospel, Isn't it? Because this evening, As we gather together for worship, Jesus is speaking. And Jesus is probing you.

[ 38 : 18 ] And Jesus is prodding you. And he's asking you the same pointed, And the same personal question, That he asked the disciples, All those years ago. Who do you say that I am?

Who do you say that I am? And sadly, Far too many people, They listen to what other people say.

They listen and learn from public opinion. They listen and learn from what the media and the movies have to say. They listen and learn from what people in school or celebrities have to say about Jesus.

They listen and learn from what all the fads and all the fashions of the day have to say about Jesus. That he was a prophet, Or that he was a good man with a good philosophy for life.

Or that he was this influential figure in the world and in the ancient history. Or even some would say, Jesus, Well, He never existed at all. So let's just erase him from our memories.

[ 39 : 20 ] But you know, My friend, Regardless of what public opinion has to say about Jesus Christ, The Son of God, The only thing that really matters to Jesus this evening, Is your personal opinion of him.

Who do you say that I am? And you know, Jesus, He's probing you this evening in the gospel. He's prodding you this evening.

He's asking you so pointedly and so personally. And I hope you see it as a personal question. Who do you say that I am?

And as we said, This is the pivotal point in the gospel. Because it's at this pivotal point that Peter steps forward. We see that the Peter steps forward, Not because he's confused, But because he has clarity.



And he wants to make a confession. He wants to commit his life to Jesus Christ. And Peter confesses there. He says, You are the Christ. You are the Christ.

[ 40 : 27 ] It's the pivotal point in the gospel. Because it's the point at which there's clarity, There's confession, And there's commitment to Jesus Christ. Clarity, confession, and commitment.

But of course, When Peter confesses to Jesus, You are the Christ, Peter isn't confessing the surname of Jesus. He's confessing the sovereignty of Jesus.

His title is Christ. He is the appointed and anointed one. He is Christed. He has been appointed and anointed As the one who is sovereign and superior And supreme over all things.

He's God's king in God's world. He is Jesus Christ, The son of God. But you know, Peter's confession of Jesus, It's not only a pivotal point In the whole of this gospel.

Peter's confession is a pivotal point In his personal life. It's a pivotal point in his own life. Because while Peter was listening And learning from the messages And the miracles of Jesus, Peter has come to discover And even to declare that Jesus Is the Christ, The son of God.

[ 41 : 39 ] But that's Peter. Jesus wants to know tonight, What about you? What about you? What about you? My friend, Have you come to this pivotal point In your life?

And the thing is, I know that you've been sitting here For so many years, Listening and learning, Just like the disciples went. Listening and learning about The messages of Jesus And the miracles of Jesus.

But have you come to this Pivotal point in your life Where you say, I need to turn away from sin. I need to turn to the Savior For salvation. Have you come to this Pivotal point of clarity?

Where you need to confess That Jesus Christ is Lord And commit your life to Him. Because you know, It's when you come To this clear realization That there's no one else Apart from Jesus.

You need to confess That He is the Son of God. He's the Savior of sinners. He's the King of kings. He's the Lord of lords. And you know, It's by your confession That you commit your life to Jesus.

[ 42 : 46 ] And you live according To your confession of faith. That's what it is To be a Christian. You confess Him as Lord And you live as if Jesus is Lord.

And yet, you know, The sad thing is And it's the same in Barvis. I don't know, Maybe it's an island thing. So many of you know this already. All that I'm saying to you this evening Is nothing new.

It's old, but it's ever new. And you've heard this all before. But you seem to be stuck On this confession part And this commitment part.

You have no issue With the clarity part. Because you know That Jesus is the Christ. You know that He's the Son of God. You know that He's the only Savior of sinners. You know that He's the King of kings And the Lord of lords.

You don't dispute that. You know that without Him You will spend a lost eternity in hell. You know all that. You believe all that. You are brought up with all that.

[ 43 : 47 ] And yet, And yet, You resist. And you refuse to confess Jesus Christ as Lord. And commit your life to Him.

And you put up all these barriers. All these boundaries. Where you say, And I've heard it so often. I'm not good enough. I'm not worthy enough.

I don't know enough. I can't commit my life to Jesus Christ. But you know my friend, The glory of the gospel is that none of us are good enough.

None of us are worthy enough. None of us know enough. This is the beauty of the gospel. I'm not worthy enough. I'm not good enough.

And yet, The Bible comes to us so graciously, So lovingly. And the Lord says to us, When you believe in your heart, And when you confess with your mouth, That Jesus is your Lord and Savior, You will be saved.

[ 44 : 58 ] When you believe in your heart, And confess with your mouth, And you know I think, It's something we need to be doing more and more. To confess to someone you know, Someone you trust, Someone you love, And say to them, You know, Jesus is the Christ.

He's the Son of the living God. He died for my sins. He is my Lord. He's my God. He's my Savior. He's my shepherd. He's my friend.

Can you say that? And if you can say that, And if you can confess that, Then you need to live according to that confession. Because that's what being a Christian is.

It's all about clarity. It's all about confession. It's all about commitment to Jesus Christ. Clarity, Confession, And commitment to Jesus Christ.

But my friend, Maybe the reason you don't confess, And the reason you don't commit your life to Jesus Christ, Is because you're unwilling to lose, In order to live.

[ 46 : 07 ] You're unwilling to lose, In order to live. And that's what we see secondly. Jesus emphasizes and explains, That there's listening and learning, But there's also losing and living.

In order to be a disciple, There's listening and learning, But there's also losing and living. Losing and living. That's what we see secondly. Losing and living. Look at verse 31.

Jesus began to teach them, That the Son of Man must suffer many things, And be rejected, By the elders and the chief priests, And the scribes, And be killed, And after three days rise again.

And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside, And began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, He rebuked Peter, And said, Get behind me, Satan, For you are not set in your mind, On the things of God, But on the things of man.

And calling the crowd to him, With his disciples, He said to them, If anyone would come after me, Let him deny himself, Take up his cross, And follow me. You know, When Peter confessed his Christian faith, And committed his life to Jesus Christ, He didn't expect to be disciplined, Or even disciplined so quickly.

[ 47 : 19 ] Especially to be told by Jesus, Get behind me, Satan. You're not set in your mind, On the things of God. You're thinking of earthly things. But as Peter quickly discovered, He discovered that being a disciple of Jesus, It's first of all about learning, Listening and learning.

But then he's going to discover, It's also about losing and living. It's also about losing and living. But Peter, he had to learn. And that's what the word disciple means.

A disciple is a learner. A disciple is someone who, Simply has their L plates on, And they're following Jesus. They don't have it all together. They're not perfect. They're just learning, To follow Jesus.

And that's what a disciple is. A disciple is someone, Who listens and learns from Jesus. Which is why Jesus goes on to, Emphasize and explain, That being a disciple, It isn't about getting and gaining.

It's about losing and living. Being a disciple isn't about getting and gaining. It's about losing and living. And that's why Jesus says here, He says, Whosoever, Or if anyone, I prefer what the authorised version says, Whosoever will come after me, Let him deny himself, Take up his cross, And follow me.

[ 48 : 39 ] And you know, There's so much to unpack, From Jesus' statement there. But what I love about it, Is that it's addressed to the whosoever. Whosoever. Whosoever will come after me, Let him deny himself, Take up his cross, And follow me.

Whosoever. And don't you just love that word, Whosoever. It includes everyone, And excludes no one. Whether male or female, Boy or girl, Young or old, Rich or poor, Whosoever.

Everyone in this community, Is included. Everyone beyond this community, Is included. It includes everyone, And excludes no one.

Which means that it includes, You. It includes you. You're here on this page. Jesus says, Whosoever will come after me, Let him deny himself, Take up his cross, And follow me.

And you know, When Jesus, Made this statement, In its original language, He issues, Three imperatives here. He issues three imperatives, There are three commands.

[ 49 : 55 ] Because if you want to be a disciple of Jesus, Jesus says, This is a must. This is non-negotiable, This is an imperative. And what he says is, You must deny self, You must take up your cross, And you must follow me.

Three imperatives. You must deny self, Take up your cross, And follow me. They're non-negotiable. They're three demands of discipleship. Deny self, Take up your cross, And follow me.

But you know, My friend, You know, I want to be honest with you. In 21st century Scotland, Let's say, In 21st century Lewis, Lewis, It is easier, To be a Christian, Than in other places in the world.

We have it easier, Than most. Because in comparison to, First century Israel, When this was written, At that time, Israel belonged to the Roman Empire.

Or even in comparison to, 21st century Iran, Which is one of the most persecuted, Countries in the world. We have it easier, Here in the Isle of Lewis.

[ 51 : 10 ] Because it's easy to be a Christian. It's easier to come out, On the side of the Lord. It's easier to confess Jesus, As Lord. It's easier to commit our life, To Jesus Christ.

We're not going to be persecuted. If we say, Tomorrow at work, I'm a Christian. I've decided to follow Jesus. But you know, If you lived in the first century Israel, Or 21st century Iran, And you come out, On the side of Christ, Confessing him as Lord, And committing your life to him, As saviour.

If you did that, You would in effect, Be signing your death warrant. And that's what Jesus meant, When he said, Whosoever will come after me, Let him deny himself, Take up his cross, And follow me.

When Jesus mentions the cross, In that passage there, It's not a metaphor, For the struggles of life, That this is the cross we bear. It's not even a symbol of Christianity, That's to be worn around your neck, As an item of jewellery.

No, The cross meant crucifixion. And everyone in Israel knew that. Everyone knew that the cross meant crucifixion. That's why it was such a startling statement, For Jesus to make.

[ 52 : 22 ] Because everyone in first century Israel, Hearing Jesus saying, Saying, Whosoever will come after me, Let him deny himself, Take up his cross, And follow me. Everyone knew what that meant.

Because at that time, Living under the power and authority, Of the Roman Empire,  
Everyone was made to bow the knee, And confess, Kaiser Curios, Caesar is Lord.

But if someone refused, If someone said, No, he's not my Lord. If someone said instead,  
And wanted to confess, Jesus, Jesus is Lord.

They were crucified, For their confession, And their commitment to Jesus Christ. That's  
why you look, At the history of the church, So many disciples, So many followers of Jesus,  
They were put to death, By crucifixion.

They were crucified, Because they wanted to claim, And confess, Jesus, Jesus is Lord.  
But this is why Jesus says, If you want to be my disciple, This is a must.

[ 53 : 34 ] This is non-negotiable. This is an imperative. You must confess. Jesus, Jesus, How  
curious. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Is Lord.

Jesus, Is Lord. Whosoever will come after me, Let him deny himself, Take up his cross,  
And follow me. My friend, Christianity isn't about gaining and getting, It's about losing, And  
living.

It's not about gaining and getting, It's about losing and living. Verse 35, Whosoever, Says  
Jesus, Would save his life, Will lose it.

But whosoever loses his life, For my sake and the gospels, Will save it. And you know,  
This is the first, We could say, This is the first, Would you rather question, That Jesus  
asks.

Would you rather save your life, Or lose it? Would you rather save your life, Or lose it? It's  
a simple question. And of course, Our natural response, At hearing the question, Is that  
we would rather save our life, Than lose it.

[ 54 : 43 ] We have this human instinct, That we want to live. But when we stop and think about,  
What Jesus is talking about, What Jesus is getting at, He's showing us that our life, In the  
here and now, Is short.

It's fleeting. Our life is an, Evanescent life. It's brief. It's momentary. It's passing. And what  
Jesus is showing us, Is that our, Evanescent life, Is nothing, In comparison, To the eternal  
life, That he is offering.

In comparison, To the length of eternity, Of eternal life, It's nothing, In comparison, To this  
life. Which is why, Jesus goes on to ask, His second and more, Solemn, Would you rather  
question, In verse 36, What does it profit a man, If he gains the whole world, And loses his  
own soul?

Or what shall a man, Give in exchange, For his soul? And you know, We mentioned  
earlier, That Jesus asks this, Would you rather question, And it's solemn and serious,  
Because he's asking, Well would you rather, Gain the whole world, And lose your soul, Or  
gain salvation, And save your soul?

And the language, Jesus uses here, It's very interesting language, It's financial language,  
Because Jesus is speaking, About the terminology, Of profit and loss. What shall it profit a  
man, To gain the whole world, And lose his soul?

[ 56 : 23 ] It's financial language, It's profit and loss, With the loss, Being sizably greater, Than the  
profit gained. Gaining the whole, Of this temporary world, And losing your soul, Is nothing  
in comparison, To gaining Christ, And saving your soul.

And you know, The thing is, It's such an extreme example, That Jesus gives us, Because,  
You can't actually gain, The whole world. No one can, No one can gain, The whole world.

But you know, That's the devil's deception, Isn't it? The devil's deception, Is that, He tempts us, That we can gain, The whole world, We can gain more and more, The devil deceives us, Into thinking, That we need this, We need that, We need to seek, And strive, To gain and get, The whole world, And we'll never, Be satisfied, We'll never have, Safety in our life, We'll never have, Security in this life, Until we do.

That's why, For so many people, The more they have, The more they want, The more they have, The more they want, Son of what, John Rockefeller, Said, He was asked, By a reporter, He was, John Rockefeller, He was said to be, One of the richest men, That ever lived, The richest man, Of all time, He was asked by a reporter, Mr Rockefeller, How much money, Is too much money, And his reply was, Just a little bit more, The more you have, The more you want, And sadly, So many people, They seek and strive, After satisfaction, And safety, And security, In all the F's of life, I remember listening to, Life Explored, If you've ever done it, Enrico Tice, He talks about, The F's of life, Fun, Food, Family, Finance, Friendships, Falling in love, Fitness, Football, And Facebook, All the F's of life, Nothing wrong with any, Of the F's of life, In the rightful,

And respectful, Place, But all those, F's of life, Fun, Food, Family, Finance, Friendships, Falling in love, Fitness, Football, And Facebook, They should never, Get in the way, At the expense, Of your eternal, Soul, They should never, Get in the way, Of your eternal, Soul, Which is why, Jesus asks his, Would you rather question, And it's a simple question, Isn't it?

[ 59 : 01 ] Would you rather, Your precious stuff, Or your precious soul, Would you rather, Be saved, Or be lost? Would you rather, Be a Christian friend, Or an unconverted, Or an unconverted, Friend?

Would you rather, Follow the saviour, Or follow Satan? Would you rather, Die in your sin, Or die in salvation? Would you rather, Go to heaven, Or go to hell?

Would you rather, Would you rather, Gain the whole world, And lose your soul, Or gain salvation, Gain Christ, And save, Your eternal soul?

And my friend, Jesus asks this, Simple would you rather, Question, So that we'll see, That earthly gains, Are nothing in comparison, To eternal losses, Earthly gains, Are nothing in comparison, To eternal losses, And Jesus, He's asking us, This simple question, So that it becomes, So obvious, To us, That we need, To do something about it, Today, Today, Today, You know, Today is God's day, Tomorrow is the devil's day, That's why the Bible, Tells us that, Now is the accepted time, Today, Is the day of salvation, Today is the day, To come to Christ, Confessing him as Lord, And committing your life, To him as saviour, Today is the day to come,

Before you're too late, And my friend, I urge you to come, To come on bended knee, Before this saviour, And confess him as Lord, And live according, To that confession, Because you know, Life is all about, Living, Living for Jesus, That's our chief end, To glorify God, And to enjoy him, Forever, So would you rather, Would you rather, Gain the whole world, And lose your soul, Or gain salvation, Gain Christ, And save your soul, Would you rather, Would you rather, May the Lord bless, May the Lord bless, These thoughts to us, Let us pray, O Lord, Our gracious God, Lord, We give thanks to thee, For the beauty,

[ 61 : 41 ] Of the gospel, How the gospel, Comes to us, So clearly, And it comes to us, So lovingly, From the lips of Jesus, And we pray, And we pray, And we pray, That we would hear, And heed, The word of Jesus, That how he asks us, What shall it profit a man, If he were to gain, The whole world, And lose his own soul, And Lord, That we would see, The preciousness of our soul, We would see the need, To seek first, The kingdom of God, And his righteousness, Knowing then, That all other things, Will be added unto us, Bless thy truth to us, We pray, We pray, That we would not leave, Thy word, In the pew this evening, But it might find, Lodgement in our heart, That we would take it home, That we would, Mull over it, And realize, That now is the accepted time, That today, Is the day of salvation, Oh Father, Be gracious to us, We ask, Go before us, Into the week,

That lies ahead, A week that is unknown, To any of us, But Lord, We give thanks, That this is where, We are found, In the Lord's house, On the Lord's day, Take away then, Our iniquity, Receive us graciously, For Jesus' sake, Amen, We're going to bring, Our service to a conclusion, This evening, We're going to sing, The words of Psalm 130, Psalm 130, It's in the Scottish Psalter, Page 421, Psalm 130, Psalm 130, Page 421, In the blue psalm book, And we're going to sing, The whole psalm, Psalm 130, It's one of the songs, Of ascent, There are 15 of them, They begin in Psalm 120, To Psalm 134, And Psalm 130, It really is a song, Of ascent,

Because it begins, In the depths, And it ends, In the heights, It begins, Where he's crying, In the depths, To the Lord, For mercy, Where we all need to be, And it ends, In the heights, Praising God, For his wonderful salvation, And as we said, All of our psalms, This evening, They focus on the soul, He's crying, From the depths, Of his soul, He says, And then he says, In verse 5, I wait for God, My soul doth wait, My hope is in his word, More than they, That for morning watch, My soul waits, For the Lord, And that word, Wait there, In verse 5, And verse 6, It doesn't mean, Wait as in hang around, I'm waiting for God,

To come and save me, No, It means trust, I wait, I trust in God, My soul trusts, My hope is in his word, And that's how I want us all to be this evening, Trusting with our soul, Upon the Lord, So Psalm 130, The whole psalm, We'll stand to sing, If you're able, To God's praise, Lord, From the depths, To thee I cry, My voice, Lord, To the hear, And to myself, I cry,

If the Lord should smother in me, We're teamed, but yet with thee our givennesses I fear the mere scheme I will for God my soul doth wait My hope is in His word For I lay that o'er morning watch

[ 66 : 55 ] My soul waits for the Lord I say more than they thought to watch The morning high to see Let Israel open the heart For where their mercies be And plentiful redemption Is ever far with Him

And from all His iniquities Israel shall redeem The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father The fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with you all Now and forevermore Amen