

An Invitation to Rest

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Preacher: Mr Alexander Macritchie

[0 : 0 0] Good day. This is well turned up. It's good to meet with you and to see you together here as we gather to worship God on his own holy day.

I'm told there's no notices to give out except that this evening the service God willing will be taken by Donald McKinnon Elder and next week your own minister will be back in the pulpit after his holiday.

Let's hear God's call to worship. Words David wrote as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

O give thanks to the Lord. Call upon his name. Make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him. Sing praises to him. Tell of all his wondrous works. Glory in his holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his presence continually. Remember the wondrous works that he's done. His miracles and the judgments he uttered.

[1 : 0 6] If we would remember all these things when we worship him, surely our worship would be lifted up, raised up by thinking in these ways.

Let's worship God by singing. Let's worship God by singing. And singing from the Scottish Psalter. Sorry, beg your pardon. From Sing Psalms to start with. Sing Psalms. Psalm 46a.

Psalm 46a, which is page 59, if you're using the combined book. Psalm 46a, which is page 59, if you're using the Bible.

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And therefore, though the earth gives way, we will not be afraid.

[2 : 5 6] The mountains fall into the sea, the water fall by the roar, we will not be afraid.

Though mountains quink us wings and guide the shore, and with the holy streams delight the city of heaven.

And God, the holy place in which the Lord most high has his abode.

God, the holy place, the city will not yield.

Our God will come, have grace of day, to be the help of you.

[4 : 4 6] The nations are in this array, that kingdom's disappeared.

God, the holy place, the holy place, the holy place.

It's here. The Lord Almighty is with us to stand and sustain.

For Jacob's love, our song he ends, and our death will remain.

Let's come together before God in prayer. Let us pray. Let us pray. Our gracious and ever-blessed God, we seek to praise your name to the best of our ability, knowing that we never do justice to you in our worship or in our lives.

[6 : 4 2] But thankful that you are a gracious God, a God full of loving kindness and forbearance, and a God who has gifted us with everything that we have, temporal and spiritual.

But when we come to you now, we think of the spiritual blessings you give us and the forgiveness there is in Jesus Christ. so we come to you, O Lord, trusting that our prayers, spoken and in our hearts, will be cleansed, will be sanctified, and made holy, for they are not holy of ourselves.

For they are not holy of ourselves. They are not as they should be. We pray your forgiveness, O Lord, for every way in which we do not honor you, particularly when we gather together in worship.

Lord, give us a greater love for you, we pray, that we might better recognize your majesty, your glory, your wonderfulness, that we may not be here as a matter of routine, that we may not be here to make up the numbers, but that we may come before you and ask, O Lord, that you receive our praise and our thanks, that you forgive us our sins as we confess them to you, and that you lead us in the truth.

Your word is truth. But although your word is truth, not just containing truth, yet we would not recognize it as such if you did not open our eyes spiritually.

[9 : 07] And this we confess, remembering back to when we did not love you or your word or understand it or have any appreciation of it.

And if that is the case for any here, if they are still thinking in these ways, we pray, O Lord, that you will open their eyes, open their ears, give them hearts of flesh instead of hearts of stone.

And we do not say this in any judgmental or patronizing way, for that is the prayer that we all needed ourselves before ever you brought us to yourself.

we are unworthy of the least of your mercies, yet you shower us with so many blessings. Make us thankful in our hearts for all that you do for us day by day, all the temporal blessings that we know and enjoy.

And we have to confess, take very much for granted. When we think of others in other parts of the world who have so many more difficulties in their lives, just surviving, just to know where the next meal is coming from, or when they can get a drink of water, or how they can survive in awful heat and fires and all sorts of things that are affecting many parts of the world at the moment.

[10 : 36] Things that are never likely to happen here, as far as we can see. We complain about the weather, but we do not have life-threatening weather here, generally.

So we thank you for that. And we pray for those who are in these situations. We pray for your people who are there. And we pray for others who may not have called upon you. May they be led to do so.

Sometimes we look at situations and tragedies and worrying situations and wonder, why do people not turn to God? But would we have turned to you had you not turned us yourself?

No, this is not the way of man. We are not inclined towards you. For we have been separated by a great gulf, the gulf of sin, the indwelling sin that we all had and have.

And the only way in which we are brought to you is through the blood of Jesus Christ. So we lift him up, O Lord, and seek to magnify him in our own eyes as we look to you and worship you from your word.

[11 : 47] Help us to do so as we ought to do. Help us to do so in a God-glorifying manner. We ask, O Lord, that you might bless this congregation.

We thank you that they have a settled ministry now. And we pray for Donald and Emma. We ask, O Lord, you might bless them and be with them as they return to the congregation after a time of holiday.

Remember any in the congregation who are away at the moment. Keep them and protect them. If there are any at camps or on family holidays or whatever, bring them back safely, we pray.

If any are visiting in the congregation, bless them while they're here. And may they know fellowship and friendship here. We pray, O Lord, the word of God might go forth with power here.

And it might go forth in a saving way. So that sinners who have thus far not turned to you will do so. And that the faithful here who are already in Christ would be built up in their most holy faith.

[12 : 54] This is all we can ask of any ministry. And we pray that it will be here. So done here. And in my congregation and in other congregations across our presbytery. Remember South Uist in its fragility in the small congregation there.

And Tom Penman there. Remember North Uist in their vacancy. And John McCauley and others seeking to keep things going there while they seek another minister.

Remember those congregations that expect to be vacant shortly because of retirements impending. We ask, O Lord, that you might bless these congregations and fill their pulpits with new preachers.

Preachers who will also preach the word of God in truth. Preach Christ crucified. Preach the whole counsel of God depending on the Holy Spirit to bless it.

We ask, O Lord, that you might be with us now as we worship you further. Remember our nation, the nation of Scotland, the nation of the United Kingdom.

[13 : 56] So far from you in so many ways. We ask, O Lord, that you might guide those who lead us. And if they will not be guided, remove them and replace them with those who will be.

We ask, O Lord, that you might turn our nation towards you. And we know that this can only happen by revival through the Holy Spirit. And the revival must be amongst your people for how can dead people be revived?

We need to be revived first that we might the better evangelize for you and speak for you and not be ashamed of you. Let's start in our own homes and villages and our own streets and workplaces.

We ask, O Lord, that you might do great things that we may see God glorified in ways that we have not imagined. That we would not think of ourselves as living in a day of small things but a day of potentially wonderful things as people turn to you and are saved.

We ask, O Lord, that you will hear us now as we offer our prayers and our praise and seek to come near to you in worship. And all we ask is in Jesus' name and for his sake.

[15 : 11] Amen. Donald told me there wouldn't be any young people here. But, just in case, have something ready.

So I said to myself, if there's one young person here, and I'm not thinking of you, Andrew McKeever, because you're my age, but if there's one young person here, I'll give something for the kids.

And I can see at least one of them has a good surname sitting over there. But, I have two things to say to young people.

One, I think, is too young for you, so I'm not, I'm going to, it would go below you. So, I'm going to leave that one for another time. And all I want to say today to you and to everybody, in fact, is if you're interested in sports, it's been quite a significant year in a number of ways.

Many years are significant. This number, this year, there's been quite a number of things happening. At Wimbledon, we had the first unseeded woman champion ever, I think. Djokovic was beaten on centre court for the first time in ten years.

[16 : 21] There's a men's Rugby World Cup later in the year, in September, October. And right now, there's an event on that's capturing a lot of imagination.

Do you know what it is? Do you know what the big event is right in the moment? It's the Women's Football World Cup. Just started in Australia or New Zealand, I think in both countries, the other day.

And the reason I mentioned is that there's an organisation called Open Doors. Open Doors speak about the persecuted church, the church that is under threat in certain countries in the world.

And they publish a list of the top 50, the World Watch List, they call it, the most dangerous countries in which to be a Christian. And you might know some of these countries already.

North Korea is almost always at the top of the list. Afghanistan, Nigeria. Nigeria is the country in which the most Christians have been killed in the last 100 years, even though there's a large Christian population.

[17 : 33] So there's five countries that are of the 32 at the Women's World Cup are on the World Watch List. There's two in Africa. You won't be surprised, one of them is Nigeria.

The other is Morocco. There's two in the Far East, China and Vietnam. And there's one in South America, Colombia.

Now two of those countries is because of Muslim, jihadists, attackers, terrorists, killers. Two of those countries is because they're in a totalitarian regime in the Far East, a one-party state where no one is allowed to disagree with the government or with the attitude of the government.

And the other is Colombia, which is officially, I suppose, a Roman Catholic country, but there it's drugs and crime. Criminals that do not want Christians to try to stop them peddling drugs which kill many, many people.

So, that's five countries. If you see any of the Women's World Cup, and you don't have to watch the whole game necessarily, there's highlights on BBC TV generally in the evenings, and you can watch it on the iPlayer.

[18 : 57] But, women's football is actually very good, I think, to watch. It's a really good sport. It's a really much better sport than it was ten years ago. It's a good, good spectator sport.

If you like football, watch it if you can. But remember, if you ever watched any of these countries playing, there's something going on in their country that's bad. And remember, the Christians, including children, in these countries who are under threat, we may never know who they are until eternity, but they're in a difficult situation.

Their lives are under threat. Their liberty is under threat. So remember them, please, if you can, when you see Vietnam or China or Nigeria or Morocco or Colombia playing football.

Thank you for listening so quietly and well. I'd like to read from the Word of God turning to the Gospel of John and Chapter 6.

Gospel of John, the fourth of the Gospels, and reading in Chapter 6 from verse 25 to 40.

[20 : 20] This is after Jesus had fed the 5,000, after he'd walked on water. These are two also in the same chapter. But then Jesus comes out with one of his great I am sayings.

I am the bread of life. So at verse 25, let's read from that verse as we hear the Word of God. When they, that is the crowd, not just the disciples, but the crowd generally, the people had been listening to him and had been fed, and when they found him, when they found him, Jesus, on the other side of the sea, they said to him, Rabbi, or teacher, when did you come here?

Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him, God the Father has set his seal.

Then they said to him, What must we do to be doing the works of God? Jesus answered them, This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.

[21 : 38] So they said to him, Then what sign do you do that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Jesus then said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.

For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. They said to him, Sir, give us this bread always.

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

[22 : 45] And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

Thus far, the word of God. May he bless that reading of his word to us, and to his name be the praise and the glory. Let's turn to the Psalter, this time, the Scottish Psalter. And Psalm 3.

Psalm 3 in the Scottish Psalter. That's on page 201 in the combined book. And we'll sing the whole psalm. It's five stanzas. I'll read the first and last stanzas before we start singing.

O Lord, how are my foes increased? Against me many rise. Many say of my soul, for him in God no succor lies.

We'll sing that down to the end. salvation doth appertain until the Lord alone. Thy blessing, Lord, forevermore thy people is upon. The whole of Psalm 3 to God's praise.

[23 : 53] Amen. Amen. O Lord, O Lord, how are my foes increased?

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Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[26 : 28] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. The second reading is from another gospel, from the gospel of Matthew, Matthew chapter 11. Amen. I'll read this chapter together.

When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities. Now when John, that's John the Baptist, heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent words by his disciple and said to him, Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?

And Jesus answered them, Go and tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk. Lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up.

And the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me. As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John.

[28 : 11] What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in king's houses.

What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it's written, Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.

Truly I say to you, among those born of women, there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he's Elijah who's to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

But to what shall I compare this generation? It's like children, sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates. We played the flute for you, and you did not dance.

[29 : 23] We sang a dirge, and you did not mourn. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, he has a demon. The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, look at him, a glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds. Then he began to announce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. Woe to you, Chorazin!

Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

But I tell you, it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you. At that time, Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to little children.

[30 : 42] Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father. And no one knows the Father except the Son.

And anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Amen. May God bless that reading of his own holy word. And to his name be the praise and the glory. Let's turn again to the combined psalm book and sing psalms.

Psalm 62. Psalm 62 and sing psalms at the beginning. So that's on page 79. Psalm 62, verses 1 to 8.

[31 : 49] Five stanzas. Again, I'll read the first and last stanzas before we sing. My soul finds rest in God alone. From him comes my salvation sure.

My safety fortress, sheltering rock in him alone. I am secure. Down to verses 7 and 8. My honor and salvation rest on God.

My rock and mighty fort. O people, trust in him always. To him alone pour out your heart. Verses 1 to 8 of Psalm 62. To God's praise.

His name is the truth.

When heaven and all I am secure How long will you, a soldier man Do you all seek to lay him low This healing wall, this cold revenge And being among his overdraw The plan is born from his high grace Take, take, be right, his breeding wise

[34 : 00] With all some blood to mouth they rest But in their heart, curse not be spiced Despite prayer as my soul and God alone In heaven my hope is ever sure My sin before the shepherding wrong In heaven my hope I am secure My own hands of grace shall rest

On God my hope and my devour O give them that save him always To him, my Lord, forever dear heart If you'd like to turn back with me to the second reading The second reading, Matthew chapter 11 Read a verse from that chapter And asking the Lord's help To lead us in our meditations Speak to you on that text Matthew 11 verse 28

Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden And I will give you rest There's a great text If you were brought up in the free church And maybe other denominations And you went to Sunday school It's probably a text you learned Probably in the King James Version That's what it was for me anyway And probably with verses 29 and 30 They kind of went together But it's one thing saying it off by rote To satisfy a Sunday school teacher And it's another thing to think about it for ourselves And recognise the truth And what it means And how significant a saying this is When I first And this is not the first time I've preached on this text It was about 12 years ago I first preached on it

And it was following It was a week after our communion in Bach And the visiting preacher had not preached on the text But he'd quoted it at least four times over the weekend And of course it's one of these texts that comes back to you When you learned it as a child And there's great blessing from that text I believe And we seek that today for us This is a simple sermon The reason it's a simple sermon Is that I'm a simple person And we are simple people I don't say that in any way pejoratively But simple in the case Of not being complicated before God Because here Jesus says in verse 25 I thank you Father Lord of heaven and earth That you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding And revealed them to little children Well if we don't come to Jesus as little children Not when we're little children But acknowledging that we are Before him as little children

Then we won't come to him at all We won't come to him in our pride and arrogance People in the world think of themselves as wise and understanding But unless we know God we're not wise or understanding So a simple sermon So a simple sermon with simple headings Four headings There's an invitation first Going through the verse there's an invitation Come Come unto me Or come to me That's the emphasis there Come Secondly The inviter The person issuing the invitation Come to me Who's me?

[39 : 01] Come to me Third The invited Who's it's addressed to? All Who labour Or all you who labour And are heavy laden Lastly The promise At the end of the verse And I will give you rest And I end with a little application All being well But I want to change the order there Because before looking at the invitation We should look at who's issuing the invitation Because that's fundamental That's important That's vital So who here is the speaker?

The inviter? The host? The issuer of the invitation? We can see clearly it's Jesus If you have a red letter Bible You'll see it's the words of Jesus But you don't need a red letter Bible To tell you it's the words of Jesus From verse 25 It's direct speech At that time Jesus declared And then to the end of the chapter It's direct speech It's not narrative It's not saying this happened It's Jesus speaking So Jesus is the me Jesus is inviting us to him, himself And why is it important That we know who the inviter is?

We may not think it's that important We may think it's obvious Because we were brought up with the gospel If we were brought up with the gospel Which many of you Most of you Maybe all of you were But for those who don't have that advantage It might not be so obvious Who is this Jesus anyway?

Well, he's the almighty God He's one with the Father That's why he tells us That no one knows the Father except the Son And no one knows the Son except the Father They are one with the Holy Spirit They are one with the Holy Spirit This mysterious Trinity The triune God Three persons in one Godhead How can we explain or understand that?

Well, nobody can really Ultimately It's a mystery It's a mystery Which we can only receive by faith Without understanding What it really ultimately means Except to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit Are always of one mind They are always agreed There's never a tension So this Jesus Who's inviting us This is...

[41 : 47] He's almighty God So he's almighty He's loving Everything we can say about God We know from the Catechism Don't we do remember the Catechism? What is God?

What is God? God is a... A spirit Infinite, eternal, and unchangeable In his being Wisdom, power Holiness, justice Goodness, and truth See what trips off the tongue Because you learned it as a child But if we look at that What that means In every aspect What we say about God the Father We say about God the Son We say about God the Holy Spirit They're equal in power and glory There's no pecking order in the Godhead They're all equal And they all have All of these attributes So Jesus is almighty He's loving He knows mankind He knows what we need He knows our frailties He's trustworthy He's dependable He's reliable All the things that we are not So the issuer of the invitation That's important

I mean have you ever issued an invitation And weren't able to follow up on it? Well I remember I was As a child I remember Asking a pal to come back for tea As a primary school kid And being told no no He's got to go home His parents were wondering where he is There's no mobile phones in those days He's got to go home He can't stay for tea Oh sorry Okay Maybe another time That sort of thing I can issue an invitation I might not be able to follow through on it But Jesus is not like that He is able to do whatever he says And he will do Not only able but willing That's important isn't it?

If you ask somebody to do something They might be able to do it They have the ability They have the physical And mental And whatever attitudes they need to do it But they don't want to do it Sorry I can't stand in for you I'm doing something else They're able but they're not willing Some people are willing but they're not able That's not so common But Jesus is able and willing He issues the invitation He says come And when he says come That means that we can come Because he never asks us to do anything That we can't do Remember that That's important Because that is a get out for a lot of people Isn't it?

Brought up in our Calvinist tradition Oh, maybe I'm not elect Oh, I don't know if I can do it None of us can do it Except he enables us And he doesn't ask us Doesn't invite us Unless he means it So he says come Haven't come to invited yet But I'm trespassing a little bit into that But I'm really talking about Jesus right now As the inviter Okay, so Jesus is the one who invites Jesus is the one that says come And come is the simplest thing This is what I was going to speak to you If there were little kids here I was going to say something about hand signals And simple words and so on And one of the simplest things One of the first things a child learns When they can crawl And certainly walk Is come A beckon Come to me Come to mom, come to dad When you're starting to walk It's a simple thing, isn't it?

[45 : 19] Come Come to me That's the invitation We're going to get onto that now The invitation is come It's simple It's clear It's straightforward It's uncomplicated He doesn't ask He doesn't ask an onerous thing He doesn't say Go Work He doesn't say Pay me what I'm due Give me something Worship me And show yourself worthy of me He doesn't say wait And see what I might do He doesn't say anything like that He just says come Now that, if you can say that to a little child You know that anyone can understand it So any of us here certainly Can understand what that means Come It's not complicated We only make it complicated If we don't come If we don't think we can come But we can come Because Jesus issued the invitation

And we can trust him We must in fact trust him When I say can We ought to We ought to And we must But that doesn't mean to say that we do That's not to say everyone here trusts him We should But he says come to me And what does he mean by that?

What does he mean by this invitation? He just says come to me He just says come to me He means leave sin Trust in Jesus Follow him He doesn't say come to church He doesn't say come to the prayer meeting These are good things But that's not what he says here He just says come to me Far be it from me to suggest that you shouldn't come to church or the prayer meeting We should all come to the prayer meeting And I believe that's maybe a thing to some extent in this congregation that isn't in many others That some people who do not actually profess the name of Jesus will come to the prayer meeting Or to some prayer meetings That's a good thing Trouble nowadays is often that some of our members don't come to prayer meetings Certainly we have that in back Prayer meetings where we find God, isn't it?

Find Jesus there Find him in the prayers of his people Find him in his word Just like on the Lord's day It's important It's a means of grace But he doesn't just say come to church Come to the prayer meeting He doesn't say come to the Lord's table He doesn't say come to hear ministers Or lay preachers He doesn't say come to know about me He doesn't say come to know church doctrine to understand it He says just come to me That's where we start from Coming to Jesus Other things can follow later But we need to come to Jesus first Because we don't come to Jesus All the rest of that stuff is a waste of time If Jesus isn't in it It ain't worth it It ain't important It is not It will not save us It will not ultimately do anything for us For us Spiritually But believing in him Trusting in him

Coming to him All these things They go together So this is encapsulated in the simple word Come We have to interpret What come means It doesn't mean just come across the floor to me It doesn't mean come right up to me It means come to me Trust me Worship me Love me Believe in me Believe in his power Believe in his salvation Exercise simple faith So we need to trust We need to depend We need to come to him Like the Israelites did in the wilderness When they were bitten by the snakes And they were dying in droves To look at the bronze snake That's all they had to do Look!

[49 : 32] That was their way of salvation there Then Just to look to him Look to it Trouble is They made that into a god Which it wasn't a god But they made it into an idol Unfortunately Sadly But Jesus refers to that When he's speaking to Nicodemus When he's telling him The greatest truth that anyone ever heard John 3 16 Look it up You know it I'm sure anyway Without looking it up But you can look it up When you go home So But a word of caution though He says come to me He says in the words Go all the way Don't stomp Don't go half way Don't put your hand to the plow And turn back We're told not to do that in scripture It's a dangerous thing Don't be half hearted Don't say you will And don't do it Don't say you will And don't do it Like the two sons Remember one son Was asked

If you would help work in the field And he said yes I'll go But he didn't The other one said no no I'm not going to do that for you But he went Well it's better to combine the two And say yes And go Do it Now that's not what he's commanding here He's saying come Remember I said he didn't say go work And that will follow Once we come to him But go all the way Don't stop Don't hesitate Don't be satisfied Don't be satisfied With going to church Don't be satisfied With going to the prayer meeting Don't be satisfied With professing faith All those things are good But not in themselves But they're good things But it's not that we need to be trusting in Jesus All the way For everything For this life And for the life that is to come And how

How is that invitation to be obeyed In what manner? Well as an unworthy person As a person who's not worthy of that invitation Because none of us are But the invitation is genuine It's heartfelt It's meant And it's for us To receive that invitation And to accept it That is a requirement We can't sit there waiting And say Well I don't know if I'm elect Jesus never says come to me if you're elect Never says it once in scripture Whosoever will shall be saved That's what the scripture says Whosoever will You can know that if you turn to God You're only doing so because he's made you turn in your heart But you'll never know that unless you do it You'll never prove you're elect except by coming to Christ You'll never prove that salvation is for you except by coming to Christ If you've come to Christ already you know that's true

If you haven't yet If you haven't yet This is an urgent call It's always an urgent call Every time the gospel preached if you haven't come to Christ It's an urgent call Because we don't know what happens Tonight, tomorrow, the next day, whenever Whether we'll be here And we'll be here And we'll be here And we'll be here And we'll be here And we'll be here And we'll be here And we'll be here Whether we'll be here We've gone to many funerals We've seen many younger than ourselves passing away Some quite unexpectedly, suddenly Without warning We need to be ready We need to receive the invitation So, are you one of those who's addressed?

That's the third thing Invitees Who's addressed? Maybe it's not for you actually Maybe you're off the hook No, you're not off the hook No one's off the hook We're all invited And I'll tell you why I say that It says It says All who labour and are heavy laden Or all who are weary and burdened Looking at other translations All who are carrying heavy burdens All who are tired of carrying heavy loads All who are troubled And weighed down with care The toiling and burdened ones Or as Eugene Peterson in The Message The Message translated Are you tired Are you tired?

[54 : 14] Worn out? Burnt out on religion? There's all sorts of ways of looking at this Slightly different translations But they're all saying the same thing effectively Those who are weary and are heavy laden That doesn't mean to say that you've got a difficult physical job Or anything like that It's not talking about our lives Our spiritual lives Weigh down with what?

Well what can weigh us down? Not cares and troubles of ordinary life But the weight of sin Sin that afflicts us That affects us That does us down That stops us doing what we ought to do Maybe you're not into that category Sin doesn't bother you Well it ought to bother you Because God sent his son to die On account of that sin So if it means that much to God It should mean that much to us So who would not be under this category of Those who labour and are heavy laden It's not a social gospel We're not talking about social things Not just those who are oppressed by others And there are many in the world who are oppressed by others Being slaves and so on

You know under totalitarian regimes As we've spoken about in the children's talk and so on But all who are oppressed by sin Struggling, losing the battle Is this God's fault? No Is it the government's fault?

No They can be blamed for lots of things but not for that They can blame for their own sin But not for our sin It's sin That's the problem So If do you qualify?

Are you someone that God is addressing here? If you're not Just a dream all your way I A number of times I sat in church In the Penance pew in Stornoway And didn't listen to a blind word that was said I thought of everything under the sun except the message I couldn't repeat the text when I came home Not that that pleased my dad very much But it was the case No interest Just over there I hope you're not sitting there like that You choose to come And if you're not a child You've chosen to come For probably your own reasons So The invitation is there Do we qualify?

[57 : 03] Do we say that it's not for us? Do we say we're not good enough? No We can't say that Because the message is not for the good Jesus Christ did not come to save the righteous But sinners There aren't any righteous of course He means those who think of themselves righteous Can't save them If they won't regard themselves as sinners Are you too much of a sinner?

Are you too bad? I've heard someone say that to me I'm too bad I've done too much No one has No one's done too much Look at Paul Perseuing the church Look at Manasseh Sacrificing his own children All sorts of examples in scripture All sorts of examples through history People are worse than any I guarantee than anybody here In their behaviour But we're all sinners And we all need the same salvation However good or bad Our lives have been They're not perfect And they're not as they ought to be And we're not one with Christ Unless we are receiving his forgiveness Coming to him Is this just for the converted to hear To pat them on the back Is it well done? You've come No it's not To those who have not yet come Those who need to come All of us need to keep coming back to Christ Don't we?

Each day in a sense In the sense of repenting our sin Not that we'll be saved again Because we're saved once and for all But we need to Be looking to him everyday Looking to the Holy Spirit everyday That he might support and help us And enable us To fight against the sin And that he might do And that's what it does So easily beset us The only person in the world Who can disqualify you From this invitation You know who that is don't you?

You know it in your heart It's yourself Church can't stop you Elders can't Ministers can't Your spouse can't No one can say to you You're not worthy You're not needy You yourself might say that Don't do that to yourself Because that's the ultimate betrayal Of yourself You have to come to him He demands it Not just invites It's a demand as well Though it's phrased as an invitation here So The Inviter The invitation The Invited What's the promise?

The promise is rest Peace of soul Rest of heart Peace of conscience Not carnally Not in a worldly manner But spiritual Having spiritual freedom Having an awareness Of your sin Being forgiven Like Christian in Pilgrim's Progress Having that weight of sin Falling at the foot of the cross Christ Do we recognize him as The redeeming mediator?

[60 : 21] He has all these things True of him Prophet priest and king Our high priest And he gives us the Holy Spirit In this life To be with us and be in us To reveal himself to us To make him known to us To make us understand What has previously been Uncomprehensible to us What we once didn't understand And if that has not happened to you yet Pray that it will And if you don't Leave any of it You don't want any of it I remember when I was a very young Christian Hearing Kenny I's dad Nor'em with a cloud of storm And I was praying Or preaching And saying Maybe you hate God Maybe you don't want anything to do with him Just be honest with him and say that Wow that's pretty hate Say that and say that you don't want to be like that anymore Come to Jesus

Come to Jesus That's what he says Come to me All you who labour and who are laden And I will give you rest It's a simple statement isn't it?

It's a simple promise But it's a great promise But it's a great promise So By way of application Do you know the inviter?

Do you know him for yourself already? If you have I'm not wasting my breath on you am I Because it's great to hear about Jesus anyway The more we know about Jesus The more we want to know about Jesus Even the things that we already know Do you have them reinforced?

But if you don't Do you love Jesus? Do you fear him? Do you know him?

[62 : 15] Do you want to? Are you willing to come to him? The invitation Have you heard it? Have you heard this invitation yourself? You've heard it spoken now today But have you heard it yourself?

Have you recognised it? It's applying to you I've said it applies to you But you don't have to accept that You don't have to receive what I say Test it against the word of God Then believe it Are you one of those addressed?

I'm telling you you are We're all addressed We've all had to come Or we all have yet to come We're in one of those two camps Do you believe the promise?

Do you want the promise? Do you want the promise? Do you seek the promise? Do you seek that outcome To have rest from Jesus? Rest for our souls?

That invitation is still open But it may not remain so For any of us for much longer We don't know How long are we going to be here?

[63 : 28] How long are we going to be on this earth? We don't know None of us know Everybody knows that Don't they? Intellectually We have to receive it for ourselves And put it to ourselves as they say It's not just other people who die We all come to die We need to receive that If we haven't already done so Receive the promise As well as the invitation Accept it Close in with Christ You'll never regret it You may regret not having done it earlier Many of us do Can't do anything about that though But you can Do something about the invitation The invitation Because it's there Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel I commend him to Everyone that hasn't yet Received him for themselves Let us pray Eternal Father

We give you thanks for your word We thank you that it's so clear We pray your forgiveness for any ways In which we've obscured the truth May you take away anything that was said That was unhelpful Take it away from our minds From our understandings From our memories Emphasize to us The truth of your word Bring it home to us By your Holy Spirit Enable us to receive Jesus We do not Ask, O Lord For anything that you are not willing to give And all we ask is in Jesus name For his sake, Amen I would like to Conclude by singing Psalm 1-1-6 in the Scottish Psalter The Scottish Psalter The Scottish Psalter Psalm 1-1-6 at the beginning On page 395 Verses 1-8 I read the first and last stanzas before we sing I love the Lord because of my voice and prayers you did hear

I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear Down to 8-8 For my distressed soul from death delivered was by thee Thou didst my mourning eyes from tears My feet from falling free These verses to God's praise I love the Lord because my voice unworthy did hear I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear Oh, dear, that Lord, I'm sorrow-shin'

Thou said, Thou loved me come around Thou is over Thou didst my heart Thou didst my heart Thou prophetic Haith v■■■ Thou came out of me I'll say Even though he increased my soul, O Lord I do Thee humbly pray.

God merciful and righteous is, Dear God is the God, God saves the need, I must know, He can be held apart.

[68 : 20] O thou, my soul, Do thou return And do thy quiet rest For thou, my Lord, O thou, my Lord, To thee, His power be how expressed.

For my distresses, O round death, Delivered was my eek, Thy is my morning eyes long clear, Thy pain from falling free.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, According to the power at work within us, To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, Through it all generations, forever and ever.

Amen. Amen.