

# Luke Chapter 1 v 57 - 80

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're just waiting for you, Your Majesty, Your Highness. No, we're not. Morning, it's good to see you. Welcome.

And on this very chilly, wintry day, it's good that we can be here together and to set our minds upon the reality of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into this world.

Christmas Day, just a week tomorrow, we're getting closer and closer to that wonderful event. And on that very night when Jesus was born, we're told a great company of the heavenly host, the angels, appeared praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.

All of heaven sings the praises of God. And the very reason that Christ came is that we may join with them in worshipping and praising our great and glorious Lord.

So let's stand and sing our first hymn. It's a wonderful carol, 196. Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight to all the earth. Come and worship, come and worship Christ the newborn King.

[ 1 : 29 ] Let's stand as we sing, 196. That's a good one, isn't it?

That's a great one. Great, great, great carol. And let's pray together. Let's pray. Amen.

It's an amazing invitation that you bring before us, O Lord, in that carol, in your word, in the angels' song. That invitation to come to you, the living God.

To come and draw near, to come and know you and enter into your presence. Lord, what a wonderful thing. You do not drive us away.

You do not put up a stop sign, a no entry sign outside of your courts in that way. But Lord, you, in one sense, call, urge.

[ 2 : 37 ] Yes, Lord, truly that invitation is much more than an invitation. It's a command. It's a call to every one of us to come and worship, to come and draw near, to come and experience the great goodness and mercy and love and kindness of God.

Thank you, O Lord, that though our sins have separated us from you, though our sins have cut us off, because of their mortifying effect upon our souls and upon our lives, they only breathe death to us.

Yet, O Lord, you have not left us in that way, separate, isolated, castaways. But Lord, you've come to us. The reason we can come to you this morning, the reason we can enter into your presence and bring that worship and praise that the angels give and that all those who've gone before give in your presence in heaven.

The only reason we can come is because you came to us. You're the one who made the first move. You're the one who came in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. You're the one who entered into our world.

You're the one who came with personal invitation. You're the one who came knocking on the door of our lives. You're the one who came to speak and to command and to call us to come to you.

[ 3 : 56 ] O Lord, we thank you that in your life, in your death, Lord Jesus, in your resurrection, you've removed all the barriers, all the hurdles, all the obstacles of sin. And you've made the way because you are the way, the truth and the life.

And O Lord, we ask that this morning we may truly in our hearts and in our minds come and enter into that presence of the living and holy and awesome God.

May we know that we are with you and that you are with us. May we know you're speaking to us and meeting with us. May we know, Lord, in our hearts that overflowing praise and worship of you.

That thanksgiving to you. That delight in you. Lord, may we in one sense forget everybody else who sat around us.

And may we be captivated with you. O Lord, we thank you again that you welcome and receive us. Just as we are. Lord, just as we are.

[ 4 : 58 ] And we come, Lord, with our concerns. We come, O Lord, yes, with our anxieties, our fears. We come, O Lord, with our failings and our sins.

We come and confess them before you. Knowing that with you there is forgiveness of sins. But knowing that with you there is grace sufficient for every circumstance. We pray again, O Lord, that we might be able to lay all our burdens at your feet.

Cast all our cares on you because you care for us. Help us, O Lord, again to be strengthened in our faith. Renewed in our hope.

Assured in your love. For we ask these things now in and through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Saviour and King. Amen.

Let's turn together in our Bibles. We're continuing our time in Luke's Gospel and in his preparation for the coming of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God.

[ 6 : 02 ] And chapter 1 of Luke, that's on page 1026. We have one of the church Bibles, 1026. And we're going to read from verse 57 to the end of the chapter.

So long chapter, 80 verses. So it's only taken us four or five weeks to get through one chapter. So it's looking good for the next 24 chapters. Probably some of us will be in glory by the time we finish. Possibly the preacher. No. So Luke and chapter 1, beginning at verse 57, reading through to verse 80. When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son.

Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy and they shared her joy. On the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child and they were going to name him after his father, Zachariah.

But his mother spoke up and said, no, he is to be called John. They said to her, there's no one among your relatives who has that name. Then they made signs to his father to find out what he would like to name the child.

[ 7 : 13 ] He asked for a writing tablet and to everyone's astonishment, he wrote, his name is John. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free and he began to speak, praising God.

All the neighbours were filled with awe and throughout the hill country of Judea, people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, what then is this child going to be?

For the Lord's hand was with him. His father, Zachariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. As he said through his holy prophets of long ago, Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

To show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham. To rescue us from the hand of our enemies and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

[ 8 : 25 ] And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High. For you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him. To give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.

Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

The child grew and became strong in spirit. He lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly in Israel. Please turn back to Luke and chapter 1 and to that record we have there of the birth of John the Baptist and also the song of praise, the prophecy of Zachariah, his father, that was given to him at that time.

Now, Christmas time. It brings out all sorts of desires within us, doesn't it? It brings out all sorts of dormant feelings that usually the rest of the year we don't bother about. And one particular drive that seems to rise up in us is the need to visit people.

Over the Christmas period, we will visit and be visited by more people than the whole of the year previous. All in that matter of just a couple of weeks. Some of us will drive for hours across country.

[ 9 : 49 ] Some of us have and will travel halfway around the world. John and Anne, as you know, are in Canada and the US. But why? Why this desire to go and visit people that we haven't seen

through the year can't be visited by them as well?

But it's not because we don't trust the postal service and we make sure that the presents get there personally and are handed over. It's not because we're going to get a free meal at the end of it when we don't have to do the cooking.

We visit and are visited because there's an inner desire within us, an inner urge within us to be with those that we love at Christmas time. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, of course, was full of purpose and meaning.

There was an urge within him, if I can put it that way, to come to those that he loves. We've looked at some of the reasons already why Jesus came.

We've seen them already in this account of Luke as he leads us up to the birth of Jesus. As he said, starting at the very beginning. We saw that when Zechariah was met with the angel of the Lord, how this was to fulfil the way that God has worked throughout history.

[11:05] To keep his prophecies and promises. Just as we have here in Zechariah's song, the reasons coming out that have appeared before. There, as he said through his holy prophets of long ago.

When Gabriel came to speak with Mary, we saw how that Mary was told firstly and plainly that the child she would conceive was coming to be a king. To sit on David's throne to fulfil their promises to David.

And again, he's raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. Verse 69.

Last week we looked at Mary's wonderful song, the Magnificat, where she glorifies and praises God again by the Holy Spirit.

And what is it that we saw there? That Jesus was coming to fulfil the promise to Abraham to bless all the peoples of the earth through his offspring, his seed.

And once more, Zechariah picks that up. The oath he swore, his holy covenant to our father Abraham. And so again, as we come here to this incredible song of praise of Zechariah, we're faced with another reason, another purpose for Jesus coming into this world, being born as he was.

[12:17] That child in Bethlehem. Why the Son of God had to visit us. Verse 57 begins here with telling us that Elizabeth's time had come.

She gives birth to the Son, just as Zechariah had been promised by Gabriel. And eight days later, they take him to be circumcised, as was God's command to Abraham's descendants.

That mark of his promise to the people of God. And just as when we baptise a child, we give them their name, that's a public naming time, so circumcision was the same.

And so he's going to receive his name publicly. All the family are going to name him Zechariah because he is the firstborn son of his father. It's quite a tradition, even now, today, sometimes, to have Zechariah Jr. or James Jr. or whatever it may be.

But Mary, sorry, Elizabeth speaks up. No, she says he's to be called John. Zechariah, who you remember is deaf and dumb because he would not believe God's word at the time, nine months earlier, is asked what he will say.

[13:29] What does he think? And he cannot speak, so he asks for this writing tablet and writes down just what the angel Gabriel told him. He is to be called John.

And in that very moment of obedience, his mouth and his ears are loosed and he begins to praise God and to speak. These are the words that are recorded for us in verse 67.

These are the same words, surely, that we read about there in verse 64. Now, you would think a man like Zechariah, we don't know his exact age, but we know and we were told at the beginning that he's very old.

This is the first child that he's had. This is his firstborn son. You'd think that his song would be all about this son, all about this wonderful gift from God of this child, John.

But actually, as we read through this song of praise, this prophetic psalm, as it were, there's only one line that mentions John. In verse 76, only one line that speaks about his future ministry.

[14:38] The rest is all about Jesus coming, the Son of God coming into the world and what he's coming to do. In his praise, he is caught up with the things of Jesus.

I wonder about that with us when we pray. How much of our prayers are all about our family, about our children and grandchildren, about me and my needs?

How much of my prayer and your prayer is balanced with an emphasis upon the kingdom of God, upon the church of Jesus Christ, of the needs of the lost, of praise and worship to him?

Is it just a list of wants and family needs? But in this hymn, in this praise, in this psalm, we have, as I've said already, a theme, a new reason why Jesus was coming into the world where the Son of God was to appear.

And it's a theme because it appears twice in his psalm. He repeatedly gives thanks to God for one particular blessing that Christ was coming to bring.

[15:51] And it's there, first of all, in verse 71, salvation from our enemies from the hand of all those who hate us. And then it's repeated again, verse 74, to rescue us from the hand of our enemies.

Now, Zachariah was, as we know, a good Israelite. He knew his history. He was a priest after all. He knew that all through the history of God's dealings with his people, it had been about God rescuing his people from their enemies.

Go back to the very start in Exodus, where for hundreds of years, God's people were enslaved and oppressed by the Pharaoh of Egypt before God raised up Moses to deliver them from their enemies out of their hand and bring them into freedom and liberty in the promised land.

But then, in the promised land, what do we read about the book of Judges? We see there one long saga of God's people being subject to their enemies, oppressed by them.

And then a deliverer comes, like Samson or Deborah or Gideon. And then they go back into sin and they're under the hand of an enemy before another deliverer comes. That's been their history throughout.

[17:03] And then into the kings, and particularly how at the end of that period, the Assyrians came, first of all, their enemies, and captured Israel, the northern tribes, and took them into exile.

Then, several decades later, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar came and destroyed Jerusalem, their enemies, and took them away into exile. Eventually, in God's promises, many of them were brought back to the land.

And even now, in Zechariah's day, what has happened? The nation of Israel is under the harsh rule of the Roman empire. It's still in the hands of its enemies. Many of the people of Jesus' day were looking for the Messiah, looking for one who would come and smash the power of Rome and set them free.

They were the zealots. They were the ones who were attacking and fighting. And they saw the Messiah as a conquering king, a great warrior. But that's not why Jesus was born.

That's not why Jesus was born. It was not God's plan in coming to redeem his people, in raising up a horn of salvation. That's a phrase that you often hear in the Psalms.

[18:17] A horn of salvation is a mighty and strong one, like the symbol of an ox or a bull with its horns, a picture of strength and power, a rescuer and a deliverer.

That's not why Jesus was coming to fulfill the covenant promises that God had made to Abraham. It wasn't to deal with the Romans. It wasn't to deal with the enemies of their day, in that sense.

It was to deal with the greatest enemy, the most powerful enemy, the enemy that has constantly, from the very beginning of creation, literally attacked God's people and decimated humanity.

The enemy that continues to roam the earth and continues to bring sorrow and grief and heartache and pain wherever men and women turn away from God.

That tyrannical enemy. Not a flesh and blood, but Satan, the devil. In Ephesians chapter 6, at the end of his letter, Paul writes to the believers and reminds them of this incredible battle that is going on.

[19:27] He says, Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

We need to say, dear friends, again and again, that the devil is not a pantomime character. He's not someone who's all hiss and bluster, but has no bite.

He's not a cute red cartoon character who's just a bit naughty. Satan is the fiercely terrifying dragon who has consumed and destroyed and deceived all of humanity from the Garden of Eden up till today.

This is how he's described in Revelation chapter 12, verse 9. The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

He was hurled to the earth and his angels with him. The conclusion in the Bible is this, that because Satan, the devil, is real and he is against people because we are made in the image of God and he hates God.

[ 20 : 50 ] 1 John chapter 5, John says, When we look around us in this world, when we see the atrocities of things that took place in Salford, when we see the terror of Syria, the awfulness of Boko Haram in Nigeria, when we see the evil of North Korea, so often we say, what's behind all this?

He is behind all this. Satan is real. He's not a fairytale bogeyman. He is a real, evil, powerful force who motivates, who moves, who deceives, who lies, who betrays, who destroys.

How has he done that? How has he managed to keep himself off the radar? How has he managed to deceive the world and those without Christ because he's blinded their eyes?

Here's what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4. The God of this age, that's the very title of Satan, the God of this age, little g, has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ as the image of God.

Why is it that so many people, even yesterday, walked by without any interest in the things of Christ and Christmas? Why is it so many people in our world today will have nothing to do with the things of God?

[ 22 : 20 ] We can look at all sorts of reasons and failures on behalf of the church, etc., but ultimately it's because the devil does not want them to know. He doesn't want them to know the glorious truth of the gospel.

He wants to keep them in the dark. He wants to keep them away from the good news of Jesus Christ. And he has lied and continues to lie to do so.

Go right back to the Garden of Eden. There's Adam and Eve in perfect relationship with God, walking with him in the garden, enjoying his presence, enjoying the delight of their Creator and their Heavenly Father.

And what do we find? There is Satan in that serpent form who lies to Eve. You'll not really die. God's lied to you. He just doesn't want you to have something good.

He wants to keep things back. Isn't that the same lie of the devil today? What God has said in the Bible isn't true. Dismiss it. It doesn't count for anything. It's not right.

[ 23 : 23 ] And if there is a God, he's a God who doesn't want you to enjoy yourself. He's a God who wants to spoil your fun. He's a God who wants to take away. Don't become a Christian because it'll ruin everything.

It's exactly the lie that he told Eve that she believed and that people believe today. Jesus speaks of Satan. He calls him a liar and the father of lies in the Gospel of John.

And by his lives, he enslaves people. By his lives, he takes them captive with sin so that they are unable to break free to be the people that God wanted them to be, to be the people God has made us to be.

Here's Paul writing to the Christians in Rome. Romans 6, 16. Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness.

People that are out and about on a Friday and Saturday night, the people who are binge drinking, the people who are engaging in all sorts of drunkenness, immorality, whatever it may be, the people who are giving their money away to gambling, the people who are involved in everything that is a pleasure, if I can put it that way, to their lusts and desires.

[ 24 : 43 ] Nobody's forcing them to do it. Nobody's driving them with a whip. But the reality is that they are captive. That they just cannot stop from doing those things.

The very reason that the Lord Jesus Christ came was to set people free. The gospel that was proclaimed by the apostles in the book of Acts was the gospel to set people free from the grasp and the hold of Satan.

In Acts 26, verse 17, Paul is speaking to King Agrippa. He's telling him about how God met with him, how Jesus met with him and commissioned him. And he said, the Lord said to me to go to the Gentiles to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. When we become a Christian, an amazing transformation takes place. An amazing move of address takes place. We change kingdoms. We change places.

We move from one to another. Writing to Colossians in chapter 1, 13, Paul describes what God does for us every time somebody comes to faith in Christ.

[ 25 : 56 ] He's rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. Dear friends, when we meet with people, when we talk with people who have not known the love of Christ, the power of the gospel, please don't forget that these are people who are under the sway and influence and lies of Satan.

this is not some mild, neutral position that they're taking. This is not just some coincidence. It's not just simply a matter of the fact that, oh, bless them, they just, if only they knew, they're in this sort of fluid, vacuum-y place.

No, they're not in that fluid, vacuum-y place. They are in a place where they are under the very influence, the control, the direction of Satan, the devil. And of course, one of the great lies of the devil is, I don't exist, isn't it?

You speak about the devil today, well, you're a crackpot, you're crazy, you're living in fairy land. The devil is real.

Again, how do we account for the evil in our world? How do we account for the atrocities? How do we account for the way that people behave to one another? How can we excuse those things? How can we look at the Holocaust?

[ 27 : 14 ] How can we look at the events of history and see again and again? Why is it that humanity constantly goes from one act of evil to another act of evil, from one war to another, one atrocity to another?

How can that be? If we are evolving into better people, if we are evolving into more wise and knowledgeable and everything else, why do we still see these things in our modern day?

We can't just look back to the Crusades or look back to the First World War or look back to Hitler. This is happening today because Satan is real, because the devil is at work, because his purpose has always been the same to destroy, to decimate, to ruin.

And if he can't ruin by greed, if he can't ruin by pride, if he can't ruin by self-indulgence, which of course is his great power in the West, then he'll ruin by hatred and violence and destruction in the East.

He doesn't care what he uses. He doesn't care what power or weapons he has. He has all at his fingertips. But Jesus came to defeat Satan.

[ 28 : 29 ] The great purpose in Christ's coming was that. Here's the Apostle John in his first letter, chapter 3, the reason the Son of God appeared, the reason he manifested himself, the reason he was born into this world, the reason he was seen was to destroy the devil's work.

And that's exactly what he does for every Christian, for everyone who puts their faith in him. And so as we're going to go into the Gospel of Luke later, we're going to see constantly this battle going on between the Lord Jesus Christ and Satan.

It begins with the temptation in the wilderness, doesn't it? At the very start of Jesus' ministry, who's there to put him off? Who's there to undermine the work that he's about to do?

Who's there to seek to try him, to test him, to tempt him? It's the devil for 40 days in the wilderness. And even when Jesus defeats him there and speaks with him and causes him to flee, we read in verse 13 of chapter 4 of Luke, when the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

That wasn't the end of it. And so when we read through, we find what? Jesus dealing with people and delivering people who are oppressed by the devil. Here he is, he goes to Capernaum.

[ 29 : 46 ] In the synagogue was a man possessed by a demon who cried out at the top of his voice, Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

Be quiet, Jesus says. Come out of him. The demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. Battle after battle, all through the gospel, we see Jesus victoriously defeating Satan and his hosts, delivering people from his power, bringing them into the freedom and the love and the grace and the mercy of God.

In fact, we could say that one of the main ministries of the Lord Jesus Christ in his life was to do just that. We often emphasize, rightly so, in one sense that he gives the blind sight and he raises the dead and he heals the lame, but you see again and again that the majority of his miracles, the majority of his ministry was this, defeating Satan, setting people free who were captive to him. And as he drew near to his death, as he drew near to the end of his life, he made it plain to his disciples that his purpose in coming and particularly his purpose in dying was to do just that.

In John chapter 12, now is the time for judgment on this world, now the prince of this world, that's another title of Satan, now the prince of this world will be driven out.

[ 31 : 13 ] But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. The death of Christ was the defeat of Satan.

We look at the cross and it seems as if the religious leaders have won, the Romans have won, the people who hated Jesus, they've won, they've taken this sinless, perfect man and they've crucified and murdered him, the one who was the Messiah, the saviour of his people.

But it's the opposite. The cross isn't the defeat of the Lord Jesus Christ, it's the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the cross he broke the power of sin, which is that chain by which Satan binds people under his control.

Paul writes in Colossians 2 of what happened, having disarmed the powers and authorities he made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross. The world looks at the cross, sees defeat and misery and sorrow and has pity upon the man that they see there.

But the Christian looks and sees there the triumphant one who says it's finished, it's completed, it's done. The one who rose again on the third day, smashing Satan's power over the lives of people.

[ 32 : 32 ] And so Zechariah's prophecy comes true. Look at the end of what he has to say, verses 77 to the end of the chapter.

The Lord who is coming, why is he coming? To give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins. How is he going to do that? Because of the tender mercy of our God by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the path of peace.

And so Paul writes there after he's spoken about the eyes of the unbeliever being blinded by Satan, he says this, but God who said that light shine out of darkness made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Christ came to dispel the blindness, to take away the mask over people's eyes, the blindfold that keeps them from seeing the wonderful love of God and the situation they're in.

The Christian, we've been rescued from our enemies. As Zacharias said, God had promised he would do. Christ came to deliver us, to save us, to pluck us out of that place of darkness and death.

[ 34 : 06 ] But Zacharias' prophecy has more than that. The coming of the Lord Jesus was to rescue us and to bring us from the hands of our enemies, but why? Why is he coming to redeem us?

Why is he coming with mighty power to save us? Why? Verse 74, to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, yes, and to enable us, to empower us, to serve him without fear.

See, those who live in the realm of Satan, those who are under the control of the devil, ignorant though they are of it as we once were. As they go about their lives, they go about their lives in a position of fear.

What motivates people to sin? What motivates people to live as they do? To work themselves into an early grave? Fear. Fear that they might be missing out on something else that someone else has.

Fear that if they don't follow the crowd, they'll become unpopular and ostracize. Fear that life is passing them by. Fear on every side which herds people like sheep to the slaughter.

[ 35 : 14 ] When you begin to speak to people and talk with people about what really is under the surface, you find again and again that they serve with fear. Fear of death.

Fear of the future. Fear of illness. Fear of losing. Fear of missing out. Fear. Fear. Christ came to enable us to serve without fear.

To set us free from fear and to bring us into the care and under the mastery of a loving and caring and wonderful king. A king who frees us for his service.

When you became a Christian, dear friends, God saved you. Yes, because of his great love for you that he would save you from hell and from the devil to save you that he might bring you into the life that is in heaven but he saved you what?

That you might serve him. Your life today has purpose and meaning not for sin, not to serve Satan but to serve the Lord. To enable us to serve him without fear.

[ 36 : 20 ] Romans in chapter 6 reminds us that this transformation has taken place now that you've been set free from sin and have become slaves to God. The benefit you reap leads to holiness and the result is eternal life.

Dear friends, as Christians, we need to get rid of this negative connotation that serving the Lord is a burden or to be a servant of God is something only the minister has or the missionary has.

We are all called to serve the Lord. And what does it mean to serve the Lord? It means simply this, to do what pleases him. Well, isn't that the very crux? Isn't that the very center of the Christian life? My life was once of living for myself and living for the things of this world and living for the things that are always disappointed and now I've become a Christian while I was to live for the Lord. That's the change of direction.

The believer is someone who delights to call Jesus not only Savior but Lord and Master and King. And the motivation of our lives is not fear but love a desire a longing to please the one who so loved us and gave himself for us.

[ 37 : 33 ] And how are we to serve him? What have we been set free from? We've been set free that we might serve him verse 75 in holiness and righteousness all our days.

To serve the Lord in holiness means to serve him wholeheartedly. The word holy in that sense means to be set apart means completely given over to the Lord.

Everything that you and I do is for the Lord. Everything that you and I are about is serving him. It doesn't have to be the highfaluted which we think the super spiritual aspects of it.

It's when we are at home. It's when we're with our friends and family. It's when we're in the workplace. It's when we're at the coalface. It's when we're wherever we are we're serving the Lord. Each day is to be a day that we give to him. Lord in this day I want to serve you. I want to be completely given over to doing what pleases you. It directs us and guides us and we serve him in holiness and righteousness.

[ 38 : 38 ] What is righteousness? Does that mean that we serve him perfectly? We never get anything wrong? Of course not. But it means that we serve him as he has taught us in his word. His word is righteousness.

Psalms 19 The decrees of the Lord are solid and all of them are righteous. They're good.

Righteousness simply means in one sense what pleases God what's good to God.

And we're to serve him as his word directs us. Serve him as his word teaches us. Serve him as his word guides us. Jesus came to set you free.

To use that freedom in the most blessed way. To guide our feet into the path of peace. Let me close with this challenge.

If you're someone who still has not acknowledged Jesus as your Lord and King. Someone who has not turned to him and said I want you to save me from my enemy.

[ 39 : 43 ] If you're someone who still whether you understand it or comprehend it or recognize it or not as someone who is under the tyranny of the devil with his lies and deceit.

Let me ask you why? The only thing that the devil has to offer you for your labor for your work for your serving him is death.

For the wages of sin is death. He's got nothing to hold out to you of promise or hope. He's got nothing to give you that's going to grant you any sense of peace or joy or happiness.

He's only a destroyer of lives. Why don't you come and serve the great king? The great king doesn't ask you to serve him for wages but rather we're told the gift of this great king is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Come to him. Bow the knee to him. Yes Lord save me out of the hand of my enemy. Enable me to serve you. Be my master.

[ 40 : 45 ] Be my king. Bring me into all the blessings of your kingdom. Dear friends as Christians as those who've been delivered and brought what's the point of going back to that old master?

Why listen to his lies when he tells you it's better to follow the ways of the world? Why listen to his lies and deceits when he says to you well it doesn't matter that little bit of sin that bad habit that giving yourself over.

Jesus said you can only serve one master. It's either God or riches. It's either self or the Lord. Dear friends may the Lord enable us indeed truly enable us to serve him in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Let's sing together our final hymn. It's a modern hymn but again it's a hymn that reminds us of Jesus coming from heaven.

From heaven you came helpless babe out in our world your glory made not to be served but to serve. Christ came to serve us. Verse 4 So let us learn how to serve one another.

[ 41 : 57 ] 821 May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else.

May he strengthen your hearts so that you may be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Amen.