

19.1.25 am: Asking the Question

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. I don't think I see any visitors with us. I see a few returning friends who are away and come back. But it's good to see everyone this morning. Good to know also there's some that we can't see as well who are listening online. And so a warm welcome in the name of Jesus. The notices have been on the screen and you've also got them in the email. So I won't go through many of them. I will just highlight one or two things. The service this evening is at the normal time at six o'clock.

It's taken tonight by the Reverend Thomas Davis. So I'm in Carlyway. Thomas is here. We were away in Edinburgh for training this week. Training and how to be a supervisor for Scott. So I don't know if I'm any of the wiser on Friday than I was on Monday. But we were away for that period. So Thomas is taking the service for me and I'm heading over to Carlyway. The services next Sunday. I'm going to be away in Shawbust for the day. And maybe that's a point just for prayer. As a presbytery we're struggling just now. There are multiple vacancies. We're getting pulled all over the place to try and cover pull puts that are empty. So I've got a long standing arrangement to be in Shawbust for the day. And Duncan will take the service in the morning. Evening service is a Gaelic service taken by Hamish Taylor. And the fellowship as usual will be at half past seven. And next week's fellowship will be taken or will be led by or arranged by Kiki and Anna and Murdo and Joanne.

I don't think there's anything else to highlight other than just to say a word about the POV. In our old language we would have called this a quinquennial. Every five years in the Church of Scotland there would be a delegation that would come from presbytery to ask a few questions and to just see how the congregation is doing. Same thing happens in the free church. They just call it something different. It's the presbytery oversight visit. So that will be led by Thomas Davis. It's happening on Wednesday the 12th of February. And basically there's a there's a prayer meeting type service where there's a worship. We'll read God's word. We'll hear it preached. We'll sing to God's praise. And then there's the opportunity for Thomas and those who are with him to to basically read and come back to us on the questionnaires that hopefully some of you all filled out. You've got an email this week. If you haven't come and speak to me or to Gordon and the questionnaires you can either fill out with pen and paper or you can fill out an online form.

It asks some questions about the life of the congregation just to try and gauge how we are serving Christ and the cause of Christ in our community. So there's one short questionnaire in two formats and you're not obliged to fill it out but you're encouraged to fill it out. It's not just for members also. It's for members or adherents and you can either take one on your way out. Some are printed or you can fill in the form that's in the email link.

These I think are all the notices that I need to highlight just now. So let's begin this time of worship and let's sing to God's praise. Mission Praise 51. Be thou my vision O Lord of my heart.

[3 : 5 3] Be thou my vision O Lord of my heart.

Not he all else to me save that thou art. Thou my best God by day or by night.

Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light. Be thou my wisdom O Lord of my heart.

I am with thee, thou with me Lord. Thou my great Father, thy, thy true Son.

Thou in me dwelling, thou with me Lord. Be thou my battle, shield, sword for the fight.

[5 : 22] Be thou my dignity, thou my delight. Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower.

Thou my glory, thou with me Lord.

Thou my heart. Thou my king of heaven, my treasure, the Lord.

Thou my king of heaven, after victory won. May I reach heaven's joy so bright and sun
Heart of my own heart whatever befall Still be my vision, O ruler of all I'm going to ask
Scott to come and lead us in prayer please Let us pray together Our Father in heaven we
give thanks to you for this hour This time where we can gather together as your people To
worship you and to hear your word

Being spread to us, being preached to us And Lord we pray as we gather we would know
your hand being over us The presence of your spirit being with us Speaking to us as a
congregation and speaking to us as individuals Speaking into the depths of our hearts The
depths of our souls, the deepest of our feelings For you know us as individuals and we
come here as individuals Each with our own worries, anxieties Each with our own
personal characteristics Each with our own temptations, sins That we are easily fallen to
You know us better than we know ourselves And so we pray that you would reach down to
each of us As our loving heavenly Father does Giving good things to his children And so
give us of your rich grace and mercy this morning

[8 : 21] To feed us and nourish us And help us and strengthen us Give us what we need this
morning Lord we pray We ask that you would forgive us our sins as well We come
confessing that we have Done great sins in your sight That we have fallen to the
temptations That the devil has said before us often and many times We just pray that we
would know forgiveness Through the blood of Jesus Christ That we would, each of us,
come to the cross That we would behold with the eyes of spiritual vision That you would
be our vision That we would see the price that was paid for us That we would see the
sufferings of the Saviour The sufferings of the sacrifice that was perfect The suffering of
the one that the man who did not sin And that he did it all for us

That he loved us, that he would give us life for each of us And we pray that this loving,
wonderful gospel message Would be received by each of us today That we would
acknowledge our need of Christ That we would see the sin in our hearts That we would
know the gospel And not just know it but believe it And that we would cry out to help us in
our unbelief That many who hear the gospel and know it Would respond in faith Not
trusting in themselves Not preparing themselves in any special way But coming just as
they are Knowing their weaknesses And knowing just exactly who they are in your sight
Knowing their failings, which are many But knowing that Jesus calls them to come To
come and receive from the riches of his hand

That he would feed us and be our shepherd That he would pasture us and keep us So
each of us we pray Speak to you the depths of our hearts That we may receive the gospel
of Jesus Christ And place our faith in him Each and every step of the way Into this year
that is unknown What will hold for us We pray that you would be our guide We pray that
you would be our protector That you would keep us and watch us And we pray this gospel
message Would be pronounced with faith And with confidence And with clarity this
morning Wherever it is preached We pray for David as he comes to us With your word We
pray for Thomas That you are God willing this evening We pray across our island We pray
across our nation That the gospel will reach into hearts That are lost People who are
looking for purpose And reason in other things in life That they would find their chief end
and purpose To glorify God and to worship him

And find their enjoyment in him forever We pray That they would Be forcibly Convicted of the reality of heaven and hell And that there is an eternity Waiting for each of us That is our judgment set before Each and every one of us here Knowing what we deserve rightfully But knowing what we can receive Through the sacrifice of Jesus And his resurrection That you even though we die Yet we shall live If we trust in him So we pray this morning For churches that have no ministers As was mentioned We pray for our presbytery Here on this island We pray for those who preach your gospel We pray for our ministers We pray for the additional burdens That are upon them That you would help them

And enable them to Fulfill the requirements of What is set before them And their duties That there would be men Raised up to preach your gospel Willing servants To make your name known Believers willing to Share with what Christ has done For their soul Lord we pray That you would Raise up workers For the harvest field In this world That your kingdom may come That you may gather All your people Into your bosom Into your household And that they may be Precious to you Lord May they be precious To us too May we have a concern For those who do not know you Who do not want to know you Who are not here To hear the gospel This morning We pray That you would have A concern to make Christ known Eternal salvation And cleansing of sin Known to those

[13 : 26] Near and dear to us Those who we come Into contact with Those who even We consider Enemies of our hearts Because we are told To love them too We are told To love all men Because all men Are made in your image So Lord we pray This morning That you would Be with all Endeavours to share Your gospel We pray for our Young ones here We thank you for them We pray for our Elderly as well Who have been Faithful witnesses To us And faithful To you And your name That you may be With them And give them Strength in their Old age Even if they Feel failing This morning In their strength That you would Draw near to them And be their Comfort And reassure them With the promises Of your word That you will not Leave them Nor forsake them And you have Prepared a place For them So be with them We pray We pray for the Upcoming conference As well We remember Those that will

Speak And we pray That many will Come And that they May receive Jesus Christ And hear of the Wonderful gospel Again We ask that you To watch over us In this time May we Know and say It is good to be here And we know The presence of your Spirit with us We pray In Jesus name Amen Amen Boys and girls Would you like To come forward Please How are all you guys Today Good So I thought I would Tell you this morning Well I'm kind of

Showing you something And I'm telling you About my story as well Last Sunday When you came to church Well can you remember Was it hot Or was it cold I tell you It was hot It was super hot It was so hot I was starting to feel Faint When I was When I was preaching And it was so hot When I was looking Around the congregation I could see Some people were just Overcome With the heat Because heat Can sometimes Make you sleepy Sermons never do But heat Sometimes can So the church Was really hot Last Sunday And the reason The church Was really hot Was What What do you think Michael The heaters But there's always Been heaters here Isn't there Ever since the church

Opened Opened There's been Heaters Around the church And so Why was it hotter Last week You think Than The other weeks Well I'll tell you Why Because Scott Over there Not only is he a minister But he's an electrician And he can paint your car And he can fix your car He can do all these things After the prayer meeting The week last Wednesday Scott stayed back And I was seeing him Other people would have A stepladder But he was just kind of Looking down Just looking down At the heaters And he was fixing them So Scott Can you tell me Can you tell me How many How many of the heaters Did you fix Well first of all Tell us what was Out you come Out you come Didn't warn him Anything about this Come round this way You can sit And just There you go So

What did you do To fix the heaters Okay Why stand in the chair Or do you want To sit down To the camera Okay There's three There's three bits Inside of it Yeah But each of them Makes heat But some of them Weren't lucky So I have to Take it apart Take it down Take it apart And change these White squares Inside of it So what are the White squares called Elements Elements Elements They make heat They make heat And how many Of the The heaters How many elements Did you have to change There's 11 Did you have Did you have to change 11 elements I haven't finished Changing the 11 So it might be Warmer next Sunday My goodness So But the thing I wanted to tell you Was See when the elements Were broken Scott Could you just Look at that heater And say Hmm It's broken

[18 : 31] Or did you have to Do some kind of test Sometimes you can See it Sometimes you can't So sometimes you can Don't know if that Helps you or not It's a diplomatic answer Thank you for Giving me options Sometimes you can See it Sometimes you can't I think most of The time you can't In fact probably All the time You can't So So what you could Do in past weeks Is you could walk Around the church And you could look And say Oh there's a heater But actually With some of the Heaters They weren't Heaters They were just like Things that were Stuck to the wall And they had an Element Inside them But there was no Heat coming out So even though They had their Name heater They weren't Really heaters At all Because you could See the heart The heart Of the heater

Wasn't working And so Scott Had to come in And he had to Get the new Element The new heat But the new Heart And put it in And now The heaters Well we don't Know which ones Are still needing To be fixed But most of These heaters Now are actually Heaters They're working Now the reason I'm telling you That is because When Scott reads In a second He's going to Read a passage And Jesus In this passage He was having A battle As he often Was with some People called Pharisees And the Pharisees Everybody thought They were God's People And they themselves Said we're God's people We know the Bible We know God's Word We can tell you What God wants Out of your life And they looked Like God's people And they loved Keeping all the Rules And they were Experts in the Bible But they had A heart Problem And the heart

Problem was That they Didn't Know Jesus They didn't Know Jesus They didn't Trust Jesus And boys and Girls All of us We have a Heart problem Don't we Because in Our hearts There's a Thing That makes God sad And it Makes Us sad What's that Thing called Michael It's called Sin Isn't it And what Did Jesus Do To deal With our Sin Where did He go Michael You're having To work Over time Here Emily Where did Jesus go He went To the Cross And he Went to The cross To take Away our Sin So when We trust In Jesus He takes The sin Away From our Hearts And he Promises

That he Will give Us new Hearts Listen to This Ezekiel Chapter 36 Verse 26 This is God Speaking to His people Listen to This And God Says I Will give You a New heart And put A new Spirit in You I will Remove From you Your heart Of stone And give You a Heart Of flesh That's what It means to Be born Again So boys And girls How can We get a New heart How can We have Our sins Forgiven How can We be Born Again How can We come To know Jesus We pray We ask Him So let's Pray will We And let's Ask God To work In our Hearts And give Us new Hearts Lord God We thank You that You love Us We thank You Lord Jesus That you Came into

This world To deal With the Problem in Our hearts The problem Of sin And we Thank you That when We just Ask you You will Take the Sin away And you Will give Us a new Heart Heart The heart Of flesh And it Says A heart That Lives Forever A heart That loves You So we Pray that You would Give To us New hearts That you Would Take away Our sin And that We would Know you That we Would Trust you Whether we Are young or whether we're older.

[23 : 01] And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now, Mission Praise 1164. Come, O fount of every blessing. Tune our hearts to sing your praise.

I'm not sure, has the computer gone to sleep? Or is it so hot that Andrew's gone to sleep? Here we go. We'll stand to sing in just a moment.

Mercy never ceasing. To call for songs of God's grace. Songs of God's abundant measure.

Son of angels comes above. Songs that tell the bloodless measure. All my arms are changing by.

I remember God's good mercy. By his help I've saved me now.

[24 : 30] And I know he will not fail me, but will surely bring me home. Jesus taught me when a stranger, wandering far away from God.

And to rescue me from danger, shed for me his precious blood. Through God's grace. Through God's grace I am his tender.

Daily eye is not renewed. Let that grace, Lord, I have entered. Bright my wandering heart to you.

I'm proud to wander, Lord, I feel it. I'm proud to be the Lord I love. Take my heart, O take and seal it.

Seal it from your course above. I pray for the young ones as they go to Sunday school.

[25 : 48] And we'll turn together to the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 12. Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 12.

And we'll read from verse Mark 22. Let us hear God's word. Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and mute, was brought to him, and he healed him.

So the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed and said, Can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.

Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.

If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, By whom do your sons cast them out?

[27 : 17] Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his good, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatter. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad. For the tree is known by its fruit.

[28 : 20] You brood of vipers, how can you speak good when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

I tell you, on the day of judgment, people will give an account for every careless words they speak. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

We're going to sing again now for God's praise. Psalm 51. Psalm 51. And we're singing verses 8 to 10 of the psalm in Gaelic.

Thy face hide from my sin. Create a clean heart. Lord, renew a right spirit. Me within.
These two verses of Psalm 51 will remain seated as we sing to God's praise.

CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS And through the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] to the section that
we read in Matthew chapter 12.

We thank you that we are able to call out to you as our Father. And we thank you that we are able to come in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour, the one who made it possible for our hearts to be cleansed and the new spirit to be put into our hearts.

And we pray that you would forgive us as we do confess all that we remember that we have done and not done that has displeased you. We pray that you would wash us in the blood of Christ.

We ask, Lord, that you would be working in our lives. Pray for the young ones. And we ask, Lord, that you would bless them, that you would draw them to yourself, those who are in the creche that we can't see, those who are in the Sunday school who were here and who are so ready to respond to your word.

We pray for those at home as well. We thank you for little baby Elijah. We thank you for his safe arrival. And although he struggled a little in the first weeks, we thank you that his health is increasing, that his strength is increasing.

We pray that you would bless him and Caroline and Alex. And we ask that that boy Elijah would grow up to know you and to trust you and to walk with you.

We thank you for the blessing of new life. And we pray for your hand to be upon that young one. We pray also for those who carry young ones that we have not yet seen.

[35 : 48] We thank you that even in the womb, you're the God who knows them. And we ask, Lord, for your blessing on those who are in that position. So here are prayers we pray.

Be with those who are struggling for different reasons today. Those who may be struggling with grief, we pray for your comfort. We pray for those who are anxious that you would grant to them your peace.

We pray for those who are still outside of Christ. And we ask, Lord, that you would give to them salvation and that they would have that soul thirst for Christ. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen. Amen. I want to start this morning by thinking about just the idea of questions.

Questions are something that we deal with all through our lives. Even the little children. I see the heads of the parents go down when they decide to put their hands up because they want to ask a question.

[37 : 00] Because you never know what kind of question is going to come out. Because children in their minds, they're inquisitive and they ask questions. And you give them an answer and it's followed up with another question and another question and another question.

So from our earliest years, we have questions, we're dealing with questions. Students, school students, university students are continually having to wrestle with essay questions and exam questions.

Even when we come to the congregation, we come this morning and although I hadn't really thought about this, we're standing with a questionnaire in our hands thinking about different questions that are posed to us.

And the questions that we are asked and the questions that we answer, they have an impact. Some a big impact, some a lesser impact on the direction of life and on the things that follow.

Now as we launch back into Matthew and we come back in where we left off at Matthew 12, I want to zoom in on a question at the heart of this chapter.

[38 : 16] And it's a question that all the people were asking about Jesus. And yet, although it's a question that they were asking back then, all that time ago, it's a question that all of us here will have to answer.

when it comes to the identity of Jesus. And the way we answer this question in this world will determine where we spend eternity.

So it's not an inconsequential question. It's not a question that we can decide we're not going to give much time to if we are wise.

if we recognize that life is this short and eternity is this long.

we will be wise to give careful consideration to this question. The question is found in verse 23. If you've got your Bibles open in front of you, you'll find it helpful to track through the text with me.

[39 : 39] The crowds are asking the question in verse 23, Can this Can this Jesus be the son of David?

Or if we put this if we put this in modern day language, what the crowds were asking was Who is Jesus? Can he be the saviour?

Can he be the Messiah? Can he be the son of God? Four points for our time this morning.

My headings are a bit clunky. I didn't have a lot of time in the course of the week to do preparation. So forgive the headings. The first the first heading is the blind man that we see in verse 22.

The blind man sees Jesus. So that's the first thing we will look at. The blind man sees Jesus. And then moving on through the text we see that the seeing men the so-called seeing men the Pharisees those who are supposed to have good spiritual vision they're blind to Jesus.

[40 : 53] It's the next thing. The third thing we'll look at is the whole idea of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

Well it's refusing determinedly. to believe in Jesus and we see that in the Pharisees. Not only can they not see Jesus they will not see Jesus they refuse to see and believe in Jesus and in so doing they commit the unforgivable sin.

And the final thing we'll see if we have time is whether our lives whether our hearts are good or bad whether there is bad fruit or good fruit in us it's shown it's indicated in what we say about Jesus.

So that gives us the structure even if I don't get through this you can see the structure of the passage in the text before us. So first of all the blind man sees Jesus verse 22 Then a demon oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus and he healed him so that the man spoke and saw.

So what we start with in this section is a testimony. We love hearing testimonies. Maybe we'll hear a testimony next Sunday night at the fellowship.

[42 : 22] We love hearing testimonies and Matthew shares a testimony with us here. He tells us about a man who was blind and mute. He couldn't see and he couldn't speak.

And Matthew tells us not just the struggles that the man had he also tells us the reason behind the struggle he was demon oppressed! Demon possessed!

One of Satan's agents had this man under a dark oppression and he was suffering. Who is this man?

Well we don't know his name. We're not told very much about his identity. But spiritually speaking we are this man.

God Psalm 51 and verse 6 makes clear what the children told us. Every one of us we are born with a condition called sin.

[43 : 31] And sin makes us blind spiritually speaking. We cannot see God we cannot see our need of God.

We're much more interested in our phones and news headlines and the next thing that we're going to eat the next place that we're going to go we're blind to God and our need of him because of sin.

sin in a sense it makes us mute because the God of the universe he has revealed himself in his creative glory in the universe and yet the vast majority of people even in this area if you ask them they don't want to speak to God.

Do you pray? No I don't pray. I hear it often. And it's sin that causes that in us. Sin makes us blind.

We can't see God. Sin makes us mute. We'll talk to everyone else. We don't want to bow our knee and talk to God.

- [44 : 52] So spiritually speaking we are this man. We're given a picture. of what we are like at the heart level.
- So what happened next to this man? Well this man is brought to Jesus. That's what we're told. And Jesus heals him. We're not told how.
- Sometimes there's a touch. Sometimes there's a word that's spoken. We're not told how he's healed in this situation. We're just told that he's brought to Jesus and Jesus healed him.
- So the blind man who was mute, he is healed by Jesus. He's now able to speak. He's able to see. And what Jesus did for that man, he can do for all of us.
- The same power, the same grace that this man experienced in his life is offered to all of us. we'll sing at the end.
- [45 : 53] Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see.
- And that's the work of Jesus. Jesus can still make spiritually blind people see. Jesus can still take us from darkness, the grip of Satan, to life and light and freedom.
- And so Matthew, as he shares this testimony, he's saying to us, as the Spirit inspires him, he's saying to us, come to Jesus. Come to this Jesus who did this for the blind and the mute man.
- Come to Jesus. He can take your sin away. He can break the hold that Satan has on us.
- This is the Jesus, the same Jesus who can make our sick hearts well and whole and healthy.
- [47 : 04] So come to him, says Matthew. Have you come to Jesus yet? Jesus, he came from heaven to earth.
- He went to the cross for you. But have you come to him? Come to him, says Matthew.
- Matthew. And to those who have already come to Jesus, to those who are already believers, Matthew is saying and sharing this testimony, bring people to Jesus.
- Because notice, that's what happened here. The demon oppressed man, he is brought to Jesus. He himself couldn't see his need of Jesus.
- He couldn't see that Jesus was passing by. He himself could not speak to Jesus because his tongue is tied, he's mute.
- [48 : 15] But his friends who love him, they can see that he needs Jesus. His friends who love him, they could speak to Jesus on his behalf.
- And so that's what they do. They bring the friend that they love to Jesus.
- And that's our calling if we are Christians. We are to bring people to Jesus. We may have jobs, we may have families, we may have busy lives, we may have cluttered lives, but we need to make time.
- We need to prioritize this calling that we have to bring people to Jesus. We are to tell people about Jesus.
- People don't know. Even here, people do not know who Jesus is. Christian, it's your job to tell them.
- [49 : 34] People don't know why Jesus came. It's our job to tell them. People don't know that Jesus is the one who is able to meet all the needs of our hearts.
- Not a bottle. Not a career. Not sort of increased popularity. That's the things that we chase. We chase them and we get nowhere.

There's no satisfaction. If we belong to Jesus, we are called to tell people that there is satisfaction, there is forgiveness, there is peace, there is salvation, there is contentment.

Christ. So we're to tell people about Jesus. But before we speak to people about Jesus, we need to speak to Jesus about the people.

So we need to be praying for people. We need to be coming to the Lord each day to tell him about the people that he has laid upon our hearts who need to be saved, who need to be healed, who need their eyes opened.

[51 : 08] perfect. So can I ask a question of you that I have asked myself over the course of this week?

Very specific, direct, practical question. Who are you praying for this year? If you're a Christian, who's on your list?

on your list? on your list? on your list? Who's you praying for this year? Who are you burdened for? Who do you want to bring to Jesus?

Take a moment, and even in the quietness of this place, in the quietness of our hearts, be specific, and pray for maybe these three or four names, these three or four faces, that the Spirit just keeps bringing back to us, those who need Jesus, those who need to see Jesus.

are blind to Jesus. His friends bring him, and as God, the Holy Spirit, works, he sees Jesus, he receives grace.

[52 : 45] The second point, the so-called seeing men are blind to Jesus. Verse 23, and all the people were amazed and said, can this be the son of David?

There's our question. The people, in verse 23, they're the crowd, just the ordinary people like us. They knew a bit of the Bible, the Old Testament, but they didn't have a theological education.

They also, in these days, they didn't have a copy of the Bible. They couldn't sit with their coffee in the morning and go through the scriptures. These things were not available to them.

they had a basic knowledge of the scriptures, but no theological education, and yet, even with the basic knowledge that they had, they know enough to get excited.

And they ask the question as they see Jesus, can this be the son of David? The son of David was a title that was reserved for the Messiah. So, they're asking, in our language, could Jesus be the Messiah?

[53 : 53] Could Jesus be the Savior? They've all been promised the Savior. They're waiting for the Savior. They're looking for the Savior. And as they see Jesus in operation, they're saying, could this be him?

Isaiah chapter 35 and verse 6 made clear that the Messiah would open the eyes of the blind, he would open the ears of the deaf, he would loosen the tongue of the mute, he would heal those who are crippled.

And as the crowds watched Jesus, they could see, this is exactly what Jesus was doing. So, this must be the Messiah, to the crowds, excitedly.

But then the so-called seeing men, the Pharisees, the Bible experts, they step in. Verse 24, before, but when the Pharisees heard it, they said, it is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.

So, let's just remember here, these men, the Pharisees, they're the most qualified people to be able to see the Messiah.

[55 : 14] they have had a theological education. They do have access to the scriptures. These are the theology professors, these are the biblical experts, and yet here, the son of David, the Messiah, the son of God, is looking them in the eye, and they cannot see him.

They're blind, willfully blind to who Jesus is. They don't want to see him. And there's a warning here, which we've often noted, and the warning is this, you know, it is possible, it's possible for you and I to know the Bible well, and come every week to church, having spent our early years going through YF and Sunday school.

It's possible even to be a minister or a moderator in the church and be lost and be an enemy of Jesus like the Pharisees were.

That's the warning. Now, our salvation is dependent not on how much we know in our minds about Jesus.

We can know a lot. Our salvation is dependent on knowing Jesus personally, on trusting him, as our saviour, on following Jesus, as our Lord and our king.

[57 : 13] Our salvation is dependent on having a personal relationship with Jesus, even as we think back to last week. The Pharisees, they were close to Jesus in terms of proximity, but they were resistant to him.

They were rebelling against him. They had no relationship with him, which was a tragedy. So let me circle back to that question that we come to so often.

What about us? do we know Jesus? Are we in relationship with him?

Are you a Christian? I could go around the room and ask the question, are you married?

I don't think anybody who's married would answer the question by saying, I don't know. I think so. I hope I am.

[58 : 29] It's a yes or a no. You can go back to a day where you first met. You can go back to a date where you first went out.

You can go back to a day where you stood in a place like this and said, I do. It's a relationship. It's a conscious thing.

Have you said to Jesus, I want you to be my savior. I want you to be my Lord. I bow to you as my king.

I want to walk with you all the days of my life. I want to be eternally with you in heaven.

If you've never said any of these things, you're not a Christian. And if there's the realization of that, even in these moments, this is the time to say, Lord Jesus, please forgive my sin.

[59 : 43] please come into my life. Please be my savior. Please be my Lord. I want to follow you. The blind man sees Jesus.

The seeing men are blind to Jesus. The third point is to deal with this issue of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

And just to make clear, that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to refuse. It is to refuse to believe in Jesus.

And this is one of these areas where perhaps we're a little bit uncomfortable going to. there are some places, you know, even in our day-to-day experience, and we'd rather not go there because they unsettle us.

I was thinking back this week to a wee burn when we lived in Kensalaya when I was a teenager in Skye. There was a wee, there was a field up behind the manse, and there was a wee burn that came down and kind of cut this croft in half.

[61 : 08] Apparently, in past times, people saw ghostly apparitions at this burn. Something had happened, and there was many stories told in some written of ghostly things that were seen after dark at this burn.

I have to say, I never saw anything spooky. But I have to tell you also that when I walked the dog after dark, I tended to avoid the burn area. It just unsettled me.

And this section from verse 25 to verse 32, it's an area that many people tend to avoid because it's unsettling. Because Jesus is talking here about an unforgivable sin.

Jesus is talking here about something that we cannot be forgiven. And he calls it blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

But before we just consider the specifics of what Jesus says, let's take a moment to recap and remember just what has just happened because Jesus is speaking about this as he sees the context.

[62 : 32] So what just happened? Well, think about this. The Pharisees, they had just watched Jesus heal. They had seen the supernatural power of God the Holy Spirit working through God the Son as this blind man receives his sight and as this mute man receives speech.

So they've seen a miracle. They've seen a work of the most supernatural grace and mercy. And how do they respond as they see this miracle? Well, they respond in verse 24 by calling the Holy Spirit Beelzebub, which means the devil.

It's the most crass, sinful, case of mistaken identity. And so Jesus, using just basic reason, basic logic, he shows the Pharisees how flawed their thinking was.

Verse 25, knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand, and if Satan casts out Satan, he's divided against himself.

How then will this kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

[64 : 12] Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? Then, indeed, he may plunder his house.

J.C. Ryle says this more briefly than I can. He says of the Pharisees, this was an absurd charge. Our Lord shows that it was unreasonable to suppose that the devil would help to pull down his own kingdom and Satan cast out Satan.

But there is nothing, says Ryle, too absurd and unreasonable for men to say when they are thoroughly set against Christ.

And that was the position they held. The position that we see so often in our age and our culture. These people, they were thoroughly set against Christ.

Even though it was illogical, not thought through, even though it was unreasonable, they were against Christ. And Jesus underlines that and says in verse 30, whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

[65 : 46] Take that in for a moment. It's very black and white, isn't it? Jesus says clearly that there is no middle ground.

Not for the Pharisees, not for the crowd, 2,000 years ago as they listened in, and not for us today.

we are either for or against Jesus. Eric Alexander says in speaking on this passage, imagine Jesus coming to each of us personally, moving through this church, saying for me or against me.

Think about that for a moment. Jesus, he is here. He promised he would be here. So it makes this meeting different to any other meeting that we have in the course of the week.

We have a promise that Jesus is here in the power of the Holy Spirit. Can you imagine if we could physically see him and he was going from chair to chair, waking some people up and saying for me or against me?

[67 : 24] How would you answer? That's another question that has eternal impact. And Jesus goes on then in verse 31, to say, therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

sin. So what does this mean as we head to our conclusion? What is the unforgivable sin? sin? Because it may be that somebody's sitting here this morning stressing, thinking, am I guilty of having committed this sin?

am I beyond forgiveness? What is the unforgivable sin? Well, the unforgivable sin is to do what the Pharisees were doing.

It's to decide in our wills not to believe in Jesus. even when the Spirit of God is giving us every reason to believe.

[69 : 12] Think back into Matthew's gospel record. He tells us that Jesus preached with otherworldly authority.

everybody who listened to him was amazed at the authority with which he preached and he healed supernaturally.

He performed miracle after miracle. He reached out to the Pharisees in spite of all their rebellion day after day, but they refused to believe in him.

they resist him, they speak against him, and they speak against the Holy Spirit who was resting upon him.

Matthew 3 verses 16 and 17 makes clear at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the Spirit, he rests upon Jesus. He is with him.

[70 : 16] So as they resist Jesus, as they speak against Jesus, they speak against the Spirit who is showing them Jesus, and no matter what Jesus says, and no matter what Jesus does, they will not repent of that sin.

That's what it means to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. It's to walk out the door week after week after week after week.

and say no. It's to read the Bible passages and see the amazing works and words of Jesus and say no.

It's to go along to YF and Sunday school and feel the warmth and the love of those who are sharing Christ with you and say no. It's to watch the witness of steady older people who have walked faithfully over the years and shared the gospel with you time and time again and say no.

that's what it means to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and if that's how we live in this age Jesus says that in the age to come there will be no forgiveness no healing of the soul no heaven only hell we are speaking to is there an unpardonable sin today yes the final rejection of Jesus Christ there are many sins that may haunt us as we think back into our past but every one of them can be forgiven the vilest offender who truly believes what does it say that moment from Jesus a pardon receives the unpardonable sin is not to believe to resist the Holy

[73 : 13] Spirit as he strives with us the unpardonable sin is to go week after week communion after communion refusing to believe refusing to profess faith in Christ so how can we avoid committing the unforgivable sin because some in this room are in danger of it some in this room are in danger of this how can we avoid committing the unforgivable sin there's only one way and it's by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ today let's finish let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your word holy spirit we thank you that you move amongst us as the word is read convicting us of sin and showing us

Jesus we pray that each one of us today would come to Jesus that we would believe in Jesus and that we would know the assurance of our sins being pardoned and the assurance of salvation we pray that as we go out from here today we would go out showing that the good fruit of salvation is within our hearts as we seek to bring other people to Jesus and tell them of the amazing grace that we have received and that is offered to them and we ask this in Jesus name amen we'll sing to conclude mission praise 31 amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!

amen thing through the Amen. Lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.

Cause grace has taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.

But precious did the grace appear, the earth I first believed.

[76 : 42] Through many dangers, joints upstairs, I have already come.

Since grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've replaced a thousand years, bright shining out the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise, but when we've first begun.

Amen.