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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. A warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see everyone.! Good to see a number of visitors with us, many that we know and who return back and forth to Harris.

Some we're meeting for the first time and it's good to see some who've been away for a while and who are back with us. So a warm welcome everyone to the service today, those who are here and also those who are online at this time. One or two notices just to highlight before we move to worship.

The service today after the service, there's tea and there's coffee. If you're able to stay behind, please do so. Evening service tonight at six o'clock, six until seven, and we're continuing our studies in Revelation. We come to Smyrna tonight. Also tonight, the YF is back on and that's on after the service and there's an informal prayer meeting before the service as usual at half past five. A word of thanks to those who helped and those who came along last night. We had baked potatoes for those who were at jam over the term and the families and we enjoyed the evening. So those who helped and attended. Yep. Thank you for that. Ladies fellowship tomorrow. For the ladies, you have a warm welcome to the fellowship tomorrow with Dr. Kirsty and Angus back. This is the first one that Kirsty's back. So there's going to be a plate of something to enjoy together. So at the manse, seven o'clock, bring your own plate. I hope that doesn't apply to me. Prayer meeting on Wednesday at half past seven.

This week, DJ from Urugah will take the prayer meeting. So be encouraged to come along to that. Men's breakfast on Saturday. This coming Saturday, nine until 10. Please note that. And the service is next Sunday. Morning service will be a baptismal service. We look forward to baptizing little baby Christina, Chrissy's new grandchild and Kathy and Ivan's child. And so that service will be shared between myself and Ian Morrison. So you're welcome to come to that evening service at Sixth Gaelic service.

[2 : 30] And a fellowship will be led by Cammie and Crisalda and Maria after that. So these are the main notices. And there's other things as well you've had the chance to read through. So please take note of that.

We will now begin this time of worship and we'll sing to God's praise. We'll sing from Psalm 84. Psalm 84 and we will sing verses 1 to verse 9 of the Psalm. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me. We'll stand to sing to God's praise.

How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me. The gather knuckles of thy days, how pleasant Lord they be.

My mercy so longs me and thee, it pains thy courts to see. My heavy heart and flesh cry out, O living God for thee.

Behold the spiral, O findeth thou an house within to rest. The small, O also for herself, hath purchased seven years.

[4 : 31] In thy life, O earth, hath purchased seven years. In thy life, O earth, hath purchased seven years. Her young ones for me bring. O thou almighty Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Let God in thy house not dwell, may ever give thee praise.

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

Who passed in the middle of the hill, therein you dig up wells.

On solar rain that watered down, the pools with water fill.

[5 : 45] So they from strength unwearied flow, still more were done to stand.

Until in time they appear, before the Lord I'm led.

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

See God as shield, look on the face of thine anointed ear.

Amen. It's good to have Scott, our minister in training, with us this morning.

[6 : 43] He's making a rare appearance. Him and Fiona are touring the islands just now as he comes towards the end of his training. And so Scott will lead us in a word of prayer, please. Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for the privilege that is ours to gather together this morning. And we pray that you would have the desire, like the psalmist echoed there, longing to be with the Lord's people.

Longing to be in the dwelling place where God resides. That was the temple for the people. But Lord, we know that wherever your people gather, you are with them.

And so we pray that we would have the same desire in our hearts. To be here, where you hear our prayers. Where we join together in praise.

Whether we are young, whether we are old. Believer, unbeliever. Lord, let us know how good it is to be in your presence this morning.

[7 : 50] We know it is where you speak to us. And we pray that as your word would speak to us, we pray your Holy Spirit to accompany us with power. To encourage the believer.

To convict the sinner. To speak maybe into our lives in a way that we did not expect. But we pray that you would be doing a continual work in us.

Shaping us and molding us. To be more like your son, Jesus Christ. And Lord, we ask that you would bless the word to us.

David opens it up to us. We pray that you would help him. We acknowledge we come not of our own strength. We know that we would fail you. Whether we are preaching.

Whether we are striving on in a Christian faith. We know that we do not have the strength to do it in and of ourselves. And so we ask that you would strengthen us this morning. Strengthen David.

[8 : 47] Strengthen each of us to have ears. To hear. Hearts. To understand and to listen. And minds that would speak into our lives. That we would understand the gospel.

That we would grasp the importance of it. Not only the importance of the gospel. The importance and the weightiness of our sin. As we confess it to you.

And we ask that you would forgive us our sins. And we recount them and recall them. Probably make great lists.

Of how unsatisfactory we are. How guilty we are. How often tempted we are. But we know that that list has been taken by your son Jesus Christ.

So the things that once condemned us. Are taken from us. There is no condemnation. For those that are in Christ. So Lord we pray that we would know this truth this morning.

[9 : 52] And that we would praise you for setting us free. Through the blood of Jesus Christ. And washing us free. We pray that we would grasp it from the youngest to the oldest.

We thank you for the night we had last night. With the young ones. And we pray that you would continue to build them up. We pray that you would continue to speak to them through your word.

As they come through time. Connect unrooted. We know that they are the future of the church. We pray that you would be with them and guide them. We pray that you would give us wisdom.

Whether we are old or whether we are young. It is always good to ask for your wisdom. And so we pray that you would impart that to us this morning. We pray that we would have an understanding of ourselves.

An understanding of you. An understanding of this world. We pray that you would make us as a church. A light in God'sness.

[10 : 54] A witness for you. An understanding of the gospel. We pray with thankfulness. For the privileges that have been urged in this island for many years.

But we pray for our nation today. We pray for our nation that has turned against you. That we would restore us through you to hear your word. We pray for those who preach your gospel across our nation and across our world.

That you would bless their endeavour and their work. We pray for our world. And we pray for wars. We pray for famines.

We pray for disasters. We pray that you would draw near into these difficult situations. Again, the psalm is sung in the valley of Begah. A place that was dry.

A place that was hard. But in you. You refresh us and you strengthen us. So whether we're here with our hearts full of joy for being here. Whether we're here with our hearts sad.

[11 : 54] Whether we're here with difficulties. We pray for you. We pray for you to strengthen us and encourage us. In every situation as we come as very people. You know how best as a loving Father to speak to us.

And so we ask that you would do that for us today. We thank you for all the visitors that are with us. We thank you for Kirstie and Angus' safe return. And we pray that you would bless them and bless us through them.

And through the work that they do. So we ask that you now just watch over us. Keep us from destruction. And speak to us through your word. We ask that you should have.

Amen. Thank you Scott. Boys and girls would you like to come forward please?

It's good to see you. And it's good to hear you. I know mums and dads get stressed over the noise of the wee ones. In the first few minutes.

[12 : 54] But I would far rather have the noise of the wee ones. Than have the silence of no wee ones. So boys and girls. Are you in good form today?

Yes. Good, good. Evelyn? Did anything exciting happen in your week? It was my birthday. It was your birthday wasn't it? How old are you now?

Four. Four. That's big. And you went. Evelyn and all her pals went to the Harris Hotel for afternoon tea.

Very civilised. Was it good? Did you get a nice cake? Excellent. Having a rainbow and a unicorn cake. A rainbow and a unicorn cake. Did dad make that?

Yes. Next week we'll talk about truth and lies. Boys and girls I've got something to show you this morning.

[13 : 53] And I'm wondering if you know what this is. Shawnee? It's a ferry ticket. It's a ferry ticket.

How many of you guys were away on your holidays? Did you go away far away? Different places? You guys went to Barcelona and where did you guys go?

I went to Fort William. Fort William. So both of you went over on the ferry and on the plane. And was it a good holiday? Did you enjoy being away?

But did you like coming home? Yeah. It's good to get home, isn't it? It's good to get back home. And Harris is a beautiful place for us to be able to call home.

So it's good to get home. And it's really frustrating sometimes when we can't get home. Where's Jono? Jono and Michael over there.

[14 : 55] They went away on their holidays. And they were supposed to come back last weekend. And the ferry didn't go. So they were stuck far away.

And even though they would have had tickets that said, I promise to take you home on my ferry boat. The ferry didn't go. So they were stuck with no way home.

Now, boys and girls, Harris is our today home. But where's our forever home? Where's our forever home?

Finley and Shawnee. I'll ask Finley because Shawnee asked his last one. Heaven. Heaven. Jesus told us that he's preparing a place for everyone who loves him and everyone who trusts him.

And he's promised that one day he will take us home. So boys and girls, when you trust in Jesus, when you ask Jesus to come into your life, and I hope you have, when you ask Jesus to come into your life and be your saviour, he promises that he'll be with us every day, everywhere we go.

[16 : 15] He'll be like the best friend, the friend that sticks closer than a brother. He's the strongest one ever. And he says, I'll never leave you. And I'll never forsake you.

So when you're lying in your bed sometimes and you feel a bit scared, you can say, Lord Jesus, thank you. You're here with me. When we go to a new class in school and we're feeling a bit nervous, we can say, Lord Jesus, you are with me.

Please help me not to be scared and give me your strength. So all the way through this world, Jesus says, I'll never let you down. I'll always be with you.

Even when mom and dad might be not there at some times, when we might be on a holiday or we might be on a school trip and we feel like we're all alone, Jesus says, I'm still with you all through life.

And then he promises at the end of our lives, he will take us to a place called heaven. What do you know about heaven?

[17 : 16] It's a nice place. What did Jesus tell us heaven's going to be like? Is there going to be sickness in heaven? No sickness in heaven. Will there be crying in heaven?

No crying in heaven. Will there be people who feel sad in heaven? No. Sometimes in life we struggle with different things.

Will we be struggling in heaven with the sin that we know we shouldn't do. We keep on doing it. Will that happen in heaven? No. Will there be a devil who attacks us in heaven?

No, because he's not allowed in there. He's locked out of there. Will people be fighting and quarreling in heaven? Will there be wars? No.

It's a place where there's perfect peace, perfect health, perfect life. It's a place where everything is perfect.

[18 : 14] And Jesus says, if we trust in him, he will take us there. And you know, even more good news, just as I finish, Jesus' promise is even better than Calmac's promise.

It's a lot better. Because there's no bad weather, there's no broken boats, there's no nothing that can stop us from getting to heaven if Jesus has promised he's going to take us there.

So boys and girls, we're thankful for home in Harris, but we know this is not our forever home. But Jesus says, if we trust him, he'll take us to our forever home in heaven.

Will we pray? Let's close our eyes and let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you love us. We thank you that you loved us so much that you came from heaven to this world to make it possible for us to go from this world to heaven.

And we thank you that the way to heaven is through you. We just have to believe and we have the promise that is unbreakable that we will definitely be taken there.

[19 : 30] So help us, we pray, whether we're young or whether we're older, to believe in you, Lord Jesus. And we ask that we would know that you are with us every day that we are in this world.

And help us not to be scared ever, but to know that you are with us and to know that even at the end of this world, when our time here is finished, you will take us to a place that's even better to be with you and to be with all your people forever.

So help us to trust you. And we ask that we would know your heavenly home eventually. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing about heaven now.

Mission praise 1116. There is a higher throne than all this world has known where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come.

And we'll stand in just a moment to sing this hymn. There is a higher throne than all this world has known where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come.

[21 : 02] Before the sun will stand in faultless through the land believing hearts by promised grace salvation comes.

Hear heavens voice to sing let thunder who have the voice who have the voice who have the voice who have the voice who have the voice so god!

god! god! oh and there we'll find our own oh and raise his eyes.

All glory, wisdom and power, stand fastened on an hour to God, our King, who reigns on high forevermore.

Amen. And if we could turn in our Bibles to Matthew chapter 21, we're continuing to study in Matthew's Gospel.

[24 : 02] Matthew chapter 21, and we're reading from verse 12 down to verse 22.

This is God's Word. And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple.

And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, for you make it a den of robbers.

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were indignant.

And they said to him, Do you hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, Yes, have you never read? Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise.

[25 : 09] And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there. In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry.

And we have that question in verse 10 of Matthew chapter 21. The crowds are asking as they see Jesus make his entry into Jerusalem, who is this?

As Jesus enters into Jerusalem, it tells us in verse 10 that the whole city was stirred up. Everyone noticed, everyone was talking about this person who had entered into the city, and they're all asking the same question, who is this?

So that's where we were last week. And what we're looking at this week is just what happened next. And what we read in the verses that we were looking at a moment ago is that Jesus, he makes another entry.

So having arrived in the city of Jerusalem, he heads directly to the temple, and his entry into the temple has even more impact than his entry into the city of Jerusalem.

[35 : 28] And his entry into the temple causes people to ask with even greater intensity, who is this? And that question, the question of who is Jesus, has echoed down through the ages.

There has never been a time where the identity of Jesus hasn't been discussed and debated. It's a question that's always been asked. And it's the most important question that can be asked, because our answer to this question will determine not just how we live in this world, but it will determine where we go when we leave this world.

We're told very clearly in the Bible that when we come to the end of our time in this world, there are two directions, two places.

Heaven is a place that has been prepared for those who know and those who trust in Jesus. And hell is a place that has been prepared for those who do not know, who do not want to know and trust in Jesus.

[37 : 04] And our answer to this question of who is Jesus determines where we will go. That's why the question is so weighty. So what I want to think about today is, what do we see with this question in our minds, who is Jesus?

I want to think about what we see in the character and the works of Jesus as we lead on through these verses. And there's just two points today. The first thing we see is the anger of Jesus, and that may surprise us.

The first thing that we see is the anger of Jesus, and what we are taught as we observe Jesus in anger is that he is the Savior.

And the second thing we'll see is the action of Jesus in terms of this kind of peculiar miracle. And what we learn about Jesus as we observe this miracle is that Jesus is the judge.

So who is Jesus? He is Savior. And we'll see that in this episode in the temple. And he is judge. And we see that as he interacts, if I can use that word, with the fig tree.

[38 : 28] So first of all, the anger of Jesus, the Savior. Verse 12, we'll just step through the verses. And Jesus entered the temple, we're told.

And Jesus, in verse 13, describes the temple as my house. John tells us that he describes the temple as my Father's house.

But Jesus, as he enters this temple area, he describes this house as my house. One commentator, Weersby, says, when Jesus called the temple my house, he was affirming that he is God.

This is God's house. And Jesus is saying, it's my house. And so as Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, it doesn't surprise us that Jesus would enter his own house.

He heads directly for his own house, the house of God. He makes his entry into this house. But what an entry it was. Verse 12, And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple.

[39 : 41] And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers.

And can you imagine the atmosphere, the reaction in that situation?

We can maybe allow our minds just to go to the craft market at the community center. These things that happen week by week.

And just imagine the craft market in the community center. For those who are visiting, you've got the community center, and there's tables everywhere. And all these tables are laden with all this stuff.

All kinds of stuff that's up for sale. Imagine somebody stepping into the craft market at the busiest point and overturning the tables. pushing over all the money, the money that's on the tables.

[40 : 52] Chasing all the traders out of the building. You know, it would be quite the disturbance. You can only imagine the comments that would be on Niall Harris' Facebook page after that episode.

But that, you know, that's the picture. But in a far grander, more intense scale. The temple, the house of God, a place that was revered, a place where there was a great sort of intensity of feeling, it actually had become a place of intense trade.

The temple had become the business hub for all those who were profiteering in that place. J.C. Ryle says, Jesus found the courts of that holy building disgracefully profaned by worldly transactions.

He uses old language, but it gives us a good impression of what's going on. Ryle says, Trading and buying and selling were actually going on within its walls. There stood dealers ready to supply the Jew who came from distant countries with any sacrifice he wanted.

There sat the money changers ready to change this foreign money for the current coin of the land. Bulls and sheep and goats and pigeons were there exposed for sale as if the place had been a market.

[42 : 18] The jingling of money might there be heard as if these holy courts had been a bank or an exchange. So massive business.

Lots of money everywhere you look. People exchanging the coin of the nationality of the people who came in for the temple currency and the exchange rate was always sky high because they were making maximum profit out of those who came.

animals and noise and business and deals. And Jesus saw it all in my house, he says.

My father's house. And what did Jesus feel when he saw this? Well, he felt anger.

That's very obvious from his reaction. He felt right, holy, anger.

[43 : 38] And he flips the tables over. And money's flying everywhere. And Jesus is angry because the people were filling the temple not with prayer and the word of God.

There was no be still and know that I am God. The temple was full of all this world's stuff.

All the noise. All the business. All the activity. All the distraction. Of this world. One commentator says, the court of the Gentiles.

This is where that happened. The court of the Gentiles was used for mercenary business. Not missionary business. Anyone should have been able to walk in to that court and hear the offer of the gospel.

The good news about a God who loves and who saves those who come to him. And they could hear nothing. Just noise.

[44 : 56] Deals, deals, deals. And this provoked the anger of Jesus. So that's the scene.

That's what happened. And we can ask the question, has this got anything to do with us today? And the answer is yes.

And we can ask the question, well, we don't have a temple. You know, what's the temple? How does it connect with our lives? The temple. And the apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 16, do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you?

So the question that I have to ask and the question that you have to ask of yourselves is what does God see as he looks into the temple of our lives?

are our hearts places of prayer and quietness worship?

[46 : 18] Are our minds filled with the word of God? Is the gospel of Jesus, the message that God saves is that a message that can be seen and heard from the temple of our lives?

Or is the temple of my life and your life so filled with this world's stuff that there's no space for Jesus?

are our lives so full of work and appointments and responsibilities and pursuits and sports and every minute just consumed and Jesus looks in and says there's no there's not a 15 minute segment for me an hour and a Sunday but then it's just crammed the temple of this life does Jesus look in anger at some areas of our lives?

Are there things that Jesus would want to drive out of our lives? These are the questions that we have to think through as those who are the temple of God.

So what happened next? We have the picture busyness of the temple and Jesus walks in huge disturbance and all these religious rogue traders are driven out.

[48 : 15] They're expelled is the word in the Greek. What happened after that? Well if you look at verse 14 you can see that once the temple area was cleared the blind and the lame came to Jesus. They couldn't get near him. They couldn't connect with God in that space before but now they're able to connect and come to God the Son. And Jesus did wonderful things we're told and he healed them.

That's what happened once the place was cleared. And we're told in verse 15 that children came to Jesus and they praised him. Hosanna they said save us.

Son of David Savior. They praised them. And now what we're seeing is the temple being used for what it was designed for.

And you know that's what we're made for. The same activity. one of the most popular songs of the last five years was written by a teenage girl called Billie Eilish.

[49 : 38] The song is entitled What Was I Made For? And it connects with so many teenage people because they're all asking the same question and they don't know the answer.

But what we're learning here is that this is what we were made for. We were made to be temples for God. And when we ask Jesus to come into our lives, he comes in as Savior.

He heals our hearts. He cleanses us from our sin. we experience the wonderful things, the grace that he has for us.

And then our lives become not about this world's prophets and pleasing ourselves, but our lives become about praising Jesus and telling others that he is the Savior.

that's what we were made for. So as we see Jesus in the temple area, and we witness his angry response to all the busyness there, what he's actually teaching us is that he is the Savior.

[51 : 15] And he wants everyone to come to God, to come to him and receive healing of heart. Experience the wonderful grace that he alone can give.

That's the first point. The anger of Jesus is what we see, and we learn that he is the Savior. The second thing we see here, the last thing, is the action of Jesus. And we learn through this that Jesus is the judge.

So verse 14, the blind and the lame, once the temple is cleared, the blind and the lame came to Jesus and they are healed, they are saved. Verse 15, the children come to Jesus, they receive his blessing.

But then you have the religious people, the chief priests and the scribes, and they will not come to Jesus in faith. They will come to Jesus, but not in faith.

They come to him in anger. They don't like the disturbance in the temple. They don't much like the noise of these children who are praising the name of Jesus, and they are, verse 15 tells us, indignant, which just means angry.

[52 : 33] And they're angry because they are not willing to accept that Jesus is the Savior. They are not willing to accept what the children are saying, that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah.

That's what we see in verses 14 to 16. The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that Jesus did, and the children crying out in the temple, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were indignant, and they said to him, do you hear what these are saying?

And Jesus said to you know your Bibles? You never read out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise.

So, there's this confrontation that continues between Jesus and the religious leaders. And this may just actually, as a sidebar here, this may correct our thinking about Jesus.

There are many people who think in this world that Jesus is very, very gentle and he's weak. He's a bit effeminate. That's not the truth of what we're seeing here.

[53 : 45] The most powerful people in that place at that time, those who everyone else feared, Jesus faces off with them. Tables are flying, and money spilling everywhere, and the confrontation continues.

as these religious leaders come and they say to Jesus, what's going on here? So, what happens next?

What does Jesus do in respect of these religious leaders? Well, we're told in verse 17 that Jesus leaves them. the most religious people in that place, the theological experts, and they're standing before God the Son, and he leaves them.

walking away. Jesus left them.

And as Jesus does that, we're seeing a preview of what will happen on the last day. Okay, there's coming a day when everyone will stand before Jesus.

[55 : 22] And those who have come to Jesus in faith, those who know him, those who have believed in him, those who have embraced him as Savior, Jesus will greet them, and he will embrace them, and he will take them home to heaven.

But those who do not know Jesus, those who have not believed in him, what will he say to them in his words of judgment?

What he'll say to them, we are told in Matthew 7, 23, is, depart from me. I never knew you. And they will not get heaven, they will be cast into hell.

And we're seeing a preview of that here. As Jesus leaves these very religious people, he in his action is pronouncing judgment on them.

As he leaves them. And then in this next section, which is the final section, we're looking at today, we see in Jesus' action, a parable, a picture of his judgment against those who reject him.

[56 : 56] So verse 18, as we just continue. In the morning, as Jesus was returning to the city, he became hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it.

And found nothing on it, but only leaves. Apparently at that time of year, you could expect to find little kind of nubs on this kind of tree.

They were almost like nuts. And people would pick them and they would eat them and they would be nourished through them. So at this stage, with all the leaves, there should have been fruit.

There should have been little things that Jesus could have eaten. But Jesus looked and he found nothing on it, only leaves, and he said to it, may no fruit ever come from you again.

And the fig tree withered at once. So what's going on here? It's a miracle. But through this miracle, we are seeing a picture of the temple and we're seeing a picture of those religious leaders who are within the temple.

[58 : 12] One commentator, Ross, says this, the tree gave the appearance of having fruit, but it had none. So it was with the temple in Jerusalem.

There was much activity there, people coming and going, animals bought and sacrificed, but it was fruitless ritual. The house of prayer had become a den of robbers, and as the judgment of God would come upon that temple, so it came upon the fig tree and it withers instantly.

The disciples, when they see this, they're shocked. They're taken aback. They're used to seeing Jesus healing. They're used to when Jesus touches and when Jesus speaks, things that are broken are fixed, things that are unhealthy become whole, but they're not used to seeing Jesus destroying something that looked like it was alive.

So when the disciples, verse 20, saw it, they marveled, saying, how did the fig tree wither at once? What have you done here, Jesus? Don Carson says, this is an instance almost without parallel in our Lord's ministry.

it is almost the only occasion on which we find him making one of his creatures suffer in order to teach a spiritual truth.

[59 : 55] So what truth was Jesus teaching? He was teaching the disciples through this picture about the judgment of God.

I know in the past, I doubt it happens today, but you can correct me if I'm wrong, but in the past, children in school used to be shown a picture of the lungs of a smoker compared to the lungs of somebody who wasn't a smoker.

And the lungs of the smoker would all be black and charred and putrid looking things. It was a picture of no health.

And in contrast with the lungs of a non-smoker, it was quite disturbing to see. And that was the whole point. The picture as not nice as it was to look at, it was a warning lesson.

And that's kind of what Jesus is doing here. He's showing the disciples a warning picture that illustrates, just in a small way, the reality of the curse, the judgment of God that will fall upon those who don't accept Jesus.

[61 : 25] And then Jesus presses in on the disciples the need to believe in him and in his words and not doubt. Jesus says in verse 21, truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to this fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, be taken up and thrown into the sea, it will happen.

He's not talking literally here, but he's pressing home this lesson, the need to have faith, the need to believe. Whatever you ask in prayer, verse 22, you will receive if you have faith.

And Jesus is saying as emphatically as is possible, he's saying in a negative way and in a positive way, you need to have faith in me. You need to believe in me, saying, that's what Jesus is saying, if you want to escape the judgment of God, you need to believe in me.

So let me say just in conclusion, the judgment of God is real and it's true.

It may not be a popular message, it may not fill a church, but it is real and it's true.

[62 : 59] Yes, we see here, the blessing of God falls upon those who come to Jesus in faith and who believe in Jesus like the blind and the lame and the children did.

They come to Jesus in faith, they believe and they experience the wonderful things, the grace and the blessing of God. that's a wonderful truth.

But it's no less true to say that the curse of God, the judgment of God will fall on those who refuse to believe in Jesus.

Just like the chief priests and the scribes refused to believe in Jesus. And you know, all their ritual and all their PhDs and all their religious portfolios couldn't save them from the judgment of God.

The only one who could save them from the judgment of God was the one that they were rejected.

God will to believe And so Jesus shows his disciples a picture in this withered tree of what will happen at heart level eternally to those who reject them.

[64 : 32] So look at the tree, says Jesus to his disciples. And Jesus is saying to us today, look at the tree. Look at the withered fig tree.

Remember this lesson. Heed this warning. Believe. Don't doubt. So who is this?

Who is Jesus? That's the question we began with. That's the question that we leave with. Who is Jesus?

And as we observe his action and his interaction with the chief priests and the scribes, we see that he is the judge. He is the judge of all who do not believe in him.

All who do not want to know him will face his judgment. That's who he is. He's the judge. But as we look into the temple and observe the anger of Jesus, we see that he is the savior for all who will believe in him.

[65 : 58] All who will come to him. all who will receive him into the temple of our lives. Remember this.

All of us will meet with Jesus. you can listen to many things and compartmentalize them and say, well, that was interesting for him or her or them, but it doesn't affect me.

This is for you. Because no matter how we feel, how we have arrived here, what's going on in our heads, what's going on in our hearts, no matter what we are saying presently about Jesus.

We may be dismissing him, we may be saying our lives are too busy for him, we may not be giving him any thought space in our heads. It doesn't matter what we think, how we feel, the truth is all of us will meet with Jesus.

Not one single one of us in here or out there we'll miss that meeting. We don't know the date, but we know it's going to happen.

[67 : 32] And the question as we prepare for that meeting is will we meet him as judge and hear him say depart from me.

I never knew you. You might have sat in the chairs. You might have had your name on the roll. But if we didn't believe, we didn't receive him into our hearts, he's going to say to us, depart from me.

I never knew you. I had no relationship with you. Will we hear him saying that? Will we meet him on that day and have to experience that?

Or will we meet him as Savior and hear him saying to us with a smile, I know you.

You trusted me. You came to me. I come again unto me and find eternal rest.

[68 : 39] serious things to think through. May God help us to do that as we close.

And we'll close singing the words of that hymn, Mission Praise 275. It's the call of Jesus. It's the offer of the gospel.

And we can respond to it even now as we sing. I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest. I heard the voice of Jesus say, come unto me and rest.

lay lay down the weary one lay down thy head upon my breast.

I came to Jesus as I was weary and warm and sad.

[70 : 03] and I and and! and!!! I and he has made me glad I hear the voice of Jesus say, behold I freely give my love my love my love!

love! God I love and drink and live I give to Jesus and I grant of that thy giving stream my thirst was west my soul revive and thou I live in him I heard the voice of Jesus say I am this dark world light look on to me thy form shall write and all thy day be bright I yield to Jesus and thy cloud in him thy star my sun and in that light of life I walk till travelling days are done and now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more Amen Amen