

Jesus: Our Teacher

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Date: 22 May 2016

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[0 : 0 0] Well if we could, this morning, with the Lord's help and guidance, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read. The Gospel according to Mark, chapter 10, page 1019.

Mark chapter 10, if we take as our text the first two verses. Mark 10 from the beginning. And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan.

And crowds gathered to him again, and again, as was his custom, he taught them. And Pharisees came up, and in order to test him, asked, Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?

Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? The subjects of marriage and divorce were in Jesus' day, as well as ours, they are matters of great interest and controversy.

Because if you want to start an argument with someone, then raise the controversial subject of marriage or divorce. And that's exactly what the Pharisees sought to do with Jesus.

[1 : 2 6] They wanted to create an uproar and lobby against the teaching of Jesus by asking this provocative question. Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?

And such a question, it's bound to get people's backs up and even cause a bit of a stir, even before Jesus gives an answer. Simply because the subject of marriage or divorce in the first century, as well as in the 21st century, it's an area of great dispute.

But it's a very difficult subject to discuss and a very sensitive subject. Because the subject of marriage, especially divorce, it reminds people of the past.

Past experiences, past hardships, whether it's hurt. And for that reason, as a preacher, it would probably be far easier for me to skip over these verses and pretend that I had never seen them.

Because they are so controversial and in one sense they're so sensitive. But I can't. And I won't. Not because I want to hurt anyone by preaching on this subject.

[2 : 3 8] Because you must know by now that that's the last thing I want to do. The last thing I want to do is to hurt anyone. To hurt you or to put you off coming to Christ.

But what I mustn't do is compromise. Because if I must preach the subject of hell and the extent of the sufferings of hell as I had to last Lord's Day, then I must also preach this subject because the same rules apply.

As we saw last Lord's Day in chapter 9 and verse 42, Jesus is warning the preacher. And he says, Whosoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, to stumble by teaching lies or withholding the truth, he says, Then it would be better for them if a millstone were tied about their neck and they were thrown into the sea.

And Jesus' words, they're solemn. He doesn't mince his words because he wants the preacher to know the seriousness of telling people the truth. And Jesus knew this for himself.

This is why he taught people everywhere he went. And we saw that when we were walking through chapter 9. Because at the beginning of chapter 9, Jesus taught his disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration about his future glory.

[3 : 57] And then Jesus taught his disciples in the valley about the importance of faith with the incident of the demon-possessed boy. And then after that, we saw the disciples in the classroom in the school of Christ.

And they were learning about the importance of humility and availability as a disciple of Jesus. And then last week, we were being taught by Jesus on the solemn subject on how to avoid going to hell.

So now as we move into chapter 10, we hear Jesus teaching on the subject of marriage and divorce. But this teaching of Jesus, it wasn't initiated by Jesus.

It was initiated by the Pharisees. But what we see as we consider this section is the kind of teaching Jesus gave. And the kind of teaching Jesus gave was persistent teaching, permanent teaching, permanent teaching, patient teaching, and public teaching.

So we look firstly at persistent teaching. Jesus is a persistent teacher. Look again at verse 1. It says, And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan.

[5 : 21] And crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them. And you know, when I was thinking about Jesus as a teacher, I looked up an article about the top 10 qualities of a good teacher.

And although there were some qualities that you would probably expect from a teacher, such as a love for their subject, or a willingness to improve, or the ability to be organized with your subject.

But the article maintained that the number one aspect which makes for a good teacher is their passion to teach. Their passion to teach.

Because if there is no passion, if there is no drive, no enthusiasm for teaching, then there is no desire to patiently and persistently teach the same subjects over and over again.

And if there was anyone who was ever passionate about teaching, it was Jesus. He wanted people to know who he is and why he came.

[6 : 25] And he persistently taught the same subject matter everywhere he went. Not only because there were those who had never heard his message before, but also because there were many who were slow to learn who Jesus is and why Jesus came.

And none were as slow as his own disciples. Because they often struggled to understand what Jesus was talking about. But Jesus graciously and persistently, he taught the disciples and all those who came to hear him.

And that's what we see here in this opening verse, where Jesus has travelled from Capernaum, the region of Galilee, way in the north. And he's travelled down to Judea, to the region of the Jordan, which was in the south of Israel.

Probably a hundred mile journey, if not more. And as was the usual practice for the multitudes, they all gathered around Jesus to hear him preach. But notice what Mark says.

He says, And with this Mark is emphasising the repetitiveness and the persistence of Jesus' teaching.

[7 : 47] That when Jesus taught and when Jesus preached, he didn't just do it once and that was it. And leave it at that. It wasn't a one-off. No, Jesus went back over the same ground all over again.

And he preached the same material again and again and again. And this is what we see throughout the life and ministry of Jesus. That he was constantly going about his father's business.

He was preaching and teaching and labouring to do souls good. And he was always taking every opportunity to speak about the kingdom of God. And you know, we never read in the Gospels that Jesus was idle.

Because he was working day and night. In the morning he would sow a seed and in the evening he would not withhold his hand. Jesus continued to labour in the kingdom despite the hardened hearts of people.

Because Jesus knew the hearts of all his hearers. He knew his audience better than the audience knew themselves. And he knew perfectly well that a great proportion of his hearers were hardened and unbelieving.

[8 : 56] Jesus knew that as he spoke to the crowds who gathered in front of him. Most of his words would seem to fall to the ground. Uncared for and unheeded.

And in a sense you could say that the labour of Jesus was in vain. And yet, knowing all this, he laboured on. As was his custom, he taught again and again and again.

And it's interesting that the reason Jesus laboured on was because he was the one who issued the promise through his prophet Isaiah that the word which proceeds from his mouth will not return to him empty.

But it shall accomplish what he pleases. And it shall prosper in the thing for whereto he sent it. He promised that not one word will fail. Every word will be accounted for.

Every word will be used in some way to be an arrow from the king to pierce those who are the enemies, his enemies. And my friend, Jesus persistently taught.

[10 : 03] Persistently taught. Not only because people were slow to learn, but because that was his duty as the suffering servant. And we ought to learn from the example of Christ here.

That we are to patiently and persistently teach and encourage others using the word of God. I love what J.C. Ryle says in his commentary.

I'm always quoting him. But he's so practical in his preaching. In all his teaching he says, he says about this one verse, let it be remembered by every minister and every missionary, every school teacher and Sunday school teacher, every visitor and every lay person, every head of the house who has family prayers, and by every mother with children.

Let all such remember Christ's example and resolve to do likewise. We're not to give up teaching because we see no good done. We're not to relax our exertions because we see no fruit of our toil.

We're not. We're to work unsteadily, he says, keeping before us the great principle that duty is ours and results are God's. And my friend, that's what will make us persistent teachers, whether in church or in our home or in our community, that duty is ours and results are God's.

[11 : 25] Duty is ours and results are God's. And as I know what the Apostle Paul reminded the church in Corinth, he said, I may plant and my fellow laborer, Apollos, he may water, but it's always God who gives the increase.

It was the duty of Paul and Apollos to plant and to water as much as possible, but it was God's duty to grant the increase if he so desired. And that's what it ought to be with us too.

It is our duty to persistently sow the good seed in our family and with our children. It's our duty to persistently speak a word in season with a work colleague or a neighbor.

It's our duty to persistently encourage a friend or a stranger to come to church and be under the word. It's our duty to be persistent, but the rest is up to the Lord.

But what we see with the Pharisees is that they were still unwilling to listen to the persistent teaching of Jesus. simply because they were unteachable. They thought they knew it all.

[12 : 34] Therefore, they thought that they didn't need to listen to anything Jesus was saying. And that's what every Pharisee is like. And they're still with us today. But these Pharisees, they sought to try and catch Jesus out by raising the controversial subject of divorce.

And yet Jesus does as he has always done. He is persistent in his teaching, but this time he emphasizes that his teaching is permanent teaching.

And so we've considered, first of all, persistent teaching, but secondly, permanent teaching. Permanent teaching. Look at verse 2. Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?

He answered them, what did Moses command you? They said, Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away. The Pharisees asked Jesus their controversial question, not only to start an argument with Jesus, but also to provoke Jesus to anger.

But before we look at what Jesus taught in response to the Pharisees question, I want us to consider the kind of response Jesus gave when the Pharisees asked their provocative question.

[13 : 57] Because Jesus could have said that divorce is a disgrace and that it's wrong and that anyone who divorces and commits adultery ought to be punished. Because that's the kind of response which the Pharisees would have given.

But that's not the response of Jesus. Because all Jesus says initially is, what did Moses command you? What does the law of God actually say?

Before you twist it and make this a provocative argument, Jesus is saying to them, what has God already said on this subject? And they say to him, Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.

And immediately Jesus takes the sting out of this conversation by highlighting that divorce is permitted but not promoted. And the law of Moses to which Jesus is referring comes from Deuteronomy chapter 24 in which God allows divorce on the grounds that it is not going to cause harm to the parties involved such as poverty or homelessness.

But when Jesus speaks to the Pharisees here and he highlights that divorce is permitted but not promoted, we ought to notice the way in which Jesus deals with this controversial subject.

[15 : 24] Because Jesus doesn't hammer people. He doesn't Bible bash those who have been divorced. He doesn't tear strips off those who are not married and they're living with their partner.

He doesn't call them out and say that they're heathen and they need to sort themselves out before God sends them to hell. That's not how Jesus deals with people. That's not how Jesus speaks to people.

And yet far too often the church, Christians have this awful reputation in the way in which they deal with people and their sin. Far too often we've been guilty of hammering people and criticizing people and condemning people for their lifestyle instead of emulating the Christ we profess and acting just like Jesus.

Because how does Jesus deal with people? I mean consider the woman of Samaria. Jesus met the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well in John chapter 4.

And Jesus initiated a conversation with her not by talking about her sin but by talking about his need for a drink. And from there Jesus proceeded to explain that she had a greater need than him.

[16 : 43] Because what she needed was eternal water. She needed water that was of eternal value. That would give her eternal life. And Jesus explained that he was the only one who could give it to her.

And by her conversation with Jesus she knew that her life was in a mess. But what's amazing is that so did Jesus. Jesus knew her life was in a mess.

Because he asks her go on to call your husband. And then it all comes pouring out of her. Because the woman of Samaria confesses to Jesus I've had five husbands.

And she's been divorced five times. And the man she's now living with she's not even married to him. And at this point Jesus would have every right to condemn the woman. But instead he tells her who he is.

And why he came. Jesus speaks to her about the gospel. And because Jesus dealt with that woman in such a loving and compassionate manner.

[17 : 50] What was her response? She went home. And she said to everyone whom she knew. Come see a man who told me all things that I ever did.

Is not this the Christ? But the woman of Samaria she wasn't a one-off event. Because later in John's gospel you flip over a few pages we meet a woman who has been caught in adultery.

Caught in the act. And the Pharisees they've pulled her out and they've gathered her together and they've pulled out all their ammunition ready to stone her to death. Because the law said, the law of Israel had said that adultery was to be punished by stoning.

But Jesus again diffuses the whole situation by making one statement. He who is without sin cast the first stone.

And one by one the Pharisees dropped their ammunition and they walked away. And yet the only one who was without sin, who had every right to stone the woman to death, was Jesus.

[19 : 05] And all Jesus says to her is, woman, where are they? Where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you? And she says, no Lord, no Lord.

And Jesus responds by telling her, go and sin no more. And again, Jesus doesn't hammer people because of their sin. Instead he points them to himself.

He points them to the gospel. He directs them to the remedy for their ruin. And what we ought to see is that instead of being negative in his teaching, Jesus is positive in his teaching.

And that's what we should see here with this controversial question about divorce. Because Jesus doesn't speak negatively about the subject of divorce. Instead he speaks positively about the subject of marriage.

Because he says in verse 5, Jesus said to them, because of your hardness of heart, he wrote you this commandment. Jesus says that because of sin, sin in our lives, there is a breakdown of relationships, there is the breakup of marriage.

[20 : 16] Divorce was permitted, but not promoted. Which is why Jesus goes on to say in verse 6, from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife. The two shall become one flesh. So they're no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

And in these words, Jesus brings us all the way back to the beginning of creation. and he reads to us basically the words of Genesis. And in doing so, Jesus promotes marriage in a positive way.

Jesus issues permanent teaching. Because he says that the union in marriage ought to be permanent. What God has joined together, let no man separate.

And so in the permanent teaching of Jesus, divorce is permitted, but not promoted. Because the permanence of marriage is what is promoted.

[21 : 21] But Jesus is not only emphasizing the permanence of marriage in its union, he's also emphasizing the permanence of marriage in its institution. Because when Jesus brings us all the way back to creation and his permanent teaching, he stresses that the institution of marriage has been ordained by the creator and it has been made permanent by the creator.

Therefore marriage cannot be redefined. It's permanent. And here is Jesus and he's addressing our 21st century.

But he's doing it lovingly and compassionately. Because he teaches that marriage is permanent and it cannot be redefined. Which means that whatever our government thinks or whatever other people think about what marriage is, that's not marriage.

Because marriage which has been ordained and made permanent by our creator, as he says, it is between one man and one woman.

But before anybody thinks that Jesus is having a go, before anyone thinks that Jesus is being this extremist bigot or a homophobe, let's get this clear.

[22 : 45] Jesus isn't just targeting those who are homosexual. Jesus isn't just targeting those who are bisexual. Jesus isn't just targeting those who are transgender.

Jesus isn't just targeting those who are divorced, remarried or living with their partner. Because they all have the same problem. And they have the same problem as the atheist, the ignorant and the Pharisee.

they have the same problem as the person who is heterosexual and married with three children. Because our greatest problem, it's a universal problem.

That we're all sinners. And we all need to come to know who Jesus is and why Jesus came. That this Jesus is God's only begotten son who so loved this world in all its brokenness.

and in all its confusion. And he was willing to die. That by believing in him we may have eternal life.

[23 : 51] My friend, Jesus isn't having a go here. No, he's promoting what God has made permanent. And he promotes marriage in this positive manner by highlighting that marriage is a blessing from God and it's for our good.

Marriage was ordained for the lifelong companionship, and help and comfort which a husband and wife can have with one another. Marriage was ordained for the continuance of family life.

It was ordained that children who are the heritage of the Lord may be duly nurtured and trained up in godliness. It was ordained without doubt for the stability and welfare of society which can be strong and happy when the marriage bond is held in honour.

And that's what we ought to take from this permanent teaching of Jesus. His promotion of marriage is for our good and for our benefit. But when Jesus issued his permanent teaching, the disciples didn't understand what he meant.

Therefore, Jesus had to patiently teach them. And so, he goes on in verses 10 to 12. If considered the kind of teaching Jesus gave, he engaged in persistent teaching, permanent teaching, and then we see thirdly, patient teaching.

[25 : 14] Patient teaching. You look at verse 10. And in the house of the disciples, the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, whoever devotes his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.

And if she devotes her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. And in this section, Jesus privately and patiently teaches the disciples about the permanence of marriage.

And this isn't the first time that the disciples have asked Jesus a question privately. And yet, every time, the Lord patiently takes them aside and he teaches the disciples in order that they will learn.

But as Jesus patiently teaches the disciples, he highlights the issue of marrying for a second time. And it seems that they could understand Jesus' teaching on the promotion and permanence of marriage.

But the issue of remarriage was a sticky issue for them, as it is with many people. And so Jesus says in verse 11, whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.

[26 : 26] And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. Now, when we read these words, we always have to understand them in their context.

Because they were said within the context and culture of the nation of Israel. And so we must make clear that in Israel, it was only a man who could divorce his wife and not the other way around.

A woman could never divorce her husband in Israel because women had no rights in Israel. But not only that, a certificate of divorce which the law of Moses insisted upon, it was given to the wife or the divorced wife in order to protect their vulnerability.

Because without a bill of divorce from her first marriage, a woman wasn't free to remarry. And as a result, they would become an outcast and they would become homeless.

Therefore, remarriage wasn't an issue. But having a certificate of divorce was. It became law that a bill of divorcement had to be made so that men couldn't exploit women.

[27 : 43] Because what would often happen in ancient Israel is that if you had this impulsive man who was heavy handed with his wife, he could kick her out of the house for whatever reason he wanted.

for something as trivial as not cleaning the house the way he liked it or burning the dinner. Something as trivial as that. And what's unbelievable is that he could kick her out and make a mockery of her.

And if that woman found another man to marry, she couldn't marry him because she was still married to her first husband. And that would be committing adultery, which is what Jesus is referring to here.

And the Jewish law of committing adultery was punishable by death. She needed a certificate of divorce. That's why the concession was set in place in order to protect vulnerable women.

That they would be issued a certificate of divorce with a valid reason of divorce so that she is free to remarry. But what we must be clear on is that the purpose of the law of Moses, it was to protect women and not a command to divorce your wife for whatever reason you wanted.

[29 : 00] And so when we listen to Jesus patiently teaching them here, he's not giving us principles and guidelines for proceeding with a divorce. He's not promoting divorce. He is permitting it, but he's promoting the true meaning of marriage and the solemnity of it.

Because Jesus' intention here, and my intention in preaching this, it's not to shackle those who have broken marriages with debilitating guilt.

That's not the intention. Divorce is not an easy subject to talk about. As someone once said, it can be as painful as death, as it affects everyone involved.

God. But the reason Jesus teaches on this controversial subject is not only because the Pharisees provoked the question. They initiated the whole thing.

But it's not only that, because in his teaching, Jesus is calling us to see that our sinful nature has left us divorced from God, where our sin has left us separated from him, and that we need to be united to him.

[30 : 13] And Jesus uses this incident to stress the positive nature of marriage, not only in the physical sense between a man and a woman, but also in the spiritual sense between Jesus Christ and his church.

Because the call to discipleship, the call to become a Christian, the call to enter into that spiritual union with Jesus Christ, that's the call to marriage, the true meaning of marriage, it's to be part of the bride of Jesus Christ.

And that's why the apostle Paul used the image of marriage in Ephesians 5. It was in order to describe the relationship which Jesus has with his church. He says, the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he's the savior of the body.

Therefore, husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her. And Paul paralleled the relationship of marriage with Christ's relationship to his people.

And he did so not only to stress that the love of Jesus Christ is unchanging and permanent, but that divorce between Christ and his church, it was never an option.

[31 : 33] His marriage was instituted in heaven, and it was sealed at the cross. And it didn't come with a get out clause. The love, because the love of Jesus for sinners was so much that he gave himself.

He gave himself for his own people. And my friend, this Jesus persistently, permanently, and patiently bids us to respond to him and come and embrace him as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.

Because you know, every time you hear the gospel preached, every time you sit under a sermon, Jesus comes to us in all our filthiness, in all our sin, in all our brokenness, and he points us to the cross, and he says, I love you this much.

Will you marry me? That's the wonder of the cross. That's what Jesus is asking us in the gospel. Will you marry me?

Will you go with this man? That's what we're being asked. Do we want to unite ourselves to Jesus in marriage?

[32 : 57] Well, do you? And so we've been considering the kind of teaching Jesus gave. Persistent teaching, permanent teaching, patient teaching, but lastly and briefly, public teaching.

Public teaching. Look at verse 13. And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when they saw it, he was indignant and said to them, Let the children come to me.

Do not hinder them. For to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

And so what we read in these verses is that Jesus moves away from the controversial subject of divorce, and he emphasizes the compulsory subject of entering the kingdom of God.

But this public teaching of Jesus, it's once again brought to the fore because of a misunderstanding of the disciples. Previously we saw John rebuke a disciple for working in the name of Jesus.

[34 : 14] And now they're rebuking people, all the disciples, they're rebuking people for bringing their children to Jesus. And even though Jesus has already used a child as a visual aid in order to emphasize the importance of being a humble disciple, the disciples still didn't get it.

They still weren't taking all this on board. And so once again Jesus publicly teaches the disciples what they are not to do and what they need to do.

What they're not to do and what they need to do. Because Jesus says that this is what you're not to do. He says in verse 14, let the children come to me. Do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

He says do not hinder them. And with this Jesus is publicly teaching the disciples that the kingdom of God belongs to the smallest of children.

Which means that there are no age restrictions when it comes to the kingdom of God. There are no barriers. Because the soul of a two year old is as precious to Jesus as someone in their eighties.

[35 : 26] And Jesus is saying to the disciples don't deny them access to the kingdom of God. Don't stand in their way. Don't keep them back. Don't hinder them from coming to me.

My friend if you're a parent and if you view your children as the most precious gift that you've that you have been given. Then you must see that their soul is precious too.

And you must encourage them to seek the Lord. You must encourage them to read the Bible. You must point them to Jesus. It has to come from the home.

Because if you're only coming to church for the sake of your children and in order to bring them to Sunday school, well that's good. But is that enough?

Because there has to be influence in the home. There has to be encouragement to take our children to sit in church. very few of our children have ever sat through a church service.

[36 : 31] And for far too long the church considered children as unimportant. They don't have a place in the church. Or that they don't need to be part of the church until they're in Sunday school.

But as soon as they're baptized, they're part of the visible church. But our neglect of them for so many years is the very reason why there is a generation missing in the church today.

Because we didn't get them when they were young. We didn't encourage them when they were young. And now, where are they? My friend, we need to see our children as precious.

Precious. They are, as the psalmist says, they're the heritage of the Lord. But it's not only their soul that Jesus sees as precious. He sees your soul as precious too.

Which means that you must come to Christ yourself. I don't know what view you have of Christianity. Or what understanding you have of the preciousness of your own soul.

[37 : 41] I don't know if you're even interested being here today. Maybe you don't want to be here. Maybe you don't love the Lord. Maybe you don't want to follow the Lord. Maybe you don't want to be obedient to the Lord.

But whatever you do, whatever you do, please don't take your children to hell with you. Don't take them to hell with you.

Don't hinder them from coming to Christ. Because as their parent, you will be accountable before God for it. But what we see here is that Jesus not only publicly teaches the disciples what they're not to do, he also teaches what they need to do.

And he says to them, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And Jesus, he turns the whole thing on its head and he highlights that the children, they are actually a lesson to the parents.

They're a lesson to the adults. Because Jesus says that in order to enter the kingdom of God, we need to become like children. And when Jesus says this, he isn't saying that we need to be naive or gullible or innocent when it comes to our salvation.

[39 : 04] No, the quality which Jesus sees in children and commends is their dependency. Because as you know, a little child is completely dependent upon someone else doing everything for them.

They can't do anything for themselves. They can't pay for their meals. They can't prepare their meals. They can't even feed themselves. They can't wash themselves. They can't dress themselves.

They can't do anything themselves. They're completely dependent. All they can do is throw their arms wide open and cry for help.

And so what Jesus is saying is that in order to be saved, in order to enter the kingdom of God, we must see that salvation has nothing to do with what we can do for ourselves.

We can't earn it. We can't work for it. We can't do anything. We can't present our own righteousness before God. The only thing we can do is completely depend upon what Jesus Christ did on the cross and throw our arms wide open and cry to Jesus for help.

[40 : 22] And when we do that, he promises, as he did with these children, he will take us up in his arms and he will bless us.

That's his promise when we cry to him for help and for mercy. My friend, this is the kind of teacher Jesus is.

He's a persistent teacher. He gives permanent teaching, patient teaching and public teaching. And he's teaching us today that we need to come to him because that's what he says to us in the gospel.

Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart.

You shall find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. My friend, you come to this Jesus and you see and discover how much of a wonderful teacher he really is.

[41 : 45] May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to Thee that Thy Word is relevant for every day and every century.

It is a Word that speaks to us. It is a Word that will not return empty. And although these things are sometimes difficult to speak about, these things are difficult to raise in public, we thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou art the one who knows our situations in private.

Lord, the one who knows our sorrows and our weaknesses, the one who has gone through every experience and who is in all points tempted as we are yet without sin. Help us then, we pray, to look to Jesus or to look to Thee, to come as little children, to throw our arms wide open and cry to Thee for help.

O Lord, that Thou wouldst help us. Bless us, we pray. Undertake for us in the week that lies ahead. O a week that is unknown to us, how often we are reminded that we do not know what a day or an hour may bring.

Help us, Lord, then to be ready to have oil in our lamps for that when that call comes, we will be ready and waiting, found in Christ for time and for eternity.

[43 : 06] Do us good then, we pray, and go before us for Jesus' sake. Amen. We shall conclude by singing in Psalm 34.

Psalm 34 in the Scottish Psalter, page 247. Psalm 34, singing from verse 10 down to the verse marked 15.

Psalm 34 from verse 10. The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

O children, hither do ye come, and unto me give ear, I shall you teach to understand how ye the Lord should fear. Down to the verse marked 15 of Psalm 34.

We'll stand to sing to God's praise. The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food, but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good.

[44 : 30] O children, hither do ye come, and unto me give ear, I shall you teach to understand that thou evil Lord should fear.

What man is he that by desire to see good would live long?

Thy lips refrain from speaking cry, and from hell works thy tongue.

The heart from hell do good seek peace, pursue it earnestly.

God's eyes are on the justice heart open to their cry.

[45 : 58] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.