

Advent Mission The Wanderer

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Preacher: Harry Robinson

- [0 : 0 0] Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult. Let men declare among nations, the Lord is King.
- Let the sea roar and all the creatures in it. Let the fields exult and all that is in them. Then let the trees of the forest shout for joy before the Lord when he comes to judge the earth.
- Now that's a poem of King David's. And that's a poem of exultation. It's a poem in praise of his creator. And we know that King David must have gone through some terrible times in his life.
- When his son died. When he was being chased through the wilderness by his enemies. And we know that it had been many, many terrible things in his life. But I think that he was able to grasp that poem and those words.
- In his time of distress. When he was crying out in his distress to the Lord. He was able to grasp that and hold on to it. Just as you who are in distress can.
- [1 : 1 9] And just as I can right now. I want you to know Christ. He was a drunkard.
- When he became a Christian he felt constrained to tell people about his encounter. And he did so back in our church in Quebec. He told his story simply and quietly.
- Confessing that his drinking problem wasn't yet solved. But by the grace of God it would be. That he knew he was a new man.
- All in that church. I was there. All in that church. And especially the young people. They were deeply moved by his words.
- But he was not a young man. And he died a few days later. Consumed by the ravages of time. And of alcohol. But his words live on in the minds of those who heard him.
- [2 : 3 1] Because he told them. That the Lord was king in his life. Just as King David did. Now.
- I'm going to tell you a story about my wife. Those of you who. Have the good fortune to know my wife. Know that she's a very sweet. And gentle person.
- Maybe you don't know. That her quiet persuasiveness. Is very powerful indeed. In our young married life. She was a Christian. And I was not.
- She used to persuade me on occasion. When my guard was down. To go unwilling. And I mean unwilling. To church. Most of the time.
- I was bored silly. And very anxious. To get the thing over with. One day however. Someone. Was reading a lesson.
- [3 : 3 2] I can't remember who it was. And part of it. Was like it bore a hole. In my brain. Here are the words.
- Without faith. It is impossible. To please God. For anyone who comes to God. Must believe that he exists. And that he rewards.
- Those who search for him. I just said to myself. At the time. Those words. Are true. I don't know why. It.

It. It. It. It just didn't make. Logical sense to me. That all of a sudden. I could see a passage. In the Bible. And say. It's true. Then the standard religious jargon.

Would have it. That the Holy Spirit. Was doing something wonderful. And working in my life. I guess that's true too. At any rate. I started to go more often. To church. And to listen to the lessons.

[4 : 28] That were read. And it wasn't but a few months. That I realized. It was Jesus Christ. Who was the real. Author of those words. I gave my life to him. And became.

And am now a Christian. Now. That was 20 years ago. Some of you here. Weren't even born then. Or at least.

You'd be too young to remember. And some of you here. Are old enough to think. That I'm a young upstart. To get up and talk about. My life with God. When I've only had 20 years. Nevertheless.

I must. When we'd been Christians together. About five years. I said to my wife one day. Why are we so happy? And why are things going so well?

You know. We're supposed to suffer. That's what we've been. That's what we've been. Hearing. At noon. When Jim Packer was talking about. Suffering today. Last night. Crying out to the Lord.

[5 : 25] In your distress. We had led. Five. Enormously. Happy. Years. As Christians. And I said to her. Why. Aren't we suffering?

Because I know. The Bible says that we're supposed to suffer. Well. I shouldn't have said it. Because the suffering came. And it came in flows.

And I felt like shaking my fist at God. And. Things do go badly. I lost a job because of incompetence. And that hurts.

Because you know that you're at fault. And you know that you're hurting other people. And. At the time. I was going to St. John's. And.

I felt. Well. You know. There's a lot of very rich. And powerful. And. Influential people here. And they all. Dressed very nice. And. I went to the coffee one day.

[6 : 22] And. Nobody talked to me. And I felt that all these rich. And powerful people. Had nothing to do with me. And that nobody. And I mean nobody in this church was suffering.

Except. Me. It got to the point. I wouldn't go to the coffee. Then it got to the point. I wouldn't go to church. And it got to the point. That I was spiraling in. And spiraling in like that.

Reveling in my own. Anguish. And discomfort. If you will. Until finally one day. My wife. Went to church. And I didn't. And I was gardening.

And all of a sudden. I said to myself. What is wrong with you. Jack McCloud. You know. There must be something wrong. If you're afraid to go to church. You're supposed to be a Christian. So.

When church was over. I phoned Harry Robinson. And I gave him a piece in my mind. I said. You get over here right away. I want to talk to you. I said. Look. I said.

[7 : 20] Why is it I can't go to your church? You know. There's nobody there. That's suffering like I am. They're all rich. And they're all happy. And there. You know. And here I am. In my distress.

And there's no one. To comfort me. And I was really bitter. Well. You know how quiet Harry is. And we got to talking.

And. And. We ended up. Forming a little Bible study. With people that. Were like me. And I found out.

After I started going back to church again. That there were. A lot of. Very friendly. And wonderful people. In St. John's church. You know. You can lose sight.

Of the Lord. But you shouldn't. You should be able to. Exalt. Like David did. You should be able to. Exalt. In your distress. And when you're happy.

[8 : 16] I'm. Proud to be a Christian. And I hope that some of you here. Who are listening to these words tonight. Will become Christians. And. I can.

I can. I can. Exalt like David did. You know. I can. I can say. I can say. I can roar.

With delight. And I can exalt. In the wonder. And the joy. Of the Christian life. Because. We.

As a family. Know Christ. Now I'm still suffering. We got a kid. That's. Maybe we've done a little harm to. Because we haven't loved him enough. Kid that's left the house. And it's in trouble.

We all suffer. But I think. You know. We. We. We shouldn't expect to be happy all the time. That we can be Christians.

[9 : 11] And exalt. In the Lord. And be happy. In the face of it. Amen. It's very nice to see you all tonight.

And it's. It's. Very helpful. To have had that sort of. Wonderful picture of. How modern man.

Knows everything about everything. Except. His way home. There was once a story of. Of a big man. In a big Cadillac. Who came along.

A country road. And found a small boy. With a fishing pole over his shoulder. Hiking along the side of the road. And. The big man in the big Cadillac. Was lost.

And. He stopped beside the boy. And said. I'm looking for this town. Could you tell me where it is? And the little boy said. No. I'm afraid I don't know where that town is.

[10 : 16] And the man said. Well. I know that it's across. A four lane highway. Is there a four lane highway. Anywhere near here? And the little boy said.

No. I don't know any four lane highways. Anywhere near here. Well. I know that the four lane highway. Crosses. There's a bridge on it. And that means. There's a big river somewhere. Would you know where that river is?

And he says. No. I don't know where that river is either. And. As the man. Started to fan his accelerator. About to take off from that point. He said.

You don't know much. Do you boy? He said. I know my way home. And.

And I. I think that is a kind of. Lovely picture of. Of what. What's being talked about tonight. In that section of the psalm.

[11 : 11] That we. That we're going to look at. Which is the story. The first of four pictures. About. About the wanderer. And if you look again. At your leaflet. Where the. Passage that Archie read.

For you is contained. You will see. Some. Wandered in the desert wastes. And. We're talking. I'm talking tonight. About.

The wanderer. And who the wanderer. Is. Is. I think that this. Whole psalm. Is written. Really around. Around.

It's a kind of. Old Testament. The attitude. Because. I think that it's saying. Not. Blessed are the poor. In spirit. But. Blessed. Is.

The wanderer. When he gets. To the point. Of crying out. To the Lord. And. Blessed. Is. Is. The prisoner. When he sits.

- [12 : 05] In darkness. And finally. Cries out. To the Lord. And. Blessed. Is. The sick. Fool. Who comes. To the place. Where he cries. Out.
- To the Lord. And. Blessed. Is. The. Overwhelmed. Person. When he gets. To the point. Where he cries. Out. To the Lord. It's.
- Just a picture. Of. How God brings. Blessing. Into. Different people's lives. And. The wanderer.
- Is. Is. Is. Is. A very. Powerful. Picture. There is. There's. A line. By. A.
- Contemporary. American. Writer. Who is. A Christian. And. He says. Man. Is. The only.
- [13 : 00] Alien. Creature. In. The whole. Of. The cosmos. That's. A powerful. Statement. Cough drop.
- Number one. I. Have to work. On this basis. Man. Is. The only. Alien. Creature. In. The whole.
- Of. The cosmos. Now. I think. What that means. Is picked up. In scripture. When you. Start with. Cain. When he. Kills.
- His brother. And he. Wanders. Away. From. The presence. Of God. And becomes. As he says. A fugitive. And. A wanderer.
- He goes. From. The garden. To. The wilderness. And then. Spends. His life. Trying. To find. The city. And.
- [13 : 55] The reason. That he's. Wandering. Is because. He has. Chosen. To live. In. Rebellion. Against. God.
- He was. One picture. Of. Wandering. In the old. Testament. There's another. Picture. Of wandering. You remember. The people. Came up. Out of the land. Of Egypt. They crossed. Under Moses.
- They crossed. The Red Sea. They came. Into the wilderness. And they went. Right up. To the borders. Of the promised land. And they sent.
- Spies. Into the promised land. And the spies. Having gone. Into the promised land. Saw the fruitfulness. Of it. Saw the size. Of the armies. And the size. Of the soldiers.
- And came back. And filled the people. With fear. So that they would not. Enter into the promised land. That God had prepared them. And for 40 years.
- [14 : 51] They wandered. In the wilderness. And it became. A way of life. For them. And some had to die. In the wilderness. So that their fear.
- And their anxiety. And their turning back. From the promise. Of God. Would not. Would not. Ultimately. Stand in the way. Of people going there. You have.
- You have a lovely picture. In Deuteronomy. Chapter 26. When. The man. Who is now. In the promised land. Comes. To offer his.
- The first fruits. Of his harvest. And he comes. To the place. Which the Lord. Has appointed. And he offers these. And he is told. To say.
- This confession. My father. Was. A wandering. Aramean. That he would never forget.
- [15 : 49] That he had been brought. From wandering. Into. A promised. Land. Well. That's why. There is. Scripturally.
- A kind of. Reinforcement. Of the picture. That man is a. Perpetual. Wanderer. And the reason. That he wanders. Is because.
- He is. Lost. You know. That. That people. Like. Burl Ives. Sing song. I'm just.
- A poor. Wayfaring. Stranger. Traveling. Through. This land. Of woe. Or that other. Lovely. Cowboy song. And. Cowboys. Are particularly. Good. I think.

- At. Catching. The reality. Of wandering. Like the lone ranger. Across the west. From town to town. And never having a place. Where he ever settles down. And that picture.
- [16 : 44] Of the wandering man. Is. Is all through. Music. And literature. And stories. Way back in. 975. There is an early.
- Writing. In. In early. English. Called. The wanderer. The one who has lost. His lord. And wanders.
- Looking for the place. Where he can be. Welcomed back. Into the company. Of people. That sense. Of lostness. Is. Is something.
- That I think. Is universal. I don't think. You have to. Be a Christian. To know. That you're wandering. And you don't know. Where you're going. The whole concept.
- Of. Of being. On a journey. And not knowing. Where that journey. Is leading. And wondering. Whether it's leading. Into blackness. And into oblivion.
- [17 : 41] It's very hard. Not to feel that. And so. I think. In a wonderful way. Psalm 107. By talking about. The wanderer. Is not only.
- Referring to the history. Of the people of God. Who turned back. From the promise. Of God. It has infected. The whole of mankind. So that we become.
- Very much aware. That we are. A people. Who are in. An alien. Universe. Somehow. We don't. Belong. And we're looking.
- For a home. And nothing here. Satisfies us. My home is not. Down here. I don't know where it is. But I know. That it isn't here.
- And that longing. For a place. That is home. Is. Is so deeply. Embedded. In all our minds. And hearts.
- [18 : 36] And the difficulty. Is that we wander. And wander. And wander. And never come. To the place. Where. We are meant to be. There's a story.
- I want to read to you. About a couple. Of wanderers. In the north woods. Of British Columbia. About a century ago. And I'll just read you the story.
- It's from a book. Called Pack Saddles. To the. Tete Jean Cache. Which I guess is up. West of Jasper somewhere.
- It talks about this time of year. Perhaps a little later. And a cold. Snowy night. A young Englishman. And his wife.
- Decided to put in the winter. After trapping. The man had found. Railroad work hard. And having a little money. Was able to outfit. Comfortably.
- [19 : 34] For the winter. Having no horses. Of his own. He hired a guide. And a small pack train. To take them out. Thirty miles. To a good locality. For fur. Along the wild hay river.
- And after selecting. A site for their cabin. The guide. And outfit. Left them. From laziness. Or inexperience. The shack they built.
- Was most uncomfortable. The roof so low. That only in the center. Of the floor. Could they stand upright. Without touching the joists. A small sheet iron.
- Box stove. Without an oven. Was all they had. For heating and cooking. The weather up to New Year's. Was cold. Although the snowfall. Was light. Fur was plentiful.
- But the couple. Did not get nearly enough. Moose meat. Put by. Their first difficulty. Came when their moccasins. Began to wear out. And they did not have. Any tanned moose.
- [20 : 31] Ready to repair them. Neither did they have. The necessary skill. Eventually. The woman. Had to wrap her feet. In gunny sacking. And canvas. Luckily.

About this time. They fell in. With a native family. From whom they got. New moccasins. But not before their feet. Had been slightly. Frost bitten. Climax of their troubles.

Came one day. When they left their cabin. To visit traps. Some miles away. They intended to camp out. And to retrace their trail. Next day. Towards evening.

However. The weather broke. And snow began to fall. They decided to take. A brief rest. And then head home. Before the weather got worse. Within a short distance.

They found that their tracks. Had been covered by snow. In the growing darkness. They missed their way. Instead of camping at once. And waiting out the night.

[21 : 26] Waiting for daylight. They made the mistake. Common to most inexperienced. Persons in the bush. They pushed on. Thinking they would soon. Strike some familiar spot.

Before long. They were lost. They had very little grub. And very few matches. They made a fire. And sat by it. During the long hours. Of that January night.

By daybreak. There was more than a foot. Of fresh snow. They traveled all day. And as is usual. In such cases. Found themselves. Going in the wrong direction. Towards evening.

A native trapper. Crossed their trail. He recognized the snowshoes. As white men. And noticed that one pair. Was exceptionally small. His curiosity was aroused.

And he followed them. When he caught up with them. They were in desperate straits. But he helped them. To make a good camp. And fed them from the food. He was carrying.

[22 : 25] Next day. He led them safely home. Tired. But very thankful. For their narrow escape. Except for sore feet. They were none the worse. For their experience.

They decided. That they had had enough. And set out. For the railway. Again. Well. You see. When people are lost.

This story illustrates. They. They go the wrong way. Because. Every way. Seems right to them. They keep moving.

When they. They should. Keep. Still. It's. It's hard. I think. To be still.

And probably. The. Chief characteristic. Of our wandering. Is the terrible. Restlessness. The terrible. Desire. We have. To go on.

[23 : 21] And on. In the hope. That we'll find. Where it is. We're meant to go. In Psalm. 107. We find. That the wanderers.

Were. Hungry. They were thirsty. And they were. Weary. And Jesus.

Picks up. This picture. Of. Hunger. And thirst. And weariness. And he says. To the people. Who are wandering. And lost. I am the way.

And to the people. Who are thirsty. I am the water. Of life. And to the people. Who are hungry. I am the bread. Of life. The people.

Who are weary. Come to me. All ye that labor. And are heavy laden. And I will. Refresh you. Well.

[24 : 21] That's. That's the picture. Of the wanderer. And that's. Who you and I are. That's the restlessness. That's in our hearts. That's why the picture. In the Bible.

Is so often. The picture. Of people. Being. Lost. And yet. Because we are lost. Among others. Who are. Equally. Lost.

As you saw. Illustrated. For you tonight. The lady. Who's so anxious. To build up. The choir. Is lost. And the insurance man.

Who's so anxious. To sell a policy. Is lost. And the lady. Of the street. Who has only. One thing in mind. Is lost.

And that lostness. Is almost. A pervasive disease. In the whole. Of our society. Which we can't. Confess. One to another.

[25 : 18] You may. You may. You may. You may remember. Psalm. Psalm. Psalm 1. Which. Which talks about. Blessed is the man. That walks not. In the counsel.

Of the ungodly. Neither stands. In the way of sinners. Neither sits. In the seat. Of the scornful. But his delight. Is the law. Of the Lord.

Lord. And therein. Does he meditate. Day and night. He shall be like a tree. Planted by the rivers of water. That he will bear fruit.

In due season. And it says. The ungodly. Are not so. But are like the chaff. Which the wind. Drives away. But then it concludes with.

But the Lord knows. The way. Of the righteous. And. Somehow. That's the thing. That we've got to find.

[26 : 16] We've got to find. The way. We've got to know. Where it is. That we're. That we're going. And our life. Consists.

Of a search. For. The way. And in our hearts. And in our lives. Is the consciousness. That we are.

Lost. And being lost. How do we turn. And find the way. Well. Well. I suppose that.

I suppose that the thing that. That most of us are. Belong to. Is the kind of conspiracy. That suggests that if we're all lost together.

It doesn't much matter if. Any of us. Find the way. It's. It's as though. In the. In the situation.

[27 : 24] In which. In which we are. Nobody wants to ask the question. Nobody wants to. Raise the problem. Nobody wants to say.

Where are we going? What are we doing? Nobody wants to acknowledge. The reality. Of our. Lost. Lost. And.

So we come to the place. Where in Psalm 107. Some wandered in deserts. Finding no way to a city.

To dwell in. Hungry and thirsty. Their souls fainted within them. And then they cried to the Lord. In their trouble. And he delivered them.

From their distress. Yes. I. I. I don't particularly. Have anything against.

[28 : 23] Against. Whistler Mountain. As a place to ski. But as a kind of. Spiritual symbol.

Of our age. It could be. It could be a kind of symbol. Of lostness. In that carved out of the wilderness.

Is that little. Community. Where people find. Physical refreshment. And they find. Great beauty. And they find. Excitement.

And they find companionship. And they find warmth. And they find. Friends. And they find. Society. They find all sorts of things.

And. The whole. Structure. Of the community. Is built. Around. Going up. A hill. In order to turn around.

[29 : 22] And come down again. And. That's what happens. And. If you were to ask anybody.

Where are you going. They would say. Up the hill. And what are you going. Up the hill for. In order to come down the hill. Then why bother.

But. It's a. You know. I. It's a. It's just that. It's symbolically. It represents. It represents.

It represents. A kind of. Of lostness. In our society. A kind of. Awareness. That we're. We're not. Particularly. Going.

Anywhere. Now. I. I don't want. What I've said. To spread. Beyond just the. Just the. Just the. Just the. Few of us here. Um.

[30 : 17] I mean. I'd feel badly. If they went. And closed it down. Just because. Actually. I have every confidence. That it'll survive. In spite of.

What I have to say. About it. But. Um. It's. Uh. It's that kind. Of. Mutual. Conspiracy. That we.

As human beings. Get into. Where. We. In a sense. Refuse. To allow. Anyone. To ask. The questions. That need to ask.

That need to be asked. Like. Where are we? And. Uh. You know. That. That original story. Of. The news is good.

And the news is bad. And the pilot. Saying. The good news is. That. Uh. That we're traveling. At just over. 600 miles an hour. And the bad news is.

[31 : 11] That we're lost. And. The. Uh. The. The. The kind of. Thing about our society. Is we take great pride.

In. The kind of. Measure. Of our progress. And the measure. Of our accomplishment. But. Uh. Where we're going. Is a question. That we. Were not.

Allowed. To ask. And. Uh. If you do. Ask the question. You in a sense. Step outside. The social conventions.

To which you are. In which we are all. Uh. Heavily compromised. And maybe. In the quiet. Of our own hearts. Cry out. To the Lord.

And ask. That he will. Deliver us. He will deliver us. From this lost. Now. And when you read on. In that section. Of the psalm.

[32 : 04] Which we're looking at. Tonight. Tonight. He said. He led them. He delivered them. From their distress. He led them. By a straight way. Till they reached.

A city. To dwell in. You know. That by faith. Abraham. Sought for a city. Whose maker. And builder. Was God.

And the. The whole. Sort of. Picture. Of our spiritual. Journey. Is a picture. As I think you heard. From Pilgrim's Progress. Last night. As a kind.

Long. Journey. Towards. The city of God. Towards the place. Where God. Intends. That we should come. And that we shouldn't. Wander around.

Like the children of Israel. Who did not have the faith. To enter in. To the promises. That God had made for them. And the land. That he had prepared for them. And I think.

[32 : 59] That this is why. In a sense. We are. Like Cain. Who went out. From the presence. Of the Lord. And was a wanderer. And a fugitive. On the face of the earth.

And simply. Because. We do not. Want to come. To the place. That God has prepared. For us. When we get tired. Of wandering.

And when we're hungry enough. And when we're thirsty enough. And when our souls. Have fainted within us. Then we cry out. To the Lord. And say. Tell him.

What our troubles are. And allow him. To lead us. By a straight way. Till we reach. The city. To dwell in. To which he wants. To bring us. To the people.

Could I give you. A beautiful picture. Of how. That is consummated. In scripture. This whole theme. Of wandering. Is wonderfully. Consummated.

[33 : 56] In. In the. In the book. Of the revelation. In chapter. Seven. In verse. Thirteen. Says. One of the elders.

Addressed me. Saying. Who are these. Clothed in white robes. And whence have they come. And I said to him. Sir. You know. And he said to me. These are they. Who have come out.

Of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes. And made them white. In the blood of the lamb. Therefore. Are they before the throne of God. And serve him. Day and night.

Within his temple. And he who sits upon the throne. Will shelter them. With his presence. They shall hunger. No more. Neither thirst. Any more. The sun shall not strike them.

Nor any scorching heat. For the lamb in the midst of them. Sorry. The lamb in the midst of the throne. Will be their shepherd. And he will guide them.

[34 : 51] To springs of living water. And God will wipe away. Every tear. From their eyes. And it's that picture.

Of God. Finally bringing us. Through our wandering. To the place. That he has purposed. That we should come. Bringing us to the place.

Of the fulfillment. Of the promises. That he has made. To us. And only after. We have come to the point. Where in our humiliation.

In the recognition. Of our lostness. In the recognition. Of the aimlessness. Of our wandering. We cry to the Lord. In our distress. And he hears us.

And redeems us. And delivers us. Let me just put before you. That picture. Of how Jesus does that.

[35 : 45] How he has worked it out. That we come to. The place that he wants us to be. And in order to. Prepare you for that. I want you to.

Sing. First. A hymn. Which. Is in the blue prayer book. Or the blue hymn book. And it's number. Four hundred and fifty nine.

And this is the wanderer's hymn. It's in a minor key. And people well known. And well loved by me. Have never heard it before. So.

One of the brilliant illustrations. That appeared. At the time that Stephen Neal. Took a mission. To the University of Toronto.

Some many years ago. The varsity. Which corresponds to the UBC. Printed a cartoon.

[37 : 04] Which has remained engraved in my mind. Ever since I saw it. And the cartoon. Which I've told some of you about. I'm sure. Illustrated a small lamb.

That was cowering. Behind a great rock. Out in an open wilderness. And finally. A shepherd arrives. Staff in hand.

And he comes up. To the wee lamb. And the wee lamb. Says. Lost. Hell no. I'm hiding. I'm hiding. Now.

That was. I guess the feeling. That Bishop Stephen Neal. Gave to the students. Of the University of Toronto. They didn't want to be. Considered as lost.

They thought they were. Hiding. And. And I don't think. There's very much. Difference. Between. Being lost. And. Hiding.

[38 : 06] Hiding. It's one of the most. Disappointing things. When you are playing. A game. Of hide. And seek. To find. A perfect. Hiding place.

So that people. Give up. Looking for you. It's a very sad. Situation. And. The. The difficulty.

In our society. Is that. There isn't. Very much. Difference. Between. When you look at them. Between the people. Who are lost. And the people.

Who are. Hiding. The people. Who are wandering. Aimlessly. And the people. Who are. On their way. Somewhere. Who are going. Somewhere.

And I think. In response. To these verses. In 107. Is that. Particular verse. In the gospel. According to St. John. Which all of you.

[39 : 00] Should know by heart. Coming as it does. In the sixth verse. Of the 14th chapter. Where Jesus says. I. Am. The way. And.

And. And I think. That's all. That he says. You would be. Familiar. As I am. Familiar. Going up. To somebody. And saying.

Could you tell me. Where. And they saying. Yes. You go right. Down there. Four blocks. Turn right. Keep to your right. The next. To your left. And you'll find it. The third house. On your right.

That's the way. The particular. And significant. Thing about. What Jesus did. When people. Came to him. And said. I'm lost. And I'm looking.

For the way. Jesus said. I. Am. The way. And he was. Pointing to.

[39 : 57] A very. Personal. Relationship. With him. Now. A lot of people. In our society. Have. In a sense. Gone on. Great pilgrimages. And great.

Treks. To remote. Parts of the world. Perhaps. Halfway up. The Himalayan mountains. To find a guru. Who will say. That's the way. That you should go.

People will pay. Counselors. And they will pay. All sorts of people. Who will stand up. And say. That's what you should do. That's where you should. Put your money. That's the.

The road you should travel. But Jesus. Does not. Do that. To the wanderer. He says to him. I am the way. And the reason.

That I think. He says that. Is. There is. There is. I think. A sixth century. Chinese. Philosopher.

[40 : 51] Called. Leo. Tsi. Who. Who. In contemplation. And in the study. Of the sayings. Of Confucius. Indeed. He was thought. To be. A student.

Of Confucius. Said that. The way. Is. Action. Free. Of. Self. Motive. In other words.

To be able. To act. Without any. Selfish. Motive. At all. That's. The way. When the. Encyclopedia. Described. This.

It says. It's very much. Like. What appears. In. The first. Chapter. Of the. Gospel. According. To St. John. Where it says. In the beginning. Was.

The word. So that you can. Put four words. Together. From the New Testament. Jesus. Can say. I am the word. I am the truth.

[41 : 44] I am the life. I am the way. And those are the. The things. That the. The wanderer. Needs. He needs. To know. The word.

Which God. Gives him. He needs. To know. The truth. About God. He needs. To know. The life. Which is. From God. And he needs. To know. The way.

In which. To live his life. Now. I. Again. In George. McDonald's books. There is. A wealthy lady. Comes. To this gentleman.

Who is. A sort of. Gentleman. Physician. In the slums. Of London. And she wants. To know. What she should do. In order. To help him. With his work.

Among the poor people. She has. Some talents. And a good deal. Of money. Now. What do you want me to do? And he said. I don't know. What I want you to do.

[42 : 40] And she became. Increasingly. Offended. Because. George. McDonald. Or. In this. In this novel. By him. Would not.

Tell her. What to do. And she insisted. Well. Who do you have. Working with you? He said. We have a great. Many people. Who work with me. And who is their director?

We don't have a director. And do you have. Meetings together? No. We don't have. Meetings together. Well. What do you do? We. Only do one thing.

And you need. Only do one thing. And that is. Allow. Jesus. Himself. To lead you. You go to him. And he will tell you. Because he is the way.

And he is the truth. And he is the life. And what Jesus is. Saying to the wanderer. When he says.

[43 : 36] I am the way. He wants. The wanderer. To take him. Very seriously. And to recognize. That. Being.

In the way. Is being. In. A personal. Relationship. With. Jesus Christ. A moment. By moment. Day. By day.

Fellowship. With. Jesus Christ. Not. Following. A high. And admirable. Principle. Of acting. From any motive.

But that of self. Not that. But living. In. Direct. And personal. Relationship. To Jesus Christ. Now there is.

A famous story. In the gospels. About a wanderer. Who found the way. And that wanderer. Is the prodigal son. Who asking his father. For the inheritance.

[44 : 28] Which was to come to him. Went into a far country. And spent his money. And riotous living. And when he came to the point. Where he was. Feeding pigs. Carrying a pail.

Of pig's will. And looking deeply. Into it. He said. Or it says of him. He came to himself. When the wanderer.

Comes to himself. When he comes to the point. Where he says to God. How. He cries to the Lord. In his trouble. He said.

He would fain. Have filled his belly. With the husks. That the swine did eat. And coming to himself. He laid out. A plan for himself. And the plan was.

I will go to my father. And I will say to my father. Father. I have sinned. Against heaven. And before you. And am no more worthy. To be called your son.

[45 : 22] Make me as one of your hired servants. And what happened then. Was that he. Started home. And when he came. In sight of home. The father.

Who was watching for him. Ran to meet him. And embraced him. And kissed him. And he started out. With his little speech. Father. I have sinned.

Be hope for. Before God. And before you. And I'm no more worthy. To be called your son. And then he never. Completed the speech. Because the father.

Embraced him. And welcomed him. And was so. Overjoyed. In his presence. Now. What I think. That indicates. Just for our purposes. Right here. And right now.

Is that we might. Think that we can come. To God. With a purpose. In our minds. Which in which. We think. Will be acceptable. To him. And say. God.

[46 : 15] This is what. I want. To do. For you. Make me. As one of your hired servants. I don't need anything special. Just let me do that. But God.

On the other hand. Is so happy. And so loving. And so gracious. In receiving us. To himself. That it's the relationship. To us. That he wants.

And he wants us. To live. Not in obedience. To a law. But out of. The fellowship. Of a relationship. To him. As a person. That's how we.

Come to Jesus Christ. And we live. Out of that. Relationship. That's what it means. When the hymn says. If thou but suffer.

God to guide me. If you will. Live. Out of that. Relationship. To Jesus Christ. So that the central reality. In your life.

[47 : 10] Must be. The relationship. To Jesus Christ. Now I know. That that's hard. For us. I know. How far.

We have wandered. Away from it. And I know. How regularly. We wander. Away from it. But that's what. He wants. To bring us. Back to. We're going to end the service.

In a few minutes. When the service ends. We're going to have. Tonight. As we did last night. An epilogue service. Over there. In the chapel. And in the chapel.

It will be. Explained to you. Very simply. How. You do. What the psalm. Suggests you do. Cry to the Lord. In your trouble.

Some have said to me. You have to be in trouble. Before you get into. A relationship. With Jesus Christ. And I would like to say. No you don't. You're already in trouble. You don't have to.

[48 : 09] You may not recognize it. But you are. And that's why. What we want to do. Is. Is to. Give you.

The opportunity. Of showing you. How in. A very direct. And very simple way. You establish. A relationship. With Jesus Christ. It may be.

For you. The opportunity. To renew. A relationship. With Jesus Christ. Dr. Packer. Pointed out. To us. Today at noon. How many people.

Have been. Disappointed. In their. Spiritual lives. Disappointed. By. Things. Which have occurred. To them. Which have happened. In the course.

Of their lives. And they very much. Need to. Renew their relationship. To Jesus Christ. As soon as we begin. To. To use. Anything but.

[49 : 04] Our relationship. To him. As a guide. To our lives. Then we're lost. Again. And we need. To come back. To that. So. To establish.

A relationship. With Jesus Christ. To renew. A relationship. With Jesus Christ. Asked. I invite you. To come. And hear. The very simple. Presentation. That will be made. In the chapel.

Directly. This service. Is over. And then I want. The rest of you. To leave quickly. That is. I'd love you. To come over. For coffee. To the hall.

Next door. There are books. There's displays. There's opportunity. For discussion. There will be. A review. Of an important book. That you would probably. Like to have. And certainly.

Like to hear about. And so. I'd like you all. To move over there. As quickly as possible. So that the epilogue service. Can begin over here. I don't want to.

[49 : 57] Unduly persuade you. In the matter of staying. For the epilogue service. But I do want you. To recognize. That. That we. We do have to come. To that place.

And to be in that place. Where. Having. Cried to the Lord. In our trouble. We allow him. To deliver us. We allow him.

To have. His way. In our lives. To the wanderer. Jesus says. I am the way. And no one. Makes his way.

To the father. But by me. And if Jesus. Is the way. And we are the wanderer. Then. There has to be.

That moment. In which the wanderer. Finds the way. The way. Which we are told. In the psalm. Is a straight way. Leading us.

[50 : 51] To the city. To dwell in. The city. Where we stand. In his presence. And offer to him. Our whole heart. Worship. So will you consider.

That the epilogue service. Tonight. May in fact. Be meant for you. And if it is. You will be welcome. To the service. That follows this service. Immediately.

half. Half. Half. Half.

Half. Half. Half.