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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning.

Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning and those who are visiting with us. We've got a few visitors and it's good to see you. It's good for us to be able to come together and to worship God in this way again.

And also those who are not in the building but who are watching online, a warm welcome in the name of Jesus. One or two intimations. First of all, to remind you that the service this evening is at 6 o'clock, both here in the building for those who are able to come and on Zoom for those who are not able to come.

Not on Zoom, sorry, on YouTube. But the prayer meeting will be on Zoom on Wednesday at half past 7, so be encouraged to come along to that one. And there'll be a meeting tomorrow night on Zoom at 7 o'clock for those who may be able to help with the holiday club.

We've run a holiday club over the recent years. We weren't able to do one last year, obviously, but we hope to do a short one this year in August. And so those who are able to help, please just tune in on the prayer meeting Zoom code tomorrow night at 7 o'clock.

[1 : 25] Just a short meeting until we see how feasible it is to have a holiday club this year. One final intimation is just to say that next Sunday evening we'll have another testimony in the evening service.

And David Cameron will be sharing testimony in the evening next week. So you can maybe have a note of that in your minds and encourage perhaps some who wouldn't be overly keen to listen to a sermon to maybe tune in to listen to hear how God has worked and is working in David's life.

These, I think, are all the intimations. So let's begin this time of worship and sing to God's praise in Mission Praise 1072. The words also on the screen.

And this hymn which takes us through the message of the gospel. In Christ alone my hope is found. And we'll stand to sing.

In Christ alone my hope is found. He is my heart, my strength, my soul.

[2 : 42] This cornerstone, this solid ground. Felt with fierceness, drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace When fears are still, when striving cease I comfort her, I all in all Here in the love of Christ I stand In Christ alone, who took on flesh Full is the God in helpless faith This gift of love and righteousness Scarred by the ones he came to save Till on the cross, as Jesus died

The wrath of God was satisfied For every sin on him was laid Here in the death of Christ I am There in the ground His body lay Light of the world by darkness slain Then bursting forth Through glorious day Bought from the grave he rose again And as he stands in victory Sins' verse has lost his grip on me

For I am his and he is mine Bought with the precious blood of Christ No guilt in life, no fear in death This is the power of Christ in me From life's worst cry to final breath Jesus commands my destiny No power of hell, no scheme of man Can ever pluck me from his hand Till he returns or calls me home In the power of Christ in me

In the power of Christ as man Let's unite our hearts in prayer Let's pray together Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for Another day, another time that you've taken us to this place We thank you for your day We thank you for your grace We thank you for your grace We thank you that this is not any day But this is your day This is the day that has been set apart from all other days The first day of the week The day that we mark to remember and rejoice in the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and we thank you Lord for all that we've sung of on that hymn we thank you that we're taken through the gospel message in that hymn and as we look at the words of it we are reminded and we repent once more because we see that we are sinners we sin in thought, we sin in word, we sin in deed we sin because that's our nature and we sin because that's our practice we thank you that you've loved us enough in your word to tell us that and to tell us the problem that that brings the punishment that that attracts but we thank you Lord that also you've made it possible for sinners to be saved we thank you that we are called to and we are able to repent to confess sin, not to cover it up not to seek to justify our bad behaviour through the circumstances of whatever it is we've gone through but we thank you that we come before you as those whom you know better than we know ourselves and we thank you that as we lay our lives out before you this morning and as we confess the fact that we are sinners you've promised that the blood of Jesus is able to purify us from all unrighteousness to cleanse us from all sin so we pray Lord for that cleansing even now as we think back over a few days as we think about where we've been physically where we've been in our minds as we think about the things that we've said and the things that we should have said as we think about the different things that haunt us even as we may look back over the years we thank you that there is forgiveness there is a way that we can have the slate wiped clean and we thank you Lord that we do not look to ourselves for that but we look to Christ to his cross till on the cross as Jesus died the wrath of God was satisfied and we thank you that that's the truth that you've revealed to us in scripture and so we pray Lord for that forgiveness for that salvation for that eternal life that is promised to those who will simply come and ask pray for anyone here this morning or anyone who may be watching online who has never asked for that forgiveness pray for anyone whom you may even be striving in the heart of at present and showing them their need who has not yet called upon the name of the Lord Jesus and we ask that even today even in these moments there may be some who find that salvation offered in the gospel

[9 : 54] and who can leave the service or the place that they're listening from in moments time saying that I now know that I shall not perish but I have everlasting life through Christ my saviour so be at work Lord we pray in the service in our hearts I glorify your name enable us to look away from ourselves and to fix our eyes upon Jesus the author the perfecter of our faith enable us to say with John the Baptist he must increase in my life and I must decrease help us to live for the glory of God and not for selfish desires and give us Lord the courage and the opportunity if we are your people to reach out to those around us to tell those who don't know and who don't understand that there is forgiveness there is salvation there is life there is meaning there is purpose in our existence when we trust in you we know there are many people who are struggling who feel lost who are confused and who have not heard that Jesus is the answer so help us to tell them through the words that we say and the lives that we live and forgive us for the times that there may have been a disconnect between what we preach and what we practice forgive us Lord for the hypocrisy that Jesus speaks to his disciples of in the passage today enable us we pray to to have clean hearts and right spirits as we bow before you and use us we pray in this place and to the ends of the earth for your glory we pray for those who are struggling today some who are ill we thought of

Cathy Ann her sister last week Myrat we pray for her as she's gone from Stornway to Inverness and we pray that your hand would be upon her we pray for those who are sick in different places connected to us we pray for those who are sad we think of those who grieve we think of Cathy Ann and the family as they remember the anniversary of doing this funeral these years back and many others Lord who miss loved ones who have gone in past months and years we pray for Alistair Mardazic as he goes to the funeral of his granddaughter on Tuesday and we pray that your presence would be with them and that your comfort would be given to them as they bow before you we pray for those who struggle with addictions with anxiety with stress with worry you know our hearts Lord we thank you for the verse that we often go back to as we're called to cast our cares our anxieties upon the Lord because you care for us to enable us to know that love and care that grace and your presence with us on this day be near to us and move amongst us in this hour we pray this in Jesus name and for his sake

Amen Boys and girls it's good to see some of you here this morning and so I don't have anything on my hands to show you but I hope that in a minute well let me just tell you a little bit of a story first of all before we get to the screen I think it was on Tuesday and it was a nice day on Tuesday and I was doing some work I was reading some reading the Bible and I was reading some of the books that helped me to study and I was making some notes on a bit of paper and I had my back to the seashore to the harbour behind me so there was chip chip chip bang bang crash crash all the usual noises down from the harbour and then all of a sudden I heard this roar this rumble and it felt like everything was even shaking and then there was this crash and a huge splash and I spun round to see what on earth was that and all I could see was a massive wave going out to the bay do you know what happened does anybody know what actually happened

I thought your hand was going to be rangy John you do know what happened that's what I'm asking you does anybody know what happened do you know Callum do you know tell me what happened what was that you shout out loud something fell in the sea do you know what it was well let's have a look there's the picture that we've been looking at for the last wee while down at the harbour so we've been able to see all the work there's the yachts and all the boats there and then we can see all this work and we're hearing all the noise over the last wee while you can see the harbour just like usual and if you look on the far right of that picture there's a wee thing that sticks up it's not so easy to see there but if we zoom in a bit to the next picture you can see it a bit more clearly so you can see the sheds and you can see a van in the background in the concrete structure and then there's this big sort of crane thing and there's a platform and although it's far away from us it looks smaller it's actually very big and that's where the guys would go and they would stand and they would do drilling

I think it's called a drilling platform and that's the thing that started to come on loose I don't know how it happened or what happened you can see Andy John at the end he knows but it came loose we heard the kind of we heard all the stones starting to shift and then the rumble and then the splash thankfully there was no guys on it and nobody was hurt but it's amazing to think that this huge big thing much bigger than probably three or four cars one second it's there and the next second it just disappears and I was looking after I didn't know that I'd fallen in first I was looking thinking what was there and where did it go what happened it just disappeared just disappeared it's amazing to think that something so big in a split second just disappears and there's not even a trace of it on the sea and it made me think of something what do you think it made me think of if Michael was here he would tell me my whole sermon now what do you think it made me think of what yes and more than that tell me a wee bit more what does God do to sin when we trust in Jesus what does God do to our sin when we trust in Jesus yeah he makes it disappear he takes it away what I thought about when I was thinking about this is God's mercy his forgiveness because it's so big it's so great we sometimes sin well we sin all the time don't we but sometimes we've done things and we think oh no that was a big sin sometimes we do something and maybe lots of people get hurt or something happens and we think oh no that was a big sin

[18 : 23] I can ask your forgiveness for the little lies that I've told about taking the toffees and the biscuits but can I be forgiven for this huge big sin and what do you think is God able to forgive big sins what do you think why is it in the back there yeah that's a good big yes God is able to forgive big sins when we trust in Jesus when we ask him to take our sins away even though we may have sinned big he makes it disappear that big platform one second it's there the next second it's gone and for our big huge sins when we ask Jesus to take him away it says we sometimes talk about the sin it disappears into the ocean of God's forgiveness and when God forgives our sins he doesn't just forgive them he forgets them because you know what happened the next day well Callum

John and Lily's dad I saw him down at the harbour and he had all his gear on with his diving stuff and I saw Kyle Joey's dad and he had all his diving gear on and they were all getting ready and they were going to go back down to the bottom of the ocean to see where the thing was the ferry couldn't come in that day I don't know what they were doing down there but they were going to have a look at all the stuff that was down at the bottom they hadn't forgotten about it maybe they got plans to take it all back up I'm not sure but God never does that with our sin when we ask of forgiveness when we confess our sins they're done they're gone and the devil might say to us don't you remember what you did don't you remember that thing you think that's forgiven I haven't forgotten it and you'll throw it back at us and we might pray about it and God says to us through the Bible that's forgotten it's gone

I don't go and dig things back up so boys and girls the message for us is a simple message this morning we know that we are sinners don't we so let's ask God to forgive all our sins and trust him in the promise that he will forgive us and then once we've had our sins forgiven let's not let the devil remind us of them all over again let's leave them far away and trust that the Lord has taken them away says in Hebrews 8 verse 12 for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more that's good news isn't it so let's pray Lord God we thank you for the good news of the gospel we are sinners and we admit that we thank you that Jesus is the saviour and we know that when we ask for forgiveness our sins are taken away they disappear for us but we know that they had to be paid for and we thank you Lord

Jesus that you went to the cross to take our sins from us onto yourself we thank you that Jesus went to the cross to pay the price for our sin and we thank you that when we are looking to him and trusting in his death and his coming back to life we have the promise that our sins are gone and they remember no more so take away our sin we pray and help us to be trusting in Jesus for we pray these things in Jesus name amen we're going to sing now mission praise 987 the words also are on the screen 987 in mission praise and it says here is love vast as the ocean loving kindness as the flood when the prince of life that's Jesus our ransom shed for us his precious blood who his love will not remember who can cease to sing his praise he can never be forgotten throughout heaven's eternal days and we'll sing the whole of this short hymn to

God's praise it is love vast as the ocean loving kindness as the blood when the prince of life our ransom shared for us his precious blood who his love will not remember who can cease to sing his praise he can never be forgotten who him's eternal days on the mount of crucifixion fountains open deep and wide through the flood beams of mercy go down that and gracious time

[24 : 25] Peace and love, like mighty river, Lord, incest it from above, Attempt peace and perfect justice, Tis the guilty world in love.

Girls, if you want to head through to Sunday School, eh? And we can turn in our Bibles to Luke chapter 12, please.

You can go if you want to to Sunday School, but nobody has to go, so you're very welcome to stay if you need to. Luke chapter 12, and we'll read.

From verse 1 to 12. This is God's word. Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered so that they were trampling one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying, Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or nothing that will not be made known. What you have said in dark will be heard in the daylight, And what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

[26 : 02] I tell you, my friends, I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear. Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has the power to throw you into hell.

Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Don't be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, son of man, will also acknowledge before the angels of God.

But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the son of man will be forgiven. But anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

When you are brought before synagogues, rulers, and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

[27 : 09] Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We're going to sing to God's praise again now from Psalm 27. Psalm 27.

And we sing from verse 1 to verse 4. Verse 4 is a double verse. So we have five standards. The Lord's my light and saving health who shall make me dismayed.

My life strength is the Lord of whom then shall I be afraid. Down to the end of verse 4. And we'll stand to sing now to God's praise.

The Lord's my light and saving health who shall make me dismayed.

My life strength is the Lord of whom then shall I be afraid.

[28 : 17] When us, my enemies and foes, most wicked persons, all.

To eat my flesh against me rose, they stumble, the untold home.

Against me though I'm most in calm, my heart yet fearless is.

Though war against me rise, I will be confident in this.

One thing I all of the Lord desired and will seem to obtain.

[29 : 39] That all days of my life I may within God's eyes streaming.

But I, the beauty of the Lord, behold me at that mind.

And that I in this holy place may reverently inquire.

Amen. If you could turn back in your Bibles please to Luke chapter 12.

And as we go there let's pray once more. Our Heavenly Father we thank you that you've given us your word.

[31 : 01] And we pray as we've sang that we would see more this morning of the beauty of the Lord. We come to words which in many ways are very sobering, serious words.

That are spoken from the mouth of Jesus, your Son, our Saviour. And we pray that as we listen to them that they would come to us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And we pray that we would be those who look in faith to Jesus. Who take him at his word. And who trust him.

We see Pharisees getting very upset, very indignant over the straight talking of Jesus. But we thank you Lord that when we take the words of Jesus as straight as they are.

When we take them by faith. And when we trust Lord God that you are telling us the truth about who we are. And the danger that we're in apart from you.

[32 : 09] And we thank you that as we believe we are saved. So we ask that you would move amongst us and speak to us. And reveal more of your glory and your grace to us.

And through scripture. And we pray this in Jesus name. Amen. Well as we continue our studies in Luke's Gospel.

We've got to Luke chapter 12. And if you think back just to last Sunday and the Sunday before. There was a growing sense of foreboding.

Luke tracks the ministry of Jesus in this book. And we have the sermons. We have the signs. We have the miracles.

The encounters of Jesus with various people recorded. And in the preceding chapters we've seen increasingly the crowds being amazed by Jesus.

[33 : 11] But the Pharisees and the scribes, the teachers of the law, being furious with Jesus. So there's a growing sense of foreboding as we come to this chapter.

Jesus in chapter 11 of Luke's Gospel. He called the Pharisees and the teachers of the law out. Because they were hypocrites. He exposed their hypocrisy.

He challenged them about the futility of keeping the outside clean when the inside is filthy. He called them out exposing the folly of washing the hands furiously whilst the heart remains full of sin.

And it's fair to say that the Pharisees, as they've listened to Jesus, they haven't taken what he said well. They haven't said thank you for these straight, talking, loving words.

They're furious at Jesus. They didn't want to hear this. And it says in verse 53 and 54 of chapter 11, which kind of takes us into where we're at.

[34 : 24] When Jesus left there, this is after the last sermon about hand washing and heart washing, and all the woes that were pronounced on the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

It says, When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say.

So they're against the disciples, now they're the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, and they're against Jesus. And that would have been a fearful thing for the disciples to have to deal with.

Sometimes we might realise that someone has a grudge against us, and that they're out to get us. Boys, you know, that kind of thing happens in school.

You might hear somebody's out to get you. A teacher will say, Don't worry about him. You can't do anything. That might happen in the workplace. Somebody's out to get us, and we're told, You don't need to worry about them.

[35 : 30] There's nothing they can actually do to harm you. But the people that Jesus clashed with, these were the most powerful people. These were the biggest bullies of that day. And they were gunning for Jesus.

Jesus and his disciples. And to make things worse, the crowds, there was tens of thousands of people who were following Jesus, listening to what he had to say, and the crowds just loved it when the Pharisees and the teachers of the law got addressing them.

So they were gathering in greater and greater numbers to see maybe if Jesus would do some more of this. It's just made the religious leaders all the more angry and determined to get rid of Jesus.

And so I think we can assume that the disciples, at this point, as they see the power brokers of their day, with their sights set on them, they're almost certainly fearful for their lives.

And so Jesus, in the verses that we read today, he speaks to them and he speaks to us about fear. Fear. What we should fear and what we need not fear.

[36 : 48] So four points, hopefully, in the time that we have. The first thing is we're taught here to fear hypocrisy. And Jesus, in verse 1, I think it is, or is it verse 2, he says, be on your guard.

Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying, be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. So that's the first point.

Fear hypocrisy. Now, when we go to bed at night, usually the last thing we do, in cities in particular, and probably increasingly here, when we go to bed at night, usually the last thing we do is we lock the door.

Now, why do we lock the door? Well, it's to be safe. We want to be secure. We want to keep any danger that may be on the outside. We want to keep it out there.

Because we have this feeling that what's inside is safe and it's secure. But sometimes the danger can be on the inside. A friend of mine, Josh, who helped us with the singing throughout lockdown for a lot of the weeks, he went to bed.

[38 : 07] It was the last week before last and he went to bed. He locked the door last thing at night and went to sleep. But in the middle of the night, his wife, Catherine, she woke up.

she was hearing a beeping. So she went downstairs and there was a carbon monoxide alarm and it was beeping. It was going out an alert.

So she called Josh and they went down through the house into the kitchen and the dishwasher had caught fire. The kitchen was starting to go up.

So Josh managed to get hold of some fire extinguishers and put the blaze out. But before he did that, the first thing he had to do was unlock the door. Get the children out to a place of safety.

See, the danger on that night was not on the outside, it was on the inside. And that's what Jesus was saying here. And notice, Jesus, he's not speaking at this point to the tens of thousands in the crowd.

[39 : 13] He's speaking to his disciples. He's speaking to believers. He's speaking to us. And he can perhaps sense the fear in his disciples.

And so he says to them, disciples, the first thing to fear is not what's on the outside. It's not the Pharisees. It's not the teachers of the law. The first thing to fear is what's on the inside.

And it's hypocrisy. And Jesus essentially is saying to them, yes, you know that the Pharisees and the teachers of the law with all their washing of hands and all their multiple rules, we can see that there's hypocrisy in their lives, but he's saying it's in us too.

Don't think it's limited to them. This hypocrisy, it can be in the heart of every disciple. So be alert to it, says Jesus. Be afraid of it. And Jesus, he gives us this picture of what it's like and how it works.

And he likens it to yeast or leaven. We know how that works. You have a batch of dough. You just need a tiny little bit of yeast. And you add it to the batch.

[40 : 28] And you think it's doing nothing. You can sit there looking at this batch of dough and once the yeast is added, you think nothing's happening, but go away for 10 minutes and come back and the thing's double the size it was.

It's very active. And it's such a powerful illustration of the sin of hypocrisy. Others may not see it in us immediately.

We may not even see it in ourselves very readily. But God sees it. He sees the damage it does.

He sees the spiritual decay that it causes to our own hearts and souls. And so in love Jesus warns them, the disciples, back then and he warns us today of this hypocrisy that we can so easily be susceptible to.

And he makes it clear that although we may put on masks, although we may try to have an act that we are doing okay, that we're doing well, that we're spiritually in a good place, if we're not, God sees it all.

[41 : 51] So Jesus is saying in verses 2 and 3, he says, there's nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.

So Jesus says, be afraid of this. This is a problem for disciples throughout the ages, so be afraid of it.

Be alert to it. And as we come under God's word this morning and as we pray that the Holy Spirit will be working in us, when we see the sin of hypocrisy in us, what do we do with it?

But we take it to the Lord. That's what we do. We pray with a psalmist.

In Psalm 139, we'll sing it tonight. Search me, God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts.

[43 : 02] See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. So that's the first point, we're to fear hypocrisy.

For that fear should cause every one of us to confess it and to ask that it would be cleansed of it, that we'd be made real in our hearts before God.

So first point, fear hypocrisy. Second point is do not fear the henchmen. Do not fear the henchmen. Jesus says in verse 4, I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, the henchmen, and after that can do no more.

And the word henchmen, it begins with an H which is part of the reason that's in my points, but it took me back to days before I was a minister. And I remember being on a construction job in the past and there was a dispute over money and it had rumbled on for months.

And as a consequence of this, a couple of negotiators from America were flown to the site where we were working. And their job was to try and settle this account.

[44 : 23] And I remember the first day they walked on site, the site with all their suits on and all this kind of gravitas about them and the boss that was with me kind of turned to me and he says, here come the henchmen.

Now, did the disciples actually have henchmen to fear? Were their lives actually in danger? Or were they a little paranoid at this stage?

Well, the reality is they did have henchmen to fear. This was not paranoia. Their lives really were in danger. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law, they were fiercely and violently opposed to Jesus.

They were, as I said in the previous chapter, besieging him with questions, verse 53, not because they were looking for answers, but because they were trying to build a case against Jesus.

And because the disciples were with him, which is the definition of a disciple, they too were in the firing light. And yet Jesus says to the disciples, yes, these henchmen, they're out to get me and they're out to get you, but you don't need to fear them.

[45 : 42] You don't need to fear them. Now, what did that mean? Did that mean that the bullets that these people would fire would just bounce off the disciples?

No, it didn't mean that at all. Did it mean that the swords that would be swung in the direction of the disciples wouldn't cut them? No, it didn't mean that either. Did it mean that any legal case that the henchmen brought against Jesus and the disciples wouldn't stick?

No, it didn't mean that either. See, all the disciples, except Judas Iscariot, who would himself become a henchman, all the disciples would in due course die because of their faith in Jesus.

So what did Jesus mean when he said you don't have to fear them? Well, essentially what he was saying was you don't need to be scared of death if you're following me.

We often sing Psalm 23. And in verse 4, it says, Yea, though I walk through, through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.

[47 : 11] See, when we're disciples of Jesus, when we're trusting in Jesus, we follow him through death, death, death, death, can't hold us, the evil one, he cannot touch us, he cannot grasp us and hold us back, so we have no one and we have nothing to actually fear, not even death.

death. I have a fear of wasps, so if a wasp comes within 20 yards of me, you'll see me jumping off the chair and running down the street.

I have a fear of wasps, not the buzzer, but the sting. But if the sting was removed, I don't think I would fear wasps anymore.

Now Jesus at this point, remember, he's coming close to the cross. Why did he go there? To take the punishment for our sin, to defeat Satan, and to remove the sting of death for those who believe in him.

So if we believe in Jesus, if we're disciples of Jesus, we can see with the apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, where, oh, death is your victory, where, death is your sting.

[49 : 11] You're like a wasp that's had its sting removed. You can buzz around me, but you can't take me down. death is death.

And when that's the reality that we have in our hearts, when we're trusting Christ, we have no henchmen to fear.

We have no grim reapers to fear, because we don't fear death. death. So we sang, no guilt in life, no fear in death.

This is the power of Christ in me. So we fear hypocrisy, that's the first point. We don't fear the henchmen, that's the second point.

The third point is we are to fear him. Jesus says you don't have to fear the henchmen, but he says you have to fear him.

[50 : 15] Fear God. Jesus says in verse five, I will show you whom you should fear. Fear him, who after killing of the body has power to throw you into hell.

Yes, I tell you, fear him. Now we should know at this point, Jesus is no longer speaking just to the disciples.

He now addresses in verse four, friends. So the talk has gone from a private talk, almost a small group of disciples to an address, a public address to tens of thousands of people.

So there's this massive congregation. They're all clamouring to hear and see Jesus. There's this huge opportunity to reach so many with the gospel message.

This is an evangelistic talk where Jesus is preaching to unbelievers. He's calling them to faith. So how does he do that?

[51 : 29] I mean, on such a day, with such a vast crowd, does Jesus keep it seeker-friendly? Does he keep things light?

does he tell them just a few funny stories and share a poem? Play a song? Does he say to them, well, follow me and your life will be that much more enjoyable because I can give you rest?

Does he say, if you follow me, I'll be with you and I'll help you with your marriage and your finances and I'll keep you healthy and I'll keep you happy? Does he say, choose God please?

Because I'd really like to have you all on my team. No, he doesn't say any of these things. That's not the tone of this evangelistic message at all.

This evangelistic message is much more serious than that. And the sermon that Jesus preaches essentially can be summed up by saying, fear him, fear God, or face hell.

[52 : 50] Fear God or face hell. It's very stark. It's very un-PC.

But that's the message that Jesus proclaimed. emphatically. Now what does it mean to fear God? Well our word in the English doesn't really capture the meaning in the original text.

We think of fear as something very negative. We think of fear as something that we're driven away by. But that's not the message here. Jesus is not driving us away from God with this message.

He's calling us to come to God. Because it's God, it's God himself, he's the only one who has the power to send people to hell and he's the only one who's got the power to save people from hell.

So this is a message of come to God. But how do we come to God? Do we come with this kind of post-modern sense of entitlement?

[54 : 10] No we don't. Do we come to God proudly with a swagger in our step? We certainly don't. do we come to God casually and flippantly? No we better not. We come in fear.

Which means that we come with a sense of awe to God. We come with a deep profound respect for him.

we bow before him in reverence. That's what it means to fear God.

You know there are so many people today who think that God exists to serve us. we come to get a free ticket to heaven.

[55 : 19] We leave it as late as we possibly can so it's not to spoil life. We come to God for some post-death insurance. We come to God today, this is how people think, we come to God for some help through our bad parts but as soon as things stabilize we're off again.

It's as if he doesn't exist. we treat him like a service agency. We call his number when we're in trouble and we forget about him for the rest of the time.

But that's to get everything back to front. God was not made for us. We were made for God.

And our chief end, as the first catechism says, is to glorify him. Our first priority is to seek his kingdom and his righteousness.

That's all wrapped up in this phrase to fear God. To be a Christian. Yes, we come to Jesus and we say, please be my saviour, but we bow before him in fear.

[56 : 39] And we acknowledge him as our Lord. And if we fear him, we don't have to fear or face hell.

fear him, we don't even have to fear anything in this world.

Not the future, not circumstances, not people, not situations. We don't have to fear anything. Because the same Lord who is able to throw us into hell if we reject him, is the Lord who comes alongside us to care for us when we trust him.

D. Ralph Davis says, disciples will not experience him in his frightening authority, but in his constant care. And that's the message that Jesus speaks in verses 6 and 7.

He says, there are not five sparrows sold for two pennies, yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

[57 : 59] Don't be afraid. You're worth more than many sparrows. there's a great picture. Jesus keeps giving us these great pictures that we see all around us.

We'll see sparrows buzzing around this afternoon, flying around the garden, hopping from tree to tree. They're not stressed out. And Jesus says to us, look at them.

You don't need to be afraid either. You don't need to stress. God hasn't forgotten you. He sees you.

And he cares for you. 1 Peter 5 7 again. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

one more point, but we'll postpone it until Wednesday evening. So let me just finish by encouraging each of us to fear the Lord.

[59 : 23] Fear the Lord God. Or face hell. It's the sermon of Christ. It's very stark.

It's very strong. It's very sobering. But it's preached in love. love. And we know it's preached in love because Jesus went all the way to the cross.

So we wouldn't have to face hell. he descended into hell, it says in the Confession, in the Creed. He took our sin from us.

He suffered for our sake. So that if we trust him, we don't have an eternity to fear, but we have an eternity to look forward to.

And when death comes, however it comes, we pass through it. Because we're able to say, I'm following Jesus.

[60 : 38] He's the Lord. He is my shepherd. So trust him. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we we do pray that you would help us to believe.

You know each heart here, you know each life, you know where there may be an angry resistance, as there was in the Pharisees, and we pray that you would break that down whilst there is time.

You know where there may be a wrestle at present, where there may be that sense of anxiety about eternity because there may be some here who are outside of Christ, and we know that when we're outside of Christ, there is a huge sense of fear as we come to death.

death. But we thank you Lord, that when we are trusting in Jesus, there is life given to us the moment we believe, and that life only intensifies and is perfected when we go through death, from time into eternity.

We thank you for your son, our saviour. We thank you for all that he did to make it possible for us to be saved. We thank you that when we fear him, we have nothing else to fear.

[62 : 20] So enable us, we pray, to fear the Lord, to trust in the Lord Jesus, and to know the security that is found in him alone.

And we pray this in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen. We'll sing to conclude from Mission Praise 702.

It's not a particularly familiar hymn to us. It's a paraphrase of Psalm 34, I think it is, but the tune is familiar, it's the tune marked her them.

So 702 in Mission Praise. Through all the changing scenes of life, in trouble and in joy, the praises of my God shall still my heart and tongue employ.

I think to the end of the hymn, fear him, ye saints, and you will then have nothing else to fear. Make you his service, your delight, he'll make your wants his care.

[63 : 21] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you. May God bless you till prè, WHO Z Revout David.

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all. both now and forevermore. Amen.