

The Parable of the Rich Fool: What is Success?

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Preacher: Rico Tice

[0 : 00] Well, do sit, and if you'd like to open your sheets, we're going to read from the Scriptures, from Luke's Gospel, chapter 12, and you'll find that the words are written there on our sheets. Luke's Gospel, chapter 12, and verse 13.

A very well-known little story of what's sometimes called the rich fool. Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But he said to him, Man, who made me a judge or arbiter over you? And he said to them, Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

And he told them a parable, saying, The land of a rich man produced plentifully. And he thought to himself, What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops? And he said, I'll do this.

I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I'll store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

[1 : 15] Relax. Eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you.

The things you've prepared, whose will they be? So is the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

Let's pray together before Rico comes to speak to us. Gracious God, our Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are indeed the God who sent your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to plead with our hearts that we might know the presence of your glorious holy being near to us in our world.

We might hear your voice calling us over the many loud voices of this world, with its possessions and its powers. We thank you, Lord, that yours is a voice of mercy, granting peace and pardon, a true balm for the troubles of this world.

We look around, Lord, and read our newspapers, and consider the things that fill our minds and hearts in this day. We do know that this is a troubled world. From the earthquake in Italy in these recent days, to the great quakes all around the world as our financial systems creak and are close to falling apart because of the greed of man and the evil in his heart, the self-seeking and the self-serving.

[2 : 57] We know, our gracious God, that there is great need in every one of our hearts, and yet so often we create such noise that we fail to hear your voice.

So we pray that in the quietness of this lunchtime hour, in the middle of the week, as we turn aside from all the busyness outside, all the thoughts that cram our minds, all the tasks that we have to do today and this week, we pray that you would give us ears to hear and open ears in our hearts to hearken to your invitation.

To hear the sweet music of your grace and to allow the peace of your great message of salvation to fill our souls with love and to draw out from us a response to the gracious message of the gospel of your Son.

For we ask it in his name, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, I'm very glad, as we said, to have Rico Tice with us, and without further ado, I'm going to hand over to him to lead us in this service.

Thank you, Rico. Thank you very much indeed. Well, it would be a great help to me if you could keep that passage open in front of you. Luke chapter 12, verses 13 to 21.

[4 : 12] This is one of the stories that Jesus told, so I'll be trying to speak from it. Now, I don't know what's wrong with me, but I find myself constantly reading the most ridiculous, inane material.

I do hope you spend your reading time slightly more profitably than I do. I think that's why I got a third at university. I just read so badly. In fact, when I got my third, I said to my tutor, was I close to a 2-2? He said, no, Rico, it's a very solid third.

So I realised ordination into the Church of England was the only career option available, so here I am. But here's something I read recently. It's a list of lost property that was left at British Rail Depots last year.

Anyone read that? No, I thought I probably was the only one. And at the top of the list, to my amazement, was a human brain, which was apparently left by a medical student on an away day.

I don't know what you make of that, but I think it may well be the ultimate in absent-mindedness. I'm not sure. Other things on the list included a pair of stuffed gerbils, a glass eye, a motorcycle, and a wooden leg.

[5 : 10] And the mind boggles as to whether the same person left them all on the train. Well, by contrast, I'd very much like you this lunchtime, ladies and gentlemen, just to use your minds. Henry Ford said, thinking is probably the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few of us engage in it.

But could you give your mind to this question, this lunchtime? Here it is. Do you think that you're a successful person? Do you think you're a successful person?

Now, I'm not saying, have you been in the past or do you think you will be in the future? But right now, at this point in time, would you consider yourself successful? And I guess as we think about that and just give our minds to it, there'd be some people who'd say, look, with all modesty, I think I am.

And there'd be others who've been put down so often, they'd say, well, look, I just don't think I am. And most of us are mucking around somewhere in the middle. My brother was always a total hero. It's his birthday today, actually, but he's three A's at A level, head of the school, captain of everything.

I know he put on my ucker form, I was his brother. But, you know, the question is, what would constitute success as far as you're concerned? And what's extraordinary here as we open the Bible is there comes before us in the Bible today a man who from every point of view would have been considered successful and yet here's what's extraordinary.

[6 : 30] God's opinion of him, God's judgment of him was that he was a dismal failure. A dismal failure. Have a look, verse 20. Can we see right-hand side there?

But God said to him, fool. Can you imagine that? The creator of the world writes your obituary and says, fool. This is the funeral card of my best friend from university.

I took his funeral two years ago. It was an agonizing thing. And last year, I went to his graveside with his father. And his father, who was a hard Midlands businessman, broke down at the graveside and he pointed at his son's grave and he said, what shall I write on his grave, Rico?

What's the epitaph? It was a dreadful moment. Well, God writes the epitaph on this man's grave and can you see it's one word, fool. One word, fool.

And interestingly, in the Greek, the word that Jesus uses literally means without thought. By the way, I don't know Greek. I just said that to impress you but I'm told that's true. But literally, the word means without thought.

[7 : 33] It means without using your brain. It's not that he didn't think he did. He made plans. He sat down. He thought and he thought. But he didn't think about the right things. He didn't think about the really important questions in life.

So let's see, just this lunchtime, if we can think about the dividing things that constitute success and failure in this passage. It is a striking story but then it had to be. Jesus has been talking about the things of eternity.

So people should be riveted. 6th of August, 1982, my godfather gets killed in a cliff fall. And suddenly, I remember that day, I started thinking about eternity. I thought the man was invincible and he's dead and what do you do with that?

And Jesus has been talking about this and people's souls have been fed. So he says, verse 2, he says, do you know what? It's a bit like gladiator. Maximus says, what we do in life echoes in eternity.

And Jesus says, there is nothing concealed that won't be disclosed. It'll all be made known. Verse 5, fear him who after the killing of the body has power to throw you into hell.

[8 : 31] That's pretty striking. Verse 8, the future eternity belongs to this figure, the son of man. So people are listening. Their souls are being fed. There's eternity. They've all got mates that have died.

They're listening. And then suddenly, into it all, bang! Have a look, verse 13. Can you see? That's the thing. Verse 13, someone in the crowd said to him, teacher, tell my wretched brother to divide the inheritance with me.

Well, it doesn't say wretched, but I put that in, but that's what he means, isn't it? So here's a guy in the crowd and he says, will you stop talking about this spiritual stuff? It's all garbage. It's pie in the sky when you die.

It's not real life. We're in a credit crunch. I mean, you know, just tell my brother to divide up the inheritance. Jesus has been talking about eternity. And he just says, what about the will?

That's what he says. So here are two brothers falling out for good over who's going to get grandma's sideboard and clock. It happens, doesn't it? You know what they say, don't you? Where there's a will, there's a family.

[9 : 30] That's what's happening here. Do you know, I had a colleague, this is extraordinary. During the funeral that he took, during the funeral, one of the members of the family removed from the parental home what they wanted.

Can I advise you not to do that? It's annoying. His reflection on was, Rico, not a good idea, it annoys people, puts a bit of a shadow over Christmas, you know, if you take what you want during the funeral.

So that's what's been going on here. And this man is absorbed with his possessions. Jesus has been talking about eternity, he can only think about the will. And Jesus, having been so rudely interrupted, then tries to get this guy to stop and just think about it.

So he says, verse 15, as we see, can we look down? He said to them, take care, watch out, the word is literally, don't get hit by an oncoming, you know, flock of horses. Take care, jump out the way, be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

And then he arrests us with this very striking parable to make this guy who has got a writ in his pocket that he is going to take along and serve against his own brother in court.

[10 : 44] Just get him to stop and say, you know, I've got to think about it. Before I go to court, I just must stop and think. And he tells us this parable. Let's have a look at it together. Can we see verse 16 as we look down?

And he told them a parable saying, the land of a rich man produced plentifully. So this guy knows exactly how to work the EU subsidies and the stables have been converted into garages.

There are three or four family cars. I don't know. His wife shops, I guess, on Princess Square. Is that right? Princess Square? She'd shop there and he lives in the West End or Devonshire Gardens.

Is that the right place? That's where he'd live or Dogarville Avenue. I don't know where it would be. And he golfs at Troon. He'd be golfing at Troon, wouldn't he?

Isn't that wonderful? And the kids are at Glasgow High. Is that right? And he'd have a holiday home on the Fife Coast at St. Andrews. Built a lovely holiday home there. So that's the life.

[11 : 38] Drives an Aston Martin. You'd see him driving in or maybe just commuting in on the train and if you saw him coming in, you'd nudge your next door neighbour and you'd say, look at him. He's made a fortune, you know.

I mean, take his advice. He's no fool. This man wasn't affected by the credit crunch. This is the sort of guy that was the senior partner at Goldman Sachs who realised what was happening and got them to ship off 40 billion pounds worth before it all happened.

I mean, this is... He's no fool. So do you see what happens? Verse 17. Let's have a... And he thought to himself, what shall I do? I've nowhere to store my crops. And he said, I'll do this.

I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and there I'll store all my grain and my goods. So you see, he gets a better harvest than is expected and he's not going to panic. He's not going to waste. He's not going to flood the market.

He gets out his calculator. He does his sums. He works out the best course of action and it's definitely worth paying for a massive grain storage mountain. Waste not, want not.

[12 : 39] That's what his mum taught him. So there's a bigger profit this year and he's not going to let Alistair Darling and Gordon Brown get hold of it. So he calls in his accountant and he works out how to invest it and then this is amazing, you see.

Having planned and thought and planned and worked and thought, it's wonderful because ladies and gentlemen, he is at last able to arrive at verse 19.

Verse 19. And I'll say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years. Relax, eat, drink and be merry.

So he retires early at 47. He's done it. At 47, he's got all he'll ever need. And doubtless, the Sunday Times colour supplement would do an article on him entitled, The Man Who Knew When to Stop.

And people reading it, still flogging in from superbia, having to keep working. They'd read it, they'd see him, they'd see the life he'd led. How from the age of 18, when he left Glasgow High himself, he'd planned to do this, he'd got it done.

[13 : 44] And they'd nod and they'd read it and see the investments he'd made. They'd go, very wise, very wise. And he's now a member of two golf clubs. He's a member of Troon here, that's wonderful.

But also over at Muirfield. Among all the lawyers, they're at Muirfield. And he's going to get his handicap down to single figures at both courses. And I reckon you've got to be full time to do that.

And you see, so that's what it is. And that's what makes verse 20 so brutal. Because can you imagine, the retirement party has come and gone. And his wife is with the staff clearing up in the kitchen.

And he's at this wonderful house they've built on the coast over at St. Andrews, overlooking the bay. Oh, it's just a beautiful place. And he's standing on the veranda and he's got a long, cool glass of, what do you think, orange juice in his hand?

And he's standing there and the congratulations from his friends are ringing in his ears. I mean, they've all had to flog back to Glasgow. They've got to start work again Monday morning. He's never going to have to do that again. And he looks down onto the little side table and there on the side table he picks up the brochures and there are safaris and there are skiing holidays.

[14 : 52] He doesn't know where he's going to buy a chalet. Courcheval, Aspen, Val d'Azur, Verbier. But I mean, with global warming, the thing is, you've got to buy one because then you go when the snow's out.

And he looks at himself and he looks at what he's built and he looks at the bay and he sees a yacht moored and he says to himself, You've done it! You've done it!

You've retired early. You've plenty laid up for years and years and years. Take life easy. Eat, drink. And suddenly, there is a searing pain in his chest and he's dead before they get him to intensive care.

Let's have a look. Verse 20. Can we see? But God said to him, Fool, this night your soul is required of you and the things you've prepared, whose will they be?

Well, they hold a memorial service for him. It's got to be Glasgow University Chapel, isn't it? I mean, that's where you get married and buried if you're one of the greats. And that's where it was. Got married there 25 years before.

[15 : 57] Now he's buried there. And the city chairman will say, come and give a speech and say what a loyal servant of the company he was and the trade journal will say what an example he was to his profession and God will say to him one word, Fool.

Fool. I've taken funerals of men like this. My godfather, who died 6th of August 1982, was just like this, made his money in shipping, died right in the middle of all that acquisition.

And do you know, I took a funeral of a young woman who died in a car crash and an old lady at the funeral said to me, she said, Rico, do you know what failure is? I said, no. She said, let me tell you what failure is. This is failure. Failure is being successful at the things that don't matter.

Failure is being successful at the things that don't matter. And the money, well, where did all the money go? Well, the lawyers tidied up some of it, but mostly it went to a son who was a worthless fellow.

I mean, nice guy, but all he liked doing was windsurfing and he blew it all in 20 years, just windsurfing around the world. Broke his mother's heart. And as to the eternal world, well, all was lost.

[17 : 08] Do you see, as you look down end of the passage, he was not rich towards God. All was lost eternally. Now, what do you reckon, ladies and gentlemen, this Wednesday lunchtime? Do you reckon it might have made the guy put the writ back in his pocket, the brother, and say, look, I've just got to step back and think about this.

I'm furious. I'm right to be furious, but I've just got to step back. What is important? I think it would have made him think about it. And this man made two fatal mistakes. And I think we just need to hold them in mind as we think about what success is in life.

Here were his two mistakes. I've never met anybody who wants to fail. Everyone wants to be successful. What were his two fatal mistakes? The first was this, ladies and gentlemen. He lived as though God was not there.

Now, we don't know much about this man. We don't know if he was a good husband or a philanderer. We don't know if he was a good father or he beat his children. All we know is the end of verse, let's have a look down, end of verse 21.

Do you see? He was not rich towards God. Now, here's the issue. I don't doubt for a single moment that if you'd taken a vox pop to him on the street and you'd said to him, sir, do you believe in God?

[18 : 13] Maybe one of the students at St. Andrew's was doing a project and asked him that near his house. Do you believe in God? He just said, of course I do. Look at that beautiful beach. Look at where my house is.

Look at the course. Look at St. Andrew's. Look at the way, look at the summer's evenings. Of course I believe in God but he lived as though God didn't exist. I mean, if he'd been in England he'd have said, you know, I'm not so much C.O.V., Church of England, I'm more C. Andy, Christmas and Easter.

That's him, you see. And do you see he's absolutely focused on himself. Let's have a look, verse 17. What shall I do? I've nowhere to store my crops. He said, this is what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones.

Eleven times in those three verses he says, I, me, or myself. He's self-focused. I'll tear down my barns, build bigger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods.

You know, he thought he was self-sufficient. Actually, he was self-centered. And selfish people are such a pain, aren't they? It was Samuel Butler who wrote about two incredibly selfish people, Mr. and Mrs. Carlisle, and he wrote this.

[19 : 19] How good of God to cause Carlisle and Mrs. Carlisle to marry one another and so make two people miserable instead of four. And he's absolutely focused on himself. You see?

And do you see, he's got his treasure. Have a look at verse 19. He's got his treasure, ample goods laid up for many years. He's got his leisure, relax. He's got his pleasure, eat, drink, and be merry.

But God, the giver of it all, this is the issue with God, as he looked at the view out from the Fife Coast on St. Andrews, the issue with God was he was on the back burner. And he meant to get him down one day.

I mean, he realised his amazing ability in business to see a deal and take it. It wasn't just himself, but he was on the back burner. And really, you know, really, if you'd pushed him, ladies, I'm sorry, this is sexist, but this is what he'd have said if you'd pushed him.

Religion? Really? It's for the wife and children. That's what religion's for. But I like them to have those handrails. But it's not for me. I mean, look what I've achieved.

[20 : 22] Look at my career in Glasgow. Look at my house. Look at that. You know, I prefer to be on the golf course Sunday morning myself. But religion's a good thing, and I like the wife and children to go along.

But it's not for successful men like me. I don't need it. So he lived as though God wasn't there, and God says to him, what a fool you are. Why? Why? Because God is there, and he's shown himself.

A while back, I was on my day off, and my mother, who's very dominant in the family, said to me, I had to stay at home, and I had to be at home, and I had to babysit my brother's kids.

So that was quite an ordeal, I can tell you, for the whole day. There I was. I mean, I loved them very much, but it was quite a thing. So we played rugby, we played football, we played cricket, we went and fed the ducks. And someone should have told me at bath time, it's helpful if you mostly take your own clothes off.

I got drenched at bath time. Anyway, there I was, and there we were. About three in the afternoon, Lena Joy, who was the little three-year-old, said she wanted to play a game. I said, Lena, I'd love to play.

[21 : 21] I said, what game do you want to play? She said, hide and seek. I said, Lena, what are the rules? By the way, you've noticed that, haven't you? If you're playing a game with little ones, you always need to get the rules clear at the start, because otherwise, if there is a ruling in the middle of the game, it tends to go against you.

So I said, Lena, what are the rules? She said, it's easy. She said, you shut your eyes, you count to ten, and I go and hide behind the dining room door, and you come and find me. I said, Lena, I got that clear.

I shut my eyes, I count to ten. You hide behind the dining room door, I come and find you. She said, those are the rules. I shut my eyes, I counted to ten. I said, is Lena underneath the kitchen table? Howls of laughter from behind the dining room door.

Is she under mummy and daddy's bed? Howls of laughter from behind the dining room door. Is she behind the dining room door? And she shot out as though she was spring loaded. I said, what are we doing now? She said, I'm going upstairs, I'm going to hide underneath mummy and daddy's bed, you've got to shut your eyes, count to ten, and come and find me.

Now, she hadn't quite got it, but I realised later on what was happening. The issue is, sadly in the family, Lena has been informed that her uncle is such a thick idiot, that unless she tells him exactly where to find her, she'll end up as a skeleton underneath mummy and daddy's bed.

[22 : 33] They'll never find her. And the thing about hide and seek is, the fun is being found. It's not in hiding. And if you're going to be found, you've got to speak. You've got to speak if you want to be in relationship with people.

I mean, we could sit here, but if we don't talk to each other, we don't know each other. Well, ladies and gentlemen, do you know, the amazing thing is this. It's an amazing thing, but you've got a bit of it in front of you here.

Here, the Bible tells me that God has spoken to me. And above all, he has spoken to me about his son, Jesus Christ, and he says this, I've sent my son to be in friendship with you, and that is the heart of life and the heart of success.

The heart of success in life is finding friendship with Jesus Christ because he holds the future. So here is this man, and on Easter day, we'll remember that he rose from the dead, and that is proof that the coffin is not an exitless box and that he stands at the head of history.

And the success or failure of my life depends on what I do with Jesus Christ. Now, what do you make of that? That's what the Bible says.

[23 : 49] And actually, the way I'm meant to live is this. I'm meant to live with Jesus Christ as central to my life as a ball is to a game. Right at the centre. And it'd be extraordinary, wouldn't it?

There you are, you go to Murrayfield, you watch a game, and there's no ball. The players are just running around. You'd say, well, they're just going through the motions. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is to be as central to my life as a ball is to a game.

He's to be right at the centre of it. And so, God not only sent his son so that I could be friends with him, but this is even more extraordinary. Ladies and gentlemen, he sent him to die on Good Friday.

So, two days' time, we'll remember that. There'll be a three-hour service here. He sent him to die so that I could be forgiven all the times that I've slapped God in the face, that I've ignored him.

It's an extraordinary thing. I've got a friend called John. He was visiting a church. He was a speaker. And when he got to the church, on the fridge of the family he was staying with was a little baby.

[24 : 47] And he said, who's the baby? And the host said, oh John, it's a terrible story. There was a couple in the church family. They had that little baby. And the mother put him in a little cradle.

They lived in a flat just out on the driveway to get some sons. She didn't tell the dad. And he reversed the car, didn't know his son was there, and killed him. Now, I say that because we're no longer shocked that God allowed his son to die on Good Friday.

We're no longer shocked. Now, that little boy was involuntary in his death. Jesus voluntarily went and God gave his son so that he could die so that I could be in friendship with God.

And do you know what is amazing? All over Glasgow, all over London where I work, there are people who say, God will accept me because I've lived a decent life. I'm a good person.

God will accept me. And at their funeral they expect me, I'm taking one tomorrow back in London, they expect me to say, he didn't hurt a fly, she didn't hurt a fly. A lovely person. And underlying that presumption is they'll be accepted by God because they were nice.

[25 : 53] Well, why did God send his son to die on Good Friday if my goodness is good enough? It's no small thing to send your son to die. My brother's got two sons.

He'd not let them die for anyone. God on Good Friday sends his son to die for me and all over Glasgow there are people saying, do you know what, I live a good life and I'll be accepted. That's what put me into the ministry.

I watched my grandmother die from the 1st to the 7th of April 1988 believing that because of her goodness she'd be accepted by God. She had no relationship with God. He was nothing to her. He wasn't as central as a ball is to a game.

And my darling grandmother believed that she could get through death, find her way to heaven and be accepted by God without Jesus Christ. And the distress of watching her die put me in the ministry.

Please don't be like that. Please don't be like that. God would not have sent his son to die if our wrongdoing wasn't serious and needed the death and blood of his son to be forgiven.

[26 : 54] Well let me finish now but there's one other mistake. Let me close with this mistake. Can you see this man's second mistake? Let's have a look down. We can see it in verse 20. Can we see it? There it is in verse 20 in front of us and then we're closing.

Here it is, verse 20 and this is this dear man's second mistake. He lived as though there was no judgment day. So his framework for living missed out what he could not change and what could he not change?

Let's have a look. But God said to him, you fool, this night your soul is required of you. You see, he'd made preparations for a long time. Have a look.

Do you see verse 19? I'll say to my soul, soul, you've ample goods laid up for many years. But he didn't have a long time. He was fresh out of time. And he was totally naive about the fact that actually we get plunged into eternity and we don't know when it will be.

My godfather's death, my best mate from university's death, they were so sudden. I can't believe they're gone. I've buried nine of my school friends. Nine. The brevity of it.

[28 : 02] You stand at the grave side and you say, as for man his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower on the field, but the wind blows its place and remembers it no more. The brevity of life. And it gets faster and faster.

This is how my father defines middle-aged. You bend down to do up your shoelaces and ask, what else can I do while I'm down here? Life is so short.

And this man lived as though there was no judgment. And ladies and gentlemen, there is a judgment to come and it's wonderful there is. Because it means how I treat you matters to God and how you treat me matters to God and how we treat the world matters to God.

And there are some here who've been treated dreadfully by other people. Dreadfully. And it matters to God and there is a day of judgment. I went to Auschwitz last year. After I'd been there 45 minutes, all I could say to myself was, Rico, there is a judgment to come.

The people that did this will be judged. But will be judged as well. And the big question will get asked, God will say, I sent my son to be as central to your life as a ball is to a game. Was he?

[29 : 05] I sent him to die on Good Friday so you could be forgiven. What did you do with that? Can you not see that's the basis of success in any life? Well, I'm closing there.

I'm closing there. And my plea is, and Willie will just explain how to do this, you'll make time to get this relationship in place. Because you need information. Faith in the Bible is three things.

It's information, it's assent to that information, believing it's true, and thirdly, after assent, it's trust, it's saying it's for me. So if I take communion on Good Friday, I'm saying, Jesus, your debt is for me.

I don't know where you stand on that. Maybe you need the information. Willie can talk about how you do that. But I'm saying one or two people here, I reckon, are saying, do you know what? I know this is true and on this Easter week I've got to get right with God.

He should be as central to my life as a ball is to a game but he's not been. Well, I need to get that right. So let me close with a prayer now and it's a prayer to become a Christian. And we become a Christian on the basis of what Jesus has done and can I plead with you to do that if you haven't done that?

[30 : 15] Here's the prayer, I'll read it once and once I've read it I'll then pray it. And if it's right for you, why not echo it in your own heart this Easter week? It would be a great week to do that.

On today, Easter week, why not do that? Can I plead with you to do so? Here's the prayer. Heavenly Father, I'm sorry if we've lived as if there's...

I'm sorry if I've lived... I'm sorry about that. Let me start again. I'm a klutz. Let me do that again. Let me go again. Heavenly Father, I'm sorry that I've lived as if there's no God and no judgment.

I now turn away from that life. Thank you so much that Jesus died so I can be forgiven. Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit and help me to live with Jesus Christ as my Master.

Well, that's the prayer. And as we remember that failure is being successful at the things that don't matter. Maybe it's right for one or two. Let me pray it now slowly. Here it is.

[31 : 20] Heavenly Father, please echo it in your own heart if it's right for you. I'm sorry that I've lived as if there's no God and no judgment.

I now turn away from that life. Thank you that Jesus died on the cross so I can be forgiven.

Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit and help me to live with Jesus Christ as my Master.

Amen. Thank you so much for coming. If you've prayed that prayer, I'd love to see you just down the bottom of the steps afterwards. I'd love to take your name, pray for you, give you a booklet. Thanks for listening.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, as Rico says, don't go away if that's been you without speaking to somebody. But perhaps if you've been pricked by what you've heard today and you do want to find out more, well, do come back.

[32 : 30] We're here every Wednesday at 1.10 for our lunchtime service. We'll be here this Friday at 1 o'clock for our Good Friday service. And of course, on Easter Sunday, morning and evening as well. We also have a course of Christianity Explored starting just after Easter on Thursday the 23rd of April.

We meet at 7 p.m. in our church halls around the corner in Bath Street. It begins with a meal and then you have a short talk and an opportunity to discuss together the claims of Jesus Christ as you study one of the Gospels, Mark's Gospel.

We have a shortened version also at lunchtime which runs just 40 minutes at 10 past 1 on Thursday. That's held here in this building. And if you are short of time but you're able to come in lunchtime from work, then perhaps that would be for you.

There's cards like this at the doors and in the racks and you can pick one up and we'd be very, very happy indeed to tell you more about that. But don't go away today without thinking seriously about what you've heard and about resolving in your heart to do something about it.

We'd love you now to stay behind. There's tea and coffee and hot cross buns and no rush to leave. So thank you for being here and I hope you'll take the opportunity to stay behind and have some refreshments with us.

[33 : 39] And hopefully we'll see you again over this Easter season. Thank you.