

15.5.22 am

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Date: 15 May 2022

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning, and a warm welcome to the service this morning. Is the microphone on? I'm not sure it's on, is it? We'll just give a wee second to pause.

Anyway, it's good to see you, everyone. And the intimations, I don't have a copy in front of me, so I'm going to have to go through these just on the screen. So those who are visiting, I spotted a few visitors just on the way in, and it's good to have some folks visiting with us this morning, and I'm hearing the microphone kicking in now.

So a warm welcome to those who are visiting. There's tea and there's coffee at the end of the service. If you're able to stay, please do so. Evening service tonight at 6, and that's going to be taken by Bill Ferguson of Asia Link.

He spoke at the prayer meeting on Zoom on one occasion during lockdown and was excellent. So he expressed a wish to come to Harrison Lewis, and he's realising his wish this evening.

He's coming. He's going to be speaking about one particular closed country, and because of that, it's not appropriate for us to put it out online. So there'll be no YouTube service tonight, no actual live link.

[1 : 23] It's just an in-person service, so be encouraged to come if you're able, please. Special thank you to those who helped with the car wash yesterday and the men's curry night.

The car wash, we were raising money for the defibrillator. Come in, come in. Seats at the front, always. We were raising money for the defibrillator, which will be at the church door in Duke Horse.

Cami is here somewhere and will tell us how much was raised yesterday. £626. £626. And 58 pence.

And I did see another envelope in the plate, so there's probably more coming. How much more do we have to raise to make it?

I'm not sure yet. So we're not at our target yet, so if you want to give, there's still opportunity to do so. And the men had a good curry evening last night, and thanks to those who helped with that.

[2 : 29] Deacon's Court tomorrow in the church here at half past six. Ladies Bible Study Fellowship on the usual places, usual times. Little Fishers on Tuesday, 10 till 12.

Road to Recovery Tuesday night. Prayer meeting on Wednesday, half past seven in the church and on Zoom. No jam and connect clubs this week or over the next few weeks until the new term begins.

Rooted will continue until, I think it's the end of June, around about then, so the older ones will continue to meet. But there is a Sunday school jam connect trip to Ness next Saturday.

And the bus is leaving the church at half past nine, returning around four o'clock. And if any one of the young ones would like to join us but doesn't want to take the bus, then we'll meet in Europee Play Park at 11 a.m.

Services next Sunday at 11 and 6, and both will be taken by myself, God willing. Date for the Diary, Dachas Fundraising Cafe.

[3 : 35] You'll see it there, 27th May in the Community Centre. If you're able to help with donations of food, please speak to Nurse Marion. Congregational Barbecue, another date for your diary, 18th June at Shillabost.

And if there are volunteers, please, could they put their name next to the sheet at the door for any items they can assist with? And that's it. We can pronounce the benediction now, I think.

These are the intimations. Let's now worship God and we'll sing to his praise from Psalm 84. Psalm 84, verses 1 to verse 9.

How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me. The tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant, Lord, they be. My thirsty soul longs vehemently. Ye fainst thy courts to see.

My very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee. So we sing from verse 1 to verse 9, I think it is. The words are on the screen.

[4 : 38] We'll stand to sing to God's praise. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me.

The tabernacles of thy grace, how pleasant, Lord, they be.

My thirsty soul longs vehemently. It fainst thy courts to see.

My very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee.

Behold the spiral findeth out, an house wherein to rest.

[5 : 44] The swath of all, so far herself, hath purchased, let her nest.

In thine own altars where she stayed, her young ones forth may claim.

O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Blessed are they in thy house that dwell, they ever give thee grace.

Blessed is the man who sent the heart, in whose hearts are thy ways.

[6 : 45] Who passing turneth on, in whose hearts fill, their end to thee are wells.

Or so the rain that falleth on, in whose hearts fill.

So they from strength and weary go, till forward unto strength.

Until in Zion they appear, before the Lord our land.

O God of hosts, my prayer here. O Jacob's God dear here.

[7 : 45] Ye God have shielded on the face of thine anointed here.

Let's pray together, let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day and we thank you for your word which we have been singing. And we thank you that in your word as we read it and as we sing it and as we meditate upon it, as we sing out these words, we thank you that you reveal yourself to us.

We thank you that you are the God who did not just create this world and create us and walk away. But we thank you that you are the God who is with us, the God who holds all things together constantly.

And we thank you that you are the God who reveals yourself to us through your word. We don't have to look at the wonder of creation and wonder without answers as to who lies beyond us.

[9 : 03] But we thank you that as we look to the hills and beyond, we are introduced in Scripture to the God who made all of this and who holds it together.

The God who is our sun and our shield. The God who hears our prayers and who answers our prayers. The God in whose presence our souls find rest.

And we pray that you would help us this morning to look in faith to you. And help us as we read your word and as we sing these praises.

Help us to hear the voice of God. Help us to sense the presence of God. And help us, we pray, to come to you in faith.

We thank you that we can come. We thank you that in your word we are given that invitation, that call to come and worship and to come and find the forgiveness that our souls need.

[10 : 12] And we come in the name of Jesus, your son, our saviour. We cannot come in our own name.

We cannot come pleading our own righteousness because we have no righteousness. Even the good things that we would wish to do, our best good works, are as filthy rags when compared to the perfect righteousness of Christ.

So we come looking to Jesus, trusting in Jesus. We ask, Lord, that we would be cleansed in the blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sin.

We confess that we are much in need of that. We sin in our thoughts. We sin in our words. We sin in our silence. We sin in the things that we do.

And as we look back over each week as we come here, we are conscious of how we have fallen and how we have failed. But we thank you that there is forgiveness.

[11 : 25] And so we pray that you would cleanse us, that you would wash our hearts clean, that you would create in us these clean hearts, these right spirits. And we ask, Lord, that you would clothe us in that righteousness of Christ, so that we would know that we are accepted, that we are children of God, so that we would know that assurance, that we are safe in time, and that we are safe for eternity because of the God who holds us.

So hear our prayers and help us, we ask. Give us ears to hear. Give us eyes to see. Grant to us that faith that would enable us to take hold of the grace that's offered to us in Christ.

And we pray that we would know, as we go from here, that it was good for us to have come, because not only were we in the presence of each other, but we were in the presence of God.

We pray for those who are not here this morning. We are conscious of many, as we think about our congregation who are at home just now. We are conscious of many who have COVID this morning.

And we pray, Lord, that you would be near to each one, that you would lay hands of healing upon each one, and that they, as they watch and listen at a distance, would feel that they are part of the fellowship, and that they would feel your presence with them in their own homes.

[13 : 06] We thank you that you are the God who is everywhere. And so we pray for those who are sick, asking that you would lay hands of healing upon them. We pray on for those who are grieving, those present with us and those absent from us.

In this world, we are constantly aware of those whom we have loved, who go from time into eternity. We thank you that when they are in Christ, we have the assurance that they are saved.

And yet we still feel the pain of loss. And so for those who feel that most acutely this morning, we pray that they would know your comfort.

We pray for those who are battling with addictions. We think of Road to Recovery in particular. And we ask, Lord, for those who feel the chains around them, we pray that they would know the power of Christ, who is able to break these chains.

So we pray for all who are in need. We are all in need. And we ask that you would help us, meet us at the point of our need, and enable us to trust you.

[14 : 23] We pray on for our nation, asking that you would draw us back. We are far from you as a nation, and we ask that you would give to us that spirit of repentance. We pray for a world that is so broken.

A world where we see many of the signs that we were told to look for, that preface the return of Jesus. And we ask, Lord, that you would bring peace where there is war.

We pray that you would bring justice where there is injustice. We pray that all nations would know the saving grace of Jesus.

And we thank you that we look forward to hearing more of that global ministry this evening. We pray for Bill as he prepares to come and speak to us.

So hear our prayers, take away our sin, and lead us and guide us, we pray, as we seek to worship you. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come out, please?

[15 : 27] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. How are you all today?

Good to see some of you back. You were away for a wee while with COVID and all that kind of stuff. I've got a video to show you today, which hopefully will work. Poor Mary Catherine got to put in the sign booth this morning.

Oh, but it's working. So I'll show you this video and then I'll talk in the same. Amen. I'll make a shot again if that's possible, if not nobody.

Here we go. Awesome. So, you saw that, and that happened, that was in Edinburgh.

It looked much scarier, I have to say, from the window of my plane than it did in the screen there. But I was sitting in this plane in Edinburgh waiting to come back home to Harris.

[16 : 51] Have you ever been in a plane? Put your hand up. Have you been in a plane? Do you like planes? I'm going in a plane to go into my suburb. When I'm going there, I'm going to go on a plane.

You're going to go on a plane. And do you like planes? Yes. Yes? Yes, I like it because there's a view full of the planes. Because I like going up higher than the clouds.

You're higher than the clouds, there's great views on the planes. Michael, do you like planes? I love them. You love them? Does everybody like planes? Yeah? Do you want to know? Do you like planes?

I like them, I've never been a one before. You like them, but you've not been a one before. I've been a one before. One of these days, maybe. Three of them. You'll get to go on a plane. Is there anyone who gets nervous on planes?

Young ones are okay. Mom, put your hand up. Sorry? What was that? Mom. Mom, put your hand up. Michael said, Mom, put your hand up. She wouldn't even look out the window.

[17 : 53] She wouldn't even look out the window. Sorry about the video then. So, there's probably quite a lot. Any honest people getting a bit nervous about planes?

Especially the wee planes coming from Stornoway that are like a Ford Transit with two little wings on it. The one to Edinburgh with the wee propellers and it starts to vibrate and the lights fall off the roof and things like that.

I think I'd be on that one. You're right. You'll be on a good one. You'll be on one of the big smooth ones. But sometimes when you're sitting on planes, I've been on some bumpy plane journeys and it's been a wee bit scary.

And there was one that day and I was in Edinburgh and I was sitting on the runway. We'd been waiting for a wee while and the captain was saying, right, there's slight delays but we'll hopefully be taking off quite soon.

So, just sit there and we'll keep you informed. And we're sitting on the runway and then I was seeing this big plane. I could see it in the distance. And it was getting closer and it was getting closer.

[19 : 01] And then we started moving forward and as far as I could see, it was coming right in the direction of our little bit of runway. And the more I watched the plane, I actually took the video, it looked much closer when you're in the aircraft than it did on the video.

But as it was coming closer, I thought, I think I'll just take a wee video of this. And as it was getting closer and I was looking at the plane, I was starting to feel my heart beat.

I was starting to get a bit nervous. But then I kind of had a look around out another window. And do you know what I could see in the airport? You know in the airport, there's all these different things.

And there's a big tall tower. Do you know what the big tall tower is for? Aircraft control tower. And I had a look around and I could see this big aircraft control tower.

And I thought about that for a minute. And I thought, yeah, they've got this under control. There's a guy like that, Michael. Michael's going like this. She's like, Alpha 1, Alpha 1. And he's speaking to the pilot there and he's saying, not too close.

[20 : 07] There's a plane bound for a storm away on the runway down there. Just step back, clear from, clear, keep that bit clear. So as I looked at the plane, as I looked at the sky, I was a bit nervous.

But when I looked at the air traffic control tower, I thought, no, it's okay. I don't need to be nervous. They've got this under control. I don't need to worry.

Now tell me, boys and girls, did Jesus ever talk about worry? Maybe not planes.

But did Jesus, did he ever talk about being worried? What do you think? Yeah? Yeah? Yeah? Yeah? He did talk about being worried, didn't he? And what did he say about worry?

Can you remember? He said, don't do it. He said, you don't need to worry. And why did Jesus say, we don't need to worry?

[21 : 12] Go on, Michael. He's always beside us. What can Jesus see? What can God see? We can't see God like we can see each other.

But what can God see? He can see, what, Frasier? He can see, where? What about if you go to Shilabos?

Can he see you there? What about Leverborough? What about if you went to London? Can he see you there? Yes, and this is something we can never escape God.

We can never escape God. We can never escape God's vision. He can see us wherever we are, whatever we're doing. If we're sitting on a plane starting to sweat, he can see us.

He's saying, I can see. You can even see my heartbeat going. You think you know where it's going, Michael? He can't do it. He can't do it. He can't do it. He can't do it. So. Because God is right here.

[22 : 14] He's right here. He's right everywhere. He can see everything. And so, if he can see everything, and if he loves us, and we know he does, what do we need to worry about?

Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. So. Do you ever worry? Put your hand up if you sometimes worry. Call these brave souls over that side.

We all worry about stuff, don't we? But you know this. If we look at the things that we're worried about all the time, but like I was looking at the plane, we just get more and more worried.

But if we look to the God who sees everything, who's an ultimate power, he's in the control center of heaven. But if we look to him, if we keep our eyes on Jesus, we hear Jesus saying, you don't need to worry.

Because I love you. And I'm watching you. And I promise I'll be with you. So. Let's trust him. Let's pray, will we?

[23 : 24] Lord Jesus, we tell you, we confess that we do sometimes worry. Sometimes we find it hard to sleep at night because we're worried about different things.

It might be exams. It might be our health. It might be our friends and when we fall out with them. It might be all kinds of things.

Sometimes we worry, but we pray that you would help us not to keep on thinking about the things that worry us, but to think about you, to look to you. Because we thank you that you've told us that you love us and you've shown us how much you love us, Lord Jesus, by going to the cross to die for our sins so that we could be saved forever.

And we thank you that we are safe forever when we're in Jesus. And even when we come to the end of our time in this world, when we come to death, we thank you that we are safe in Jesus because he carries us through death into life that is eternal.

So help us not to worry, but to trust you. And we pray for all the boys and girls in particular, that they wouldn't be worried, but that they would be trusting in you.

[24 : 44] The God who cares for them, the God who cares for us. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now, and the words are on the screen. Immortal.

Do you know what immortal means? It means never ending, forever living. Invisible. Do you know what invisible means? It means we can't see God. God only wise.

The one who can see us and who knows us and who knows everything. So we're going to sing now praise to this God. So we'll stand to sing in just a moment. Lord, not invisible.

God only wise. In light inaccessible. In from our eyes. Most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days.

Almighty, victorious, thy great King we praise. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as life.

[26 : 07] Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might. Thy justice, thy mountains, thy soaring above.

Thy plants which are fountains of goodness and love. To all life thou givest, to both great and small.

In all life thou livest, the true life of all. We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree.

And wither and perish, but not change indeed. Great Father of glory, new Father of light.

Thy angels adore thee, O fill in their sight. All Lord we would render, O help us to see.

[27 : 21] Tis hope we love's splendor, O find I the thief. In part of the invisible, God of the wise.

Invited, ascensible, in from our eyes. Most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days.

Almighty, glorious, thy great King we praise. Amen. Okay boys and girls, if you head to Sunday school.

And as they go, remember to be praying for them. And we can turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 20 please.

Luke chapter 20.

[28 : 37] We're reading from verse 20 through to verse 44.

In fact, I'll read from verse 19.

Jesus just, he's told the parable of the tenants. It's against the religious leaders. They're not happy about this. And so it says that the teachers of the law, verse 19.

And the chief priests look for a way to arrest Jesus immediately. Because they knew that he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies. He pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he says. That they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.

[29 : 39] So the spies questioned him. Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right. And that you do not show partiality. But teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not? He saw through their duplicity and said to them. Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it.

Caesar's, they replied. He said to them, then give to Caesar what is Caesar's. And to God what is God's. They were unable to trap him in what he said there in public.

And astonished by his answer, they became silent. Some of the Sadducees who say there is no resurrection came to Jesus with a question. Teacher, they said.

Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children. The man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers.

[30 : 39] The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her. And in the same way, the seven died, leaving no children. Finally, the woman died too.

Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be since the seven were married to her? Jesus replied. The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.

But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage. And they can no longer die.

For they are like the angels. They are God's children. Since they are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise. For he calls the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. For to him all are alive. Some of the teachers of the law responded. Well said, teacher. And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

[31 : 43] Then Jesus said to them, How is it that they say that Christ is the son of David? David himself declares in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

David calls him Lord. How then can he be a son? And Jesus leaves the question hanging. And we will do the same.

May God bless that reading of his word to us. And we are going to sing again now to God's praise. We will sing two stanzas of Psalm 84 in Gaelic.

Psalm 84, I think it is verses 10 to 12 as they are marked in English. And we read there, For God the Lord is a sun and shield.

He will grace and glory give, And will withhold no good to them that uprightly do live. For thou that art the Lord of hosts, That man is truly blessed, Who by assured confidence in thee alone doth rest.

- [32 : 47] There may be three verses we're singing actually, But Donald will know and we'll follow him. He's the presenter. So we'll remain seated to sing in Gaelic. And we sing to God's praise.
- Amen. Rated forever. Amen. And a man with Lord of hosts, Hummer saying go west to the river, Where has God the heavens increasingly!
- And the wilderness over the river, For this will come to a place near you, I hear it Wait Go Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- [35 : 08] Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Thank you.
- Amen. Let's pray as we turn back to God's Word.
- Lord God, we thank you for your word and we pray now for the help of the Holy Spirit. We need to have our eyes opened.
- [37 : 04] We need to have our minds cleared of all that would distract us. We need to have our hearts stirred and this is nothing that we can do ourselves.
- So we pray for the help of the help of the Holy Spirit. And we pray that you would speak into our lives, we pray that we would hear the voice of Jesus.
- We pray, Lord, that you would give us faith. We pray, Lord, that you would give us faith. And what we pray for ourselves, we pray for the little ones. We thank you for them. We thank you for the way they listen.
- We thank you for how ready they are to believe, we thank you for how ready they are to believe, how soft we can see their hearts are. And we ask that as they hear about Jesus this morning in Sunday school, that you would help them to understand and help them to believe.
- We pray that these young ones would grow up to be those who walk close with God. That you would use their lives to bring glory to your name. And we pray on for the little babies as well.
- [38 : 10] We thank you for them with us and for those who are at home as well. We pray, Lord, that you would be near to them. We thank you for the answer that they are to prayer.
- And we pray for their physical protection when we're aware of so many illnesses around at this time. And we pray for their spiritual protection that they too would grow up to know and trust the Lord.
- And we pray on for the children that are being carried in the womb. That you would protect them. And that in your time, we would see them and know the blessing of their presence with us in this place.
- We pray for other congregations around us as well. We thank you that the gospel is preached in all the denominations around us in this village. And we pray that you would be working in these churches as we pray that you would be working amongst us.
- And we pray now that you would go before us. That you would take away our sin and help us to believe. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Luke chapter 20.
- [39 : 12] If you could have your Bibles open in front of you, that would be helpful. And just to give the context to this passage, this is the final week of Jesus' life in this world.

We are on Tuesday. And Jesus will be crucified on Friday. And if you, I've got your Bibles open. If you look from the beginning of verse 20, where we see Jesus' authority being questioned.

And then there's the parable of the tenants. And the clash with the religious leaders. All the way through the section that we read. And further on to verse 36.

All the way through to the end of, almost the end of Luke 21. All that happened on Tuesday. So, Tuesday was a difficult day for Jesus.

There was a lot of opposition. There were a lot of clashes. It was a long day of controversy. And we're picking up today at verse 20 of chapter 20.

[40 : 25] And we're introduced in verse 20 to spies. So, that's our first point. Spies. Now, when we think about spies, we probably think about, I guess we think about James Bond.

That's where our minds likely go first of all. We think about a character in a sharp suit. Very suave, but deadly. We don't tend to think of spies.

Strolling around in clerical robes. Carrying theology books and ancient texts under their arm. And yet, that's what we see here. Jesus, in this section that we're looking at, he encounters spies.

Verse 20. Keeping a close watch on Jesus, they sent spies. He pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.

So, these spies, they have a special mission. It's to catch out Jesus. And like all spies or special agents, they're working for someone.

[41 : 41] So, we ask the question, who are these spies working for? And we're told in verse 19 that they were working for the teachers of the law and the chief priests. And the reason they were working for them is because these religious elites were looking for a way to arrest Jesus immediately.

They have been against Jesus for a long time. They've been clashing with Jesus on every corner. And now they've had enough. Jesus has just spoken a parable very clearly against them.

So, they want rid of him immediately. So, these religious spies were tracking Jesus. They were watching Jesus. They were listening to every word that Jesus said.

One of the commentators, J.C. Ryle, says, An ignorant bystander would have said, speaking about the spies, These are sincere inquirers after truth.

Charlie looked. They were undercover. But, says, Ryle, always hollow and unreal. It was the wolf putting on the sheep's clothing under the vain idea of deceiving the shepherd.

[42 : 55] Their words were smoother than butter. Yet there was war in their hearts. So, these seemingly honest men, sitting in the congregation, They weren't seeking the Lord as they came close to Jesus in order to believe in him.

They were spying on Jesus. They were looking for reasons not to believe in him. They were building a case against Jesus.

And, we're looking back 2,000 years into this scene. And yet, this is today still happening.

There are many people still who are spying on Jesus. Who are full of contempt towards Jesus. Who are always alert to see an opportunity to speak against Jesus.

That's still our day. There are still people who are spying on Jesus. Who are spying on anyone who would say that they are Christians. And the reason they're doing it is just to try to justify their own reasons for not believing.

[44 : 17] And I just, I wonder what's going on in our hearts just now. As we listen to what Jesus said in this passage.

As we read about all the things that Jesus did as Luke tells us in the gospel. Are we seeking Jesus in these moments? Because we want to believe.

Or are there some spying on him? With a deeply sceptical cynical eye. So what was happening in that congregation?

It can be happening in congregations anywhere. It can be happening from a distance. People watching this now or after time. What's going on as we look at Jesus?

Anyway, verse 21 tells us the spies as they get close to Jesus they questioned him. Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

[45 : 27] Smooth words. That's their approach to Jesus. When I read this it took me my mind went to the houses of parliament and all these politicians they're making speeches and they start their speeches by addressing the person that they're opposing as the right honourable gentleman and yet you know that there is nothing that would be within them that would want to call this person honourable.

Their motives are not to give honour but to destroy. And that's what was happening here. They approached very politely but as Ryle said there was war in their hearts.

So they asked the question in verse 22 Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not? And this was a question that was designed to be a trap.

They're not speaking to Jesus asking for financial advice. They're not speaking to Jesus asking for some direction politically. They're laying a trap. And if Jesus says in response yes it is right to pay taxes to Caesar then the Jewish crowds would call him a traitor and say that he was a friend of Rome and they would turn on him.

But if Jesus said it was wrong to pay taxes to Caesar the Romans who were listening would move in and arrest him for encouraging the crowds to disobey Caesar.

[46 : 57] So whichever answer Jesus gave he was in trouble. He was on the brink of arrest. The question was just who would arrest him?

Was it the religious police or was it the Romans? Verse 23 it says Jesus saw through their duplicity.

That's a rare word that word duplicity. It's only I think it's only used five times in the New Testament and it's a word that it's descriptive of what Satan did in tempting Eve in the garden.

Paul uses that same word duplicity to speak about the work of Satan. And Jesus as he sees these suited religious professionals coming towards him as he hears their buttery words he can hear Satan for all their disguise Satan was speaking.

And so Jesus fully aware of their motives responds verse 23 and said to them show me a denarius. denarius. So Jesus he said has anybody got any money?

[48 : 23] Anyone got a denarius in their pocket? And somebody took out a coin and passed it to Jesus. Or they're maybe holding it before they pass it on and Jesus says to them whose portrait and inscription are on it?

And they look at it and they say Caesar's verse 25. And Jesus said to them verse 25 then give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

And the spies were dismayed. They weren't expecting such a wise carefully weighted answer.

Jesus first of all he takes the coin he focuses on the coin and he says it's got the portrait of Caesar on it. It's got the inscription of Caesar on it.

So give this piece of metal that you're obsessing over with the inscription and portrait of Caesar back to Caesar. There's roads that we need to drive on.

[49 : 32] There's payments that we're walking on. There's bins that need to be emptied. And Caesar is taking the responsibility of doing that. So give your portion give your tax to Caesar.

And then Jesus turns to the Jews and the Jews the religious leaders in particular they knew that they had been made in the image of God.

See that's the teaching of the Bible. Every one of us were made in God's image. The coin has the portrait and inscription of Caesar or in our case the queen.

But every one of us has been made in the image of God. We have the portrait we have the inscription of God on us. We've been made in his image. Which means that every little soul whether in the womb or whether walking around in the streets is precious.

There's no write-offs. There are no little people. There are no worthless people. Everyone is precious because everyone is made in the image of God. And these religious people they knew that.

[50 : 47] They were made in the image of God. That was the teaching of the Bible. And Jesus says you're going to give the coin with the inscription of Caesar back to Caesar. But let me ask you this question. Are you giving your life to God?

You've been made in the image of God. God's. But are you giving your life? Are you giving your all to God? Give to God what is God's.

And that's the issue that resonated. The issue of the coin was now gone. But they're dealing with this challenge of their own lives.

Jesus is challenging them about their own lives. And who their lives belonged to.

And how their lives were being used. And that challenge comes from there to here today. Jesus is speaking to us. God's. And he is saying to us, you were made by God.

[52 : 02] You were made for a relationship with God. What are you doing in your life? Are you trusting him?

Are you giving glory to him? is he first? Or is he number six on the list of priorities? Give to God what is God's.

Augustine, in that much quoted phrase in his confessions, said, you have made us for yourself, O Lord. And our heart is restless until it rests in you.

And so that's what Jesus is teaching. He's teaching that the relationship that we have been made for is to know God, is to be in relationship with God.

And this is Tuesday. And on Friday, Jesus is going to go to a cross to carry away all the sin that keeps us back from God.

[53 : 19] So as we trust in him, we are brought close. We're brought into relationship with him. All we have to do is believe. All we have to do is come to the Lord Jesus and ask him to take our sin away, to wash us in his blood, to come into our lives.

and we are given our lives, our hearts. We are giving to God what is God's. So when have you done that?

As Jesus looks at us today, he addresses us. Are we in relationship with God? have we given him our lives?

And for those who are Christians, for those of us who profess to be Christians, are we putting God first? Because it's not a case of just trust Christ and think no more.

There's a wrestle. This world is a busy place. There are priorities, there are responsibilities, there are worries. So where is God on our list?

[54 : 47] Are we seeking him first? Are we making it our chief aim to glorify him? or is there work and family and friends and leisure and all kinds of idols?

And then God fits in somewhere down the list. This is an ongoing thing. Are we giving to God? Am I giving to God? My time, my talents, my money, am I giving to God what is God's?

So the spies now, they're on the back foot. They've come with this very smart question that they were sure was going to trap Jesus, but they're leaving the scene now, not with mission accomplished, but with mission failed.

It says they were unable to trap Jesus, verse 26, in what he had said there in public, and astonished by his answer, they became silent. So we move from the spies to the Sadducees.

And it says in verse 27, some of the Sadducees who say there is no resurrection came with a question. And they have this question in verse 28.

[56 : 01] You might wonder who are the Sadducees? The Sadducees were kind of the, they were the aristocrats of the day. They were from wealthy Jewish political families.

So they had great influence in the culture. And so the spies failed, the Sadducees step up, and they're sure they can take Jesus down. Teacher, verse 28, they said, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.

So they start off from the position of truth. They pick up on this law, which we can find in Genesis 38 or Deuteronomy 25. I'm not going there just now.

But they start at the position of truth. They open their Bibles and they say to Jesus, I want to speak to you about something and I've got a verse I want to speak to you about.

And let me just say by way of warning, most false teaching, the Sadducees were false teachers. They're against Jesus. But let me say, most false teaching, most attacks on the truth will have a little bit of truth in them.

[57 : 12] I got a letter, one of two letters in the last few weeks and I opened the envelope, I looked at it and it was hand written and it looked to be written by somebody who was maybe a bit younger.

It was kind of maybe childish type writing. And it went something along the lines of, I'd like to write to you to encourage you with some Bible verses.

I thought that's nice. It's been a hard time, it said, and it's good to get encouragement. I thought to myself, yeah, that's right. I want to tell you about the words of Jesus. Then they quoted Matthew 6 where Jesus says, don't worry about your life.

And I thought, that's a nice thing to write. And I thought, I wonder who these people are. And it said, if you want a little more encouragement then please contact X and Y.

I thought, who are these people? They had names. And I turned the letter over and I looked at it and turned it upside down. And eventually I saw, just in the bottom corner, JW.com, Jehovah's Witnesses.

[58 : 20] They didn't tell me that. I had to search hard for it. But it's a tactic that we see so often in all false teachers.

Start with the truth. truth. But then carry on the conversation. Click on the website and Jesus will not be honoured but the truth that Jesus teaches will be attacked.

The person of Jesus will be attacked. The cross of Jesus by the JWs will be attacked. That's the tactic that we so often see and that's the tactic that Sadducees use.

They start with the truth and then they launch this attack. verse 29 to verse 33. They create this scenario, this ridiculous kind of scenario. There were seven brothers they say, verse 29.

The first one married a woman and died childless. The second, then the third married her. In the same way the seven died leaving no children, finally the woman died too. Now then, they say, Jesus.

[59 : 20] Got a smirk. At the resurrection that you talk about, whose wife will this woman be since the seven were married to her?

And we can imagine them sniggering. We can hear the whispers amongst the Sadducees, we've got more of this one. It's a story that was designed to mock Jesus and ridicule the whole doctrine of the resurrection.

It was served up to Jesus with lashings of sneering pride. But as it says in Proverbs 16, pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall, and Jesus shows in the next verses how easily their argument can be destroyed.

Jesus shows them that they don't actually know the Bible that they're talking about. And first of all, Jesus deals with the marriage question in verse 34 through to verse 36.

Jesus says, the people of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die for they're like the angels, they are God's children, since they are the children of the resurrection.

[60 : 42] So Jesus teaches very plainly there is no marriage in heaven, which is very hard for us to take in, because we are so close in marriage, we're so dependent on each other in marriage, but in heaven, although we will enjoy close relationships with each other, in an even fuller way, the greatest intimacy is with Jesus, the one that we look to and depend on eternally is Jesus, and so Jesus says it's going to be different in heaven.

so he deals with the marriage question, and then Jesus deals with the resurrection question, he refers to the writings of Moses, which the Sadducees said they believed, and Jesus shows them that Moses believed in the resurrection, and so if they were following Moses, they too should believe in the resurrection.

verse 37, in the account of the bush, says Jesus, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Jesus is using the present tense there. He doesn't say that Moses calls him the God who was the God of Abraham, who is now dead, the God who was the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, Jesus says in verse 38, he's not the God of the dead.

Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are not dead, they're living. He's the God of the living, for to him, verse 38, all are alive.

[62 : 36] And the Pharisees, who did believe in the resurrection, and who were always fighting with the Sadducees, took out their notebooks, they loved that argument, they'd never seen that one before.

They say to Jesus, well done teacher, we like that one. And then there's silence.

And it says in verse 40, no one dared to ask him any more questions. And that's the third point. There's silence. the spies come against Jesus, so confident they're going to take him down, and they're silenced.

Verse 26, they're unable to trap him in what he said there in public. They were astonished by his answer, they became silent. And now the Sadducees, after their failed attempt to stand against Jesus, they're silenced.

It says in verse 40, no one dared to ask him any more questions. so we can visualize it on that day.

[63 : 57] All these guys who'd arrived with their chests puffed out, so confident, are now silent. Nobody wants to speak.

And there's two things I want to know about the silence, just very briefly. The first thing is, the silence gives a preview. of what is to come for those who will not believe.

There were some on that day, and there are some here on this day who are determined that they will not believe. And the silence gives a preview for how it's going to be on the final day if we stick in that position.

And the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the spies and the Sadducees, it's not that they wanted to be silent. They probably wished they had a whole notebook full of smart answers to be able to give to Jesus, but they realized that they didn't.

They realized to their humiliation that they could not get won over on Jesus. And you know, when Jesus returns to this world or calls us from this world, all of us will stand before him.

[65 : 24] But not one of us will be able to stand against him. And those who have gone through this life standing against Jesus and sneering at Jesus and debating and arguing and creating all kinds of barriers and obstacles to faith in Christ.

All these people who have been so full of words on that day when they stand before Jesus will be silent. On the day of judgment there will be no more objections to Jesus.

There will be no more debate with or about Jesus. there will only be silence. So that silence gives a preview of how it's going to be for some.

But the second thing is that the silence gave all who were there the opportunity to repent and to believe.

I mean these men who came with their clipboards to take Jesus down they have the opportunity at this point to repent and to believe.

[66 : 52] And we might say you know is that really possible that those who were so determined against Jesus would have that opportunity and it is. Nicodemus Joseph of Arimathea are two examples of that.

They were high class religious leaders. They were part of these plans to take down Jesus. To what degree we don't know.

But Nicodemus was described as Israel's teacher. He was the top man. But he repented. We don't know exactly when. We don't know exactly how.

But he did. And he believed. Maybe it was in this silence. Eventually he submitted.

And today in the silence of this place as we've come apart from the normal things of this world there is opportunity for anyone no matter who you are no matter what you've done in the past no matter what skeletons may be in the cupboard no matter how much we might have been against Jesus and for how long we might have been against Jesus today if you can hear this there is opportunity for you to repent and to believe in Jesus and some might say why should I who really is he and that's the question everybody was asking on that day who is this he's doing these amazing miracles they were all witnesses to it he can silence the most powerful men of our day that nobody else can stand up to who is this and now

[68 : 54] Jesus answers that question and just in a word let me give you the answer that Jesus gives in verse 41 to verse 44 Jesus he shows himself to be the son of David and the son of God the Christ some of our young folks this week were doing higher English and I remember back to these days when you were doing these kind of exams and studying texts there were some texts that you knew well and you kind of hoped a question would come up on these texts and there was other texts that you just didn't really get you didn't properly grasp and you just hoped that they wouldn't appear on the exam paper you hoped there would be no questions and the difficult ones and Psalm 110 was a text that the religious leaders they just didn't understand and to their dismay

Jesus in open court with a big audience decided that he was going to ask a few questions so Jesus said to them in verse 41 how is it that they say the Christ is the son of David David himself declares in the book of Psalms the Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet David calls him Lord how then can he be his son and all the religious bosses they didn't have a clue how to answer that one because the answer to that question was Jesus it's like the children you know in the children's talk Michael said to me today I think I know where this is going and the answer ultimately to every question you ask the children is Jesus and the answer to this question that

Jesus asks of Psalm 110 was Jesus Jesus was the son of David his ancestry could be traced back to David Jesus was fully man he needed to be fully man if he was going to take our sin from us but Jesus was not just a son of David Jesus came before David Jesus was the one that David called Lord Jesus was the son of God Jesus was the Christ Jesus was the only one who could deal with the enemy of sin and Satan and death and give God's salvation to us so Jesus opens up Psalm 110 and says tell me the answer he's showing them the answer he's revealing to them that he was the answer and he was calling them even in that moment to come to him even on

Tuesday before Friday even in the face of such hostility Jesus was calling these men and the women in these crowds to come to him to find rest for their souls but they would not so with war in their hearts they continued to reject Jesus and the question I want to finish with is what do you say about Jesus and what will you and I do with Jesus will we believe that he is the son of David who takes our sin from us and he is the son of God who brings God's salvation to us will we come to him and will we find rest for our souls we are going to sing now and we can sing in response to this text

I heard the voice of Jesus say come unto me and rest I heard the voice of Jesus say come unto me rest lay lay lay down the weary one lay down thy head upon my rest I came to Jesus as I was weary and warm and sad I found in him a resting place and he has made me glad

[74 : 22] I heard the voice of Jesus say behold I freely give the living water thirsty one to down and think and live I came to Jesus and I turned of that life giving stream my thirst was quenched my soul revived and now I live in him I heard the voice of Jesus say I am this dark world's light look on to me my Lord shall rise and all my day be right

I look to Jesus and I found in him my star my son and in that light of life I was till trapping days are done and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen over