

A Question of Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 November 2019

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. A warm welcome to the service this morning. Those who are visiting with us are very welcome especially and there's tea and coffee at the end of the service if you're able to stay behind please do so for a time of fellowship. The intimations you have on the sheets and they've been on the screen before the service began. If I could just highlight one or two to say first of all thank you to those who contributed and who prepared food and who came and who made donations to the Congregational Meal last night.

We had an excellent evening and a word of thanks to all those who took part and who made that happen. In the course of the week as usual you can see certain things as usual. The community lunch that is this coming Tuesday 19th of November from 12 till 2 and donations if desired for the Western Isles Cancer Care Initiative. Also on Tuesday the religious bookshop from Stornoway will have a stall at the lunch and they'll be there till 4. So if you want to go along there you can buy your Christmas cards and books and presents. So please make use of that if you're able to. Also to say that Thursday 21st which is this coming Thursday Anne McCauley, Stuart Santee from back will be speaking about her work in Moldova. Half past seven this Thursday in the church here and all ladies are welcome to that. Soup and pudding lunch, Free Church Hall in Leverborough from 12 till 2.30 and that's Saturday 23rd, next Saturday entry there by donation. And the services you can see this evening the service at 6 till 7. Again can I encourage the parents to come along and to bring their children and I will make the effort to to have that within the hour. And then next Sunday in the morning it's the English service which I'll conduct myself God willing and in the evening we have Hamish Taylor leading the Gaelic and the fellowship afterwards. The rest of these which there's not too many that I didn't read actually you can go through at your own convenience.

Let's worship God now and let's sing to his praise as we sing from the Psalms, Psalm 84, Psalm 84 and we sing verse 1 to verse 9 of Psalm 84. How lovely is thy dwelling place O Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of thy grace how pleasant Lord they be my thirsty soul longs vehemently ye fainth thy courts to see my very heart and flesh cry out O living God for thee.

Down to the end of verse 9 and we'll stand to sing to God's praise. How lovely is thy dwelling place O Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of thy grace how pleasant Lord they be my thirst of thy grace.

how blessed Lord they be my thirst of thy grace how blessed Lord they be my thirsty soul longs and flee ye fainth thy courts to see my very heart and flesh cry out O living God for thee.

[3 : 5 3] behold the sparrow fighteth thou an house wherein to rest.

the sparrow also for herself hath purchased a nest.

in thine own altars wherein to rest. in thine own altars wherein to rest. her young one's forth may bring O thou almighty Lord of hosts who art my God and King.

blessed are they in thy house that dwell they ever give thee praise.

blessed is the man whose strength thou art in whose heart are thy ways.

- [5 : 05] who passing through the sea who art in whose heart are thy ways. who passing through the bay of the sea that dwell therein to dig up wells.
- also the rain that falleth out that pours with water fills.
- so they from strength and weary go still forward unto strength.
- until in Zion they appear before the Lord at land.
- heaven. Lord God of hosts my prayer hear. O Jacob's God give thee air.
- [6 : 05] See God our shield look on the face of thine anointed ear.
- Lord God of hosts my prayer. Let's unite our hearts in prayer together. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father we thank you for this morning and we thank you Lord that you've given us another day and another opportunity to come into your presence.
- and we thank you that we are able to draw near to you in prayer. We're able to say with the psalmist Lord God our prayer here. and we thank you because we pray in the name of Jesus and because our faith is in the finished work of Jesus.
- We thank you that we have the assurance Lord that as we draw near in humility and in reverence to the God of heaven and earth. We thank you that we thank you that we have that confidence to know that our prayers are heard and our approach will not be dismissed because of our faith in Christ.
- So receive us we pray in Jesus and hear our prayers as we come to you. We thank you Lord that we are able to come near to you.
- [7 : 36] You are the God whom we have sung of the God who dwells amongst us. We thank you for this place that we are able to meet in this morning. A building that is normal in the sense of bricks and mortar.
- And yet a building that is extraordinary in the sense that we have the promise that as we meet together in the name of Jesus you will dwell amongst us.
- You will draw near to us. And we pray that we would know that in our hearts as we as we pray and as we read your word and as we sing praises as we meditate upon your word.
- We ask Lord that we would know that you are with us that you are dwelling amongst us. We pray that you would speak into our lives that you would speak to our hearts. And if there are any here this morning who are still strangers to Christ and who still carry the burden of their sin Lord.
- We pray that you would speak to them that they would see the urgency that there is to cast that sin upon Christ. And the assurance that there is that those who cast their burdens and who ask that Jesus will take their sin from them.
- [8 : 54] Will be heard and will be healed in their hearts and forgiven. So for any Lord who are still not Christians we pray that you would speak to them. And that they would hear the voice of God that they would not harden their hearts but that they would trust.
- And we thank you that even the faith that we that we trust with is a gift from God when we come seeking that gift. And for those of us Lord who are who are Christians who are Christ's ones who are following Jesus.
- We pray that you would speak to us each one. We ask Lord that you would sanctify us in the truth of Scripture. That we would be made more like Jesus.
- Our prayer is the prayer of John the Baptist that self would decrease and that Christ would increase in us. So Lord enable us we pray to live lives which are more holy.
- More like Christ. And we thank you that as we do so. There is that sense of the thirst that our souls have been quenched as we come to drink from the living waters that are found only in Jesus.

[10 : 10] So lead us we pray this morning as we would seek to worship you. Enable us to worship in spirit and in truth. We pray for every person who is here.

We pray for those who are absent this morning. Some who are sick. And we ask that you would touch them Lord Jesus with your hands of healing. If that be your will.

We pray for those Father who are grieving this morning. We think of Calum. And we ask that as he grieves for his sister who passed away this morning.

We ask that he would know your comfort in the family in Inver Gordon. We know your comfort and your strength in the days ahead. We pray for those who sat with us on many occasions in the past but who are unable to at present.

Those who are in homes of rest. We think of John Norman especially in Barbuya and Stornoway. And we pray that you would bless him. And that he would know your presence where he is.

[11 : 15] That he would know the Lord as his shepherd each day in that place. And for others Lord who have commitments in different areas.

And who would love to be here but who are prevented. For whatever reason we ask that you would draw near to them. And that you would bless them. And for those Father who have no interest in coming to the place of worship.

There are many in these communities who have no thought of their souls. And no awareness of the gospel. And no desire to come to Jesus. And we know that we were once like them.

And so we pray that you would awaken their souls. As you awakened our souls. And Lord that you would strive with them. And that they would come in your time to trust in Christ.

So hear our prayers and lead us we pray as we look to you. And we ask all these things together for the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus name. Amen.

[12 : 19] Boys and girls would you like to come forward please. How's everyone today?

Any news today? Any news today? You're a bit less of you this morning. Because the bug is going around. And you're all keeping your distance from me today.

Because you must think I've got the bug too. Good to see you. Good to see our visitors from back as well. Any news this week? Anything doing?

Nothing doing? Nothing doing? Nobody's going to tell me about their mum's birthday? No. No. There's nobody here to tell me about their mum's birthday is it?

But I'm glad for that. Because if they had been here. Maria would have been very embarrassed. If she'd known that I was going to speak about her birthday. Anyway, I want to speak to you this morning.

[13 : 26] And I want to ask you. What's going on in Tarbert just now? Tell me what's going on in Tarbert just now? What's going on just now that was different.

That wasn't happening a while back? Do you want to know? There's lots of work going on, isn't there?

All day long we're hearing clatter, bang, crash. Noise of diggers. And we saw cranes. And there's the cabins that were down. We're down now where they never used to be down.

And do you know exactly what is it they're doing? Because I've been hearing noise all week. I've been seeing diggers all week. And when I look out my window this morning.

I haven't. I don't actually see much different. Do you know what they're doing? I'm not totally sure. But maybe you can help me to tell me what they're doing. Yeah?

[14 : 25] They're making a new pier. That's the big picture, isn't it? Kind of. They're making adjustments to the new pier. But what are they doing right now? Not right now, today.

But what are they going to be doing tomorrow morning? Because we're not going to see a new pier for, what, 18 months, Farrakha, is it? So, what are they doing every day? Any idea? They're working.

They're working, yeah. Do you want to worry? They're getting ready. Well, they're kind of getting ready, yeah. But the way they're getting ready, I think, I'm not totally sure.

But I think what they're doing is they're dragging a whole lot of rubbish off the bottom of the seabed.

And they're putting good, hard stuff in where the rubbish was. I was speaking to somebody and they were saying, most of what's going to be happening over the next wee while, you won't see any difference for them.

[15 : 25] Because they'll be dredging out all this mud and muck and they'll be putting in all this good, hard stuff that they can then build on.

It made me think about, does God work in our lives? God is a God who works, isn't he? What does he do when he starts to work in our lives?

I mean, we're not seeing much that's happening just now down at the pier. And when you become a Christian, if you became a Christian today and you asked God, you trusted Jesus and you asked God to come into your lives, what would he start to do?

If somebody became a Christian on a Tuesday, would God start to work in a way that we'd be able to see immediately? Would he start making a new nose in our faces?

Or would he work in our ears? Or would he give us different shaped feet? So where does he work? He works where? He works in our hearts, doesn't he?

[16 : 31] And at first we can't see much going on. What does Jesus do when he starts to work in our hearts? Lois? Well, first of all, he shows us our sins.

I remember I was about eight when God started to show me my sin. I actually stole something. And I knew it was wrong.

Because God began to tell me it was wrong. And then he started to show me when he was working in my life, lots and lots of different sins. And that was the beginning of God's work.

And I was quite stubborn and I waited a wee while. But eventually when I was ten, I said to God, I see my sin.

I know you're speaking to me in the Bible. And please take my sin away and work in my heart and my life.

[17 : 30] And so he came in and that's what he does in our lives. He comes into our hearts. He shows us our sin. And a bit like what they're doing down the pier, he forgives us our sin, but then he starts to dredge you all away.

And so there's bad habits that we might have. And we know they're wrong, but we just can't seem to stop doing them. And when God comes into our life in the power of his spirit, he gives us the strength to start breaking these bad habits.

And he works in our hearts. And he drags away more and more of the sin that makes him sad. And he fills our lives more and more with, well, who's in our hearts?

It's Jesus kind of, but Jesus is in heaven. So who actually comes into our hearts when we believe?

Yeah? The Holy Spirit, that's right. And so God, he takes more and more of the sin that makes him sad from us.

[18 : 40] As we ask him to. And he gives us more and more of himself, the Holy Spirit, each day. And do you know what the Holy Spirit does in your life and mine?

He makes us more and more and more like Jesus. At first we might think, I don't know if he's doing very much. But as people watch us, as we trust God and obey him, they see more and more and more of Jesus in us.

So, let's ask God just now, as we pray, to be working in our hearts. And to be making us more like Jesus.

Lord God, we thank you. When we look out our window here in Tarbert, we see all this work that's going on. And it's going on under the surface. And at first, we won't see very much difference in Tarbert.

But over time, there'll be huge, big differences. New roads and new piers and everything. And we thank you, Lord, that you are the God who works in the world and who works in our hearts.

[19 : 53] And we thank you that when we ask you to take our sin away, when you show us our sin, you do that. We thank you that Jesus went to the cross to die so that our sin could be taken away completely.

And we thank you that the minute we believe in Jesus and ask you to come into our lives, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and makes us, day by day, more and more like Jesus.

And so we pray, Holy Spirit, that you would be working in each one of our hearts. The boys and girls and the men and ladies in the church here this morning.

We pray that you would be working, Lord, in our hearts to make us more and more like Jesus. We're sorry for the sin that we still have that makes us less like Jesus.

But we pray that you would make us holy in our hearts and make us more like Christ so that people would see Jesus in us. To hear our prayers and help us, we ask, to know you better and to be more like you in our lives.

[20 : 59] And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. And we can turn in our Bibles to Mark chapter 12, please. Amen. Mark chapter 12, and we'll read at verse 13 through to verse 27.

This is God's word. Later, they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, Teacher, we know that you're a man of integrity.

You aren't swayed by men because you pay no attention to who they are, but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

Should we pay or shouldn't we? But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. Why are you trying to trap me? He asked. Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.

They brought the coin and he asked them, Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription? Caesar's, they replied. Then Jesus said to them, Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

[22 : 36] And they were amazed at him. Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. Teacher, they said, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.

That's a law that takes us back to the book of Ruth, which we studied in the past. Then you have this ridiculous scenario. Now, there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children.

The second one married the widow, but he also died leaving no child. It was the same with the third. In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too.

At the resurrection, whose wife will she be since she were married, since the seven were married to her? Jesus replied, Are you not in error because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God?

When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. They will be like the angels in heaven. Now, about the dead rising. Have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

[24 : 01] He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken. Amen. And may God give us understanding as we come back to that in just a short while.

John McSween will now lead us in prayer in Gaelic, please. Together that is according to that, as we propose mencionanism from God, all the six employees of God will have received his own joy, by meaning our faithfulness from God to God who directly 2012 and 2012, that of all all the tribes c■n to request and to each other roller of them glory of wealth.

Emily a Sara■ When we see this air we are at your table, we seem like we people have had to look.

There are also some days when we have to look and see this light up and we rése it in a■.

When we are at a unknown, To pay raise Pump is now from up to high school at the time in the sky.

[25 : 43] You see, if I dream up for a ■ Please tell us about sounds as or- P spontane or material or something gentle or a possibility. But I love you, this tell everyone I am talking, P apparatchi on Earth and we all need some help força realised Oot, the■■ it the■ Mhm■iety na n foreign my school made a book.

For a choir in touch with the wife Bitchesbleol flood. Remember to know when she was married and given the night.

My p Fourth time two moins years old, Stay calm & talkYYs mentorship A believed we received ourertares of grief.

From that tiens back home complaining, in the Marshmallow Church, there was progress which I put in skills to save your revealing and take Berlone Each which comes to Christ, invisible to another human waste, and through all things the answers are made back, to take our Advanced Genesis Highway, and you will get the help from there.

in English, with English, Latin American Nibeam, sing it to Jesus and to Kut fest by the ■■ Heez Nasir on Original and grass, bwlychwch on o'ch dīch, gyneil acint na'r siallu, a chybuitt genafowry gan i diogragu sy'n chomol, sy'n gwe hen idd ason.

[29 : 49] Na biannoch gynna sy'n i gyrru, gynhain a sy'n i gyrru e, gan y coi honal anila yma'r cwrs, jimmy cylwn, fi ywm sy'n imo'l a fyddoin, gybui an am chdi ystyd arstoch i jw, sgym yn môr aneud y letter o chytwt sy'n ywm sy'n solis, gwe hwnach kaatain, gwtā rwyach, gwaith o'r fyd, sy'n iwrwt, oesgybuit gwsgw, y ta hosna'r mis, sna'r miaen, ni snar clywch yn fyd, oesgybuit sianna llyntyn y dôs, geimlo fi dīch, oesgybuit gwsgwuit fyddoin, oesgybuit gwsgwuit anam, oesgybuit gwsgwuit a tolysgwuit, biannig taw hydda bysio chwydwaeswyr cym, oesgybuit gwsgwuit gwsgwuit gwsgwuit, nag ahychch'n hiaelws, sy'n gwsgwuit bwytt objection jwsgwuit gwsgwuit taw hydd biannig taw hydda, eisgybuit gwsgwuit gwsgwuit a okthficheabbat.

N shield a piawnnig taw hyd yw, oesgybuit gwsgwuit it dīn, oesgybuit ein followersgwuit nido, it dedicated purposes.

Everybody days income. Always I saw my family on chaotic things, I saw a Williammasps before, and he was leavingomo voting around the country and would give me a couch to him.

So I was hoping just to■■ you to lo queue into the ocean and you won't pray to realise that when I do this I wascole of rage. Getting back to oxygen is a pureening of tolement despondent the Hala Jin Xi.

homogeneous Smith We are thank Jesus raise your heart.

[32 : 42] That's it to the world of knowledge. That's a great relationship between them.

Or the world's greatest relationship with them. Love is a great difference in my life as if not.

No wonder probably. See not just a question though. Oose Phin I quit God, in that a state of Lords have, need, laundry, and plant.

Don't build the body of fish with Nice vil Pulis Again to God's praise from Psalm 27.

Psalm 27 and verse 4, as it's marked in the English here, it's actually a double verse, two stanzas. One thing I of the Lord desired and will seek to obtain, that all days of my life I may within God's house remain, that I the beauty of the Lord behold me and admire, and that I in his holy place may reverently inquire.

[34 : 05] At these two stanzas in Gaelic of Psalm 27, we remain seated to sing in Gaelic to God's praise. Someordializing place when we live at niñjro, Here in the morning my Lord is still asleep to him.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[36 : 57] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

If you could open now your Bibles, please, in Mark chapter 12, where we read. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Just as we go there, again, let's pray.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Father, we thank you for your word and we thank you for the teaching that is in your word.

We thank you that we are able to see Jesus in these eyewitness accounts as we have them in Mark. We thank you that we're able to hear the teaching of Jesus through all that was heard and recorded and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

[38 : 00] And we pray as we sang in the psalm that we would be enabled to see something more of the beauty of the Lord, the glory of Christ in these verses as we read them.

Open our eyes, open our ears, soften our hearts that we would be those who are alert and who are responsive and who are expectant to hear the voice of the living God as you have promised that you will speak through your word.

May the word come to us and through us in the power of the Holy Spirit. And we pray that you would be glorified in and through our responses.

We pray for ourselves here, for the children in the rooms around us that they would trust you in the early years. We pray for the congregations that we are connected with, some who are visiting and who are normally worshipping elsewhere.

And we ask your blessing upon the congregations that they are part of. We pray for the congregations around us also. And we ask that whatever the word of God is preached, whatever Christ crucified and risen is preached, that you would add your blessing, Lord, and that you would build your church as your promise.

[39 : 19] So hear our prayers and help us, we ask now, as we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Mark chapter 12, and we're looking at these verses that we read together.

I wonder how many of us here are regular viewers of the program Question Time. I think probably a lot of us would have watched it more regularly in the past than we do at present, because we're so sick of hearing about Brexit.

But when you watch Question Time, you quickly learn that this is not a program where we have people who have questions that are actually looking for answers.

Question Time is one of these programs where people who think they have all the answers try to catch people out with their trick questions.

And in some way, Mark chapter 12 and the verses that we've read are a bit like a very early episode of Question Time. In the audience, we have the Pharisees, we have the Sadducees, we have the Herodians, we have all kinds of religious and political players.

[40 : 44] And their goal in their approaches to Jesus and the questions they pose to Jesus, their goal is to catch them out. They've already determined in their minds that they are against him, they will not follow him, they've seen miracles, they've heard out of this world teaching, they've been challenged with an authority that has never been known before in the world, and yet they are hardened in their hearts, they are defiant.

And they are now looking for an opportunity to silence the voice of Christ and to kill the presence of Christ.

They want him out of their lives. They want him out of their community. And so they devise schemes whereby they can do this.

There's two questions that we're looking at this morning, two points if we have time. The first is a question about this life, and the second point is a question about the life to come.

And if you have your Bibles open in front of you, we'll track through the verses quite closely, so you'll probably find it helpful to look at that rather than to look at me. So first of all, we have a question about this life.

[42 : 09] And I want to just highlight, before we even get to the question, I want to cut to the chase here and enable us to see, this question comes from Satan.

We're trying to think about the origins of this question, and what was driving these people, and who was behind the scenes, doing all the calculations and the devising.

We see a diabolical influence here. We see Satan. And under this question about this life, there's two things.

We see Satan's wiles, and then we see, in response, the Saviour's wisdom. So first of all, we see Satan's wiles in this question, in the phrasing of it, in the whole approach that they make.

Verse 13, it says, Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him.

[43 : 16] And it's worth underlining that, they. They sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians. They came to him.

Now, who were the they? Well, they were a coalition of the Pharisees and the Herodians. And that doesn't really strike us with any great impact today, because we don't know that much about them.

But for those looking on in that day, they would have wondered, what on earth is going on here? Because the Pharisees and the Herodians, they were dead against each other. It's a bit like saying that this they was made up of a coalition of Rangers and Celtic fans.

You just wouldn't see it. They're against each other. J.C. Ryle gives us a punchy kind of summary of these two groups. Ryle says, the Pharisee was a superstitious formalist who cared nothing but for the outward ceremonies of religion.

The Herodian was a mere man of the world who despised all religion and cared more for pleasing men than God. So you've got these two groups, the Pharisees, the Herodians, they're on opposite sides.

[44 : 37] They're forever clashing with each other. They have no time for each other. And yet we find them here. And they're colluding.

They're coming together to attack Jesus. And they're just the front men. Because remember, they were sent. And so behind the they there, we have a sending group that is wider than just the Pharisees and the Herodians.

There was the Sadducees. We read about the chief priests, the teachers of the law, the scribes. All their noses were out of joint. They all hated Jesus. So they'd come together behind the scenes.

They had a plan. And at certain points, they were sending off their representatives with a goal to catch out Jesus.

See, just as Jesus brings people together as they trust him. You know, think about the disciples.

[45 : 45] There's tax collector, fisherman, Luke the doctor. Later on, we have Paul the academic.

Unlikely people to be so tightly bound together. But they're bound together through their faith in Christ. If you look around the room this morning, you know, we're an unlikely bunch of people in a way to be bound together.

But it's Christ that brings us together. But just as he brings people of faith together, Satan brings people together in opposition against Jesus.

Psalms 2. We read in Psalm 2, nations conspire. Kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and his anointed one.

And what we see in shadows in Psalm 2, we see in high definition in Mark 12. And we'll see it even more so as we get closer to the cross.

[47 : 05] Pilate and Herod who were sworn enemies. They come together and they form a long-lasting friendship as they determine to crucify Jesus.

Now, who is doing all the bringing together here? Who is masterminding these coalitions? Who is whispering these oh-so-clever questions into the ears of those who make their approach to Jesus?

Oh, Satan is. He didn't want them to know that. He doesn't want us to see that. But he is the one who's at work in this scenario.

They came to him, verse 14. Teacher, they said, they said, Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men because you pay no attention to who they are but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.

We can just imagine them. With their buttery words. Another tool in Satan's box of tricks is flattery.

[48 : 28] That's how they come. They come with these smooth words and it's a tactic designed to lower the guard of Jesus so that they can hit him with the question on his blind side.

Then the question is posed in verse 14 and 15. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?

It's a very clever question. If Jesus says it's right to pay the taxes pay the taxes then he will be accused by some who were coming at him of being on the side of Rome and that would cause many of the Jews and many of the men in the street to want to rise up against him.

But if Jesus says don't pay the taxes he would be reported to the Roman authorities in a flash and he would be arrested and accused of treason.

It's one of these questions there's no right answer. It's a clever question. Satan is not stupid. You must never think he is.

[49 : 57] the children sing sometimes in Sunday school the devil is a sly old fox. He loves to trick people.

He loves to trap us. He loves to flatter people. Lull them into a false sense of security.

And he loves to employ an army of people to oppose Jesus and to oppose the people of Christ.

So if you're a Christian we need to expect this. We need to expect the devil to use all the tools in this toolbox against us.

we need to be alert to his attacks. When someone comes up with lots of words of flattery to you when someone has these smooth buttery words as they make their approach to you careful people likely Satan's not far away.

[51 : 22] When someone comes with trick questions don't be surprised by that. And when it seems that when you in terms of your faith just seem to be under a systematic unified attack then that shouldn't surprise us.

We go to work and there's trouble. In our homes there's trouble. Friendships there's trouble. And it seems like everybody's colluding together even though clearly they're not speaking to each other because they don't even know each other.

And yet it seems that there's consistency in the attack. That shouldn't surprise us because that is the work of Satan. He will employ people unbeknown to them.

They would laugh at the idea of the existence of Satan never mind being in the employment of Satan and yet he will take hold of people and he will use them to make his attack on God's people.

So recognize Satan is the message here. Be alert to the wiles of Satan and in God's strength resist him as Jesus did.

[52 : 51] We see Satan's wiles. Secondly here under this point we see the Saviour's wisdom. Verse 16 Jesus knew their hypocrisy.

Why are you trying to trap me? He said. It's interesting to just try and put yourself in that situation and think about even the shock that these words would have brought.

These smooth operators, these wily politicians coming to Jesus with this big facade of respect and honour and genuine interest.

Opening a dialogue for Jesus knew their hearts. And so he just comes straight out with it. Why are you trying to trap me?

He asked. The word for trap in the Greek there is the same verb that's used of Satan in Mark 1.13 when he tests Jesus in the wilderness.

[54 : 00] There's no mistake that that same word is in both these places. Jesus knew what was going on behind the scenes here. And so Jesus says in response verse 16 bring me a denarius and let me look at it.

Did Jesus not have a denarius himself? It's possible that he didn't. He didn't have the money bag. Judas had that. It's possible that not even Judas would have had a denarius because they weren't a cash rich bunch.

Jesus the saviour of the world, the one who was the king of kings, the one who had all authority and all riches and all glory and yet in all likelihood he didn't have a denarius in his pocket.

Such as the humility and the condescension of Christ coming in this mission to save us. He humbled himself. So he says to them, you want to talk about Caesar's money?

Then let me see some of Caesar's money. Bring me a denarius. Let me look at it. It might just have been that Jesus was wanting to show the hypocrisy of those who were trying to trap him.

[55 : 18] They were determining to use Caesar's currency to trap Jesus and yet they were very happy to have it in their own pockets and to use it for their own advantage day by day.

Anyway, they brought the coin and he asked them, whose portrait is this and whose inscription? Verse 16.

Caesar's, they replied. Then Jesus said to them, give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

And they were amazed at him. See, as far as they were concerned, they had Jesus cornered.

there was no way he was getting out of this. It was stalemate. It was checkmate.

[56 : 25] And that's what they thought. But Jesus' wisdom was far above anything they could have imagined. His ways were far higher than their ways.

His thoughts were in a whole different level to their thoughts and their schemes. And his answer and his wisdom amazed them.

Just took the wind out of them. And we should just take a minute as we think about this in terms of application. We should take a minute just to be amazed with them.

We need to have our vision of Christ shaped by scripture. The culture would say to us, Jesus is this fair haired, soft skinned, meek, mild, wouldn't say boot to a goose type character.

Beyond gentle in the eyes of the world. God's love. And yet here we see Jesus. Just a few verses back in God's house, overgo the tables, drives out the money changers.

[57 : 51] boots, in this act of power and authority. And here he is, the most powerful players of the day make their approach to him.

We'd be shaking in our boots. And Jesus looks them in the eye. And with a single sentence, he has them on their heels, absolutely amazed and dismayed at his wisdom.

We should be amazed, we should be in awe of the Christ whom we bowed before this morning.

Sometimes we can be very fearful of Satan. We need not be. Yes, we must be alert to him. He's stronger than us.

But we need never fear him because if we are Christians, the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world.

[59 : 01] So let's be encouraged by that. Let's be emboldened by that. This same Jesus is the one who in the power of the Holy Spirit lives within his people.

So why are we so fearful? So why are we so fearful? We needn't be. Let's take a minute to be in awe, amazed at Jesus.

And let's not miss the teaching of Jesus here. What is Jesus teaching us here about how to live in this world? He says to us, give to Caesar what is Caesar's.

What does that mean? Well, do you work? Jesus is saying to those who are employment, give your time, give your efforts, give your gifts to your employer.

Don't be lazy. Don't be late. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's. You have taxes to do?

[60 : 10] do them honestly. Give HMRC what they are due. It's one of the direct teachings of this.

Hendrickson, the commentator, says Jesus was not evading the issue. We're so used to politicians just not answering questions. Jesus answers the question. He has no fear of it. Jesus was not evading the issue, says Hendrickson, but was clearly saying, yes, pay the tax.

Honoring God does not mean dishonoring the employer, the emperor, by refusing to pay for the privileges, which were a relatively orderly society in that day.

Police protection for us, good roads, courts, etc. We have taxes to pay, pay them. give to Caesar what is Caesar's.

Jesus doesn't stop there. He says, give to God what is God's. You know, just as the image of Caesar was marked on the Roman coin, we are reminded in the Bible that we ourselves have an image marked within us.

[61 : 36] It's the image of God. We are made in the image of God. So, Jesus says, just as you look at the coin and give to Caesar what is Caesar's, you look at the image of God in you, and you give to God what is God's.

God's. Now, what do we give to God? We give him our everything. Not a small slither, not a wee percentage. He is due at everything.

He's going to teach that later in this chapter, verse 30. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

strength. That's what God demands from us. He demands everything. All our hearts, all our souls, all our mind, all our strength.

Now, here's the problem. What happens when there is a clash between Caesar and God? what happens when there is a conflict between what this world requires of you and what God requires of you?

[63 : 10] What happens when the government says, you and your children must believe what we say, and yet what they say goes clearly against what God says.

What do we do then? What happens when we have close friendships or relationships and people say to us, your Christianity makes me uncomfortable.

And so if you want to be friends with me, if you want us and our relationship to go somewhere, then you're going to have to tone down these strange beliefs.

What happens then? What happens when the boss or the university lecturer or the sports coach or the whoever says to us, you can't be in this firm or on this team or studying in my class and put your Sunday services, your prayer meetings, your religious beliefs, your time with Christ ahead of my teaching and my schedule and my demands.

What happens when these clashes happen in our lives as they increasingly are happening? The teaching here is Caesar loses and God wins.

[65 : 02] You want an example of it? Daniel, Old Testament, mid-teens. Just a young man. he starts to have clashes.

God looks after him and he begins to make progress and he ends up in a place of authority within the political system. A dangerous place.

And those who want to take him down realize they can't take him down unless they attack his faith. And so they pass laws under the radar that say no prayer.

What does Daniel do? Daniel says I know what the law says but I must pray regardless of what the law says.

He takes the hit for it but God protects him. In just two months from this the apostles will show us that in the New Testament in Acts chapter 5 after Jesus dies and rises and the Holy Spirit comes to these apostles and they're sent out with a gospel message.

- [66 : 21] They start to turn the world upside down with this message about Jesus. And so the authorities say to them no more talking about Jesus. Silence.
- They throw them in prison. God bursts the doors open. There they are in the courtyard. Are they silent?
- Shivering in the corner for fear? No, they're bold as brass. Preaching Christ. So in Acts chapter 5 they're made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest.
- We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name the high priest said yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood.
- Peter and the other apostles replied we must obey God rather than men.
- [67 : 28] Peter said yes give to Caesar what is Caesar's but ultimately always above all Caesar's demands give to God what is God.
- We must obey God rather than men Peter said. Let me ask just as we finish are you and I obeying God before men?
- It's becoming more and more uncomfortable in this place in this country at this time to put God before men.
- But the demand remains. Are you and I putting God before men? Are we obeying him first?
- Are we putting his kingdom before what other people demand from us? Are we putting his kingdom above even sometimes what we desire for ourselves?
- [69 : 05] See, that's the teaching here. Give to God what is God's. Your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole mind, your whole strength.
- Jesus is not looking for fans. He will whoop and cheer when the going is good and then are nowhere to be seen when things get tough.
- He is looking for disciples. He will put him first every place, every time. does this seem to demand to be unreasonable of God to make such demands upon us?
- if we think that way, think once more about what Jesus was doing in Jerusalem.
- This was Tuesday as he taught and clashed with these religious leaders, but by Friday he would be in Calvary.
- [70 : 29] He would be hanging on a cross. He would be drinking the cup of wrath that your sin and mine filled.
- He would be suffering. He would be dying. He would be laying down his life. He would be laying down his so that we could be saved.
- Think about how much God has done for us before we balk at what he demands from us.
- Give to Caesar what is Caesar's. God's.