

# Luke Chapter 12 v 1 - 12

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. Welcome. And really great to see so many guys from, well, from, I don't know what to call it really, the Hambleton Camp, is it? The Hambleton Camp, is that a fair thing to call it? Several young people from around the country, around the area, and others as well. And I think we've got a group in from Ontario, is that you guys here? Welcome, lovely to see you. We've got somebody from Australia, we've got, yeah, we're an international group today. But it's great. And if you aren't from any of those exotic places, like Hambleton, then we welcome you especially. And it's good that we are here together. I'm not sure what sort of week end you've had. I think you've had a good weekend, those who've been here. But I wonder what you feel like this morning. You feeling a bit weak, a bit tired maybe, from not having a lot of sleep. Well, this is what God's Word says.

Psalm 46, God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. I wonder how your life is. Do you feel as if the whole world is falling apart? Do you feel as if your life is falling apart?

God is our refuge and strength. He is the one who is able to give us strength, to take away fear in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. We're going to sing this psalm, and it's in your hymn book. It's number 103. God is our strength and refuge, and our present help in trouble. 103.

We'll stand as the music begins to play. The music begins to play.

The music begins to play.

[ 3 : 11 ] He is with us and for us. We can come to him in prayer. We can bring to him our thanks and praise and our needs. So let's pray together now. Almighty and all-loving God, we come to you this Sunday morning, and we rejoice in the things of which we've read and of which we've sung, that you are the God who is with us, for us, on our side, and, O Lord, the one who never leaves us nor forsakes us. You are the God who fills the universe and beyond. You are the God who was able to contract himself into that bay born in Bethlehem in Jesus Christ. You are the God who has no limits. You are the God for whom nothing is impossible. You are the God who is infinite in love and power, wisdom and strength.

And, O Lord, when we come and meet with you, we find such a contrast between you and ourselves. For, Lord, we are weak, and we are finite, and we are small.

And sometimes we think of ourselves as insignificant and unimportant. But, Lord, we thank you that because you made us in your image, because you created us as unique, because you imbedded in us worth, Lord, we thank you that we are worthy, we are loved of you, and, Lord, not worthless to you, not insignificant to you, but each and every single human being in this room and on this planet matters to you in the most intense and meaningful way.

We thank you, O Lord, our God, that your concern for us is not only that you provide for us food to eat and clothes to wear. These are all your gifts. But you are most concerned for our souls, because, Lord, you have created us not merely flesh and blood and bones, but, Lord, we have a spirit, a soul.

We were created by you that we might know you and enjoy you, that we might have a friendship with you, which lasts beyond this life, but, Lord, that lasts throughout eternity.

[ 5 : 26 ] O Lord, we thank you that because of your great concern for our soul, Lord, you sent your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into that world. Lord, Lord, God made man, that through his life and especially his death and resurrection, we might be delivered from the power of sin over our lives, delivered from that ugliness which so stains and pollutes our lives and our world, that we might be rescued and brought into the joy and the life which is God himself.

And we thank you, Lord Jesus, that your death for us and your resurrection for us and the fact that you live and never die means that we can trust you.

We can trust you because you have loved us and proved and evidenced that love by your death in our place. And we can trust you, Lord, that you have the power to save and to rescue and to transform and to change because you defeated death, something that we cannot do and we shall never be able to do.

Lord, we thank you that we have someone. We have one who understands us having lived this life that we have lived in every way except that you never sinned. You never got it wrong.

You never mucked it up unlike us. And so, Lord, when we stand in contrast to you, we see that we are indeed, O Lord, tiny in that sense.

[ 6 : 50 ] We don't have all the answers. We aren't as wise as we'd like to think we are, but you are all wise and mighty and great. And so we pray, Lord, that you would receive our thanks and our praise and our worship and that, O Lord, even in this time together this morning, that you would meet with us.

For you are the God who has not hidden yourself away. You're not the God who hides up in heaven or in an ivory tower. You're the God who rolled up your sleeves and got stuck into the filth and dirt of this world.

And you're the God who still is engaged in this world and is engaged in the lives of every person and especially those who found you to be the source of life and joy and peace.

Be with us then. Send your Holy Spirit into our midst and make us to hear what you have to say. Help us to enter in, enter the fullness of the good gifts of God.

For we ask it all in and through the name of Jesus Christ, the one who is the way, the truth and the life. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 7 : 53 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Wait. Amen.

And I will trust with you as always. For your endless mercy follows me.

Your goodness will lead me home. Let's take our Bibles and we're going to read together from the Gospel of Luke and chapter 12.

[ 9 : 04 ] Luke and chapter 12. If you have one of the red church Bibles, then it is page 1044.

Page 1044. So Luke and chapter 12, we're going to read the first 12 verses. But I wonder, we're just going to go back a fraction.

So when you found chapter 12, go back to verse 53 of chapter 11. So it's just two verses earlier.

Just to give us the context, Jesus has been in the home of one of the Pharisees, one of the religious men of the day.

And he has been giving them some home truths, which they have not liked very much at all. And so verse 53 of 11. When Jesus went outside, 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.

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

[ 10 : 23 ] There's nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. What you've said in the dark will be heard in the daylight.

And what you've whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs. 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 your body has been killed has authority 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 publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.

[ 11 : 24 ] But whoever disowns me before others 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.

Well, if you do have the Bible to hand, I would encourage you to turn with me back to Luke 12. Luke chapter 12 and these words of Jesus, particularly to his disciples.

And his words, therefore, to us who are believers, but words to each and every one of us. Whatever age we are, whatever background, whatever country, whatever circumstance we are from, whatever our thoughts, whatever our beliefs, convictions.

These are the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, they have to be heard. Now, I wonder if I could ask you a question. Who do you most want to impress?

[12:40] Who do you most want to impress? What would you be prepared to do to gain the approval of that particular person? Does what they think of you matter so very much?

Is everything that you do, is everything that you say determined by this one longing above all else to be liked, to be accepted?

So with your family, are you always trying to keep them happy? You don't disagree with anybody in the family. You say those things that you know is going to make them happy.

Keep them happy. But they want to hear. What about those of you at school? Do you really want more than anything to be in the in crowd?

And so you'll smoke a cigarette because they smoke. You'll swear because they swear. You'll do whatever it takes to be considered cool and part of that gang.

[13:49] What about on your social media page? On your Facebook or whatever it may be? You always tick to like what your friends put up by way of their comments, messages or pictures.

You hope that they will like your posts and pictures as well. And you really, really don't want them to unfriend you. Perhaps you're going to university or you're at university or you're in the workplace and you want to impress your peers in your office or in your class.

So you'll laugh at the jokes that they tell even though they're crude and not very funny anyway. And you'll join in the gossip behind the backs of others but never to their face.

You don't want to stand up. You don't want to stand out for what might be unpopular. What might get you unliked. Whether this is true of you or not, I don't know.

But I'm sure that all of us at times are tempted to do those sort of things. At times we're tempted to act hypocritically. Because that's really what the word hypocrisy means.

[15:00] And we see Jesus make mention of it here in Luke in chapter 12. He says, be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy. We'll come back to that in a moment.

The Pharisees were the in crowd of their day amongst the Jewish people. They were the ones who did everything to impress others. They were the ones that were looked up to. They were the ones who went out of their way for people to say, wow, I wish I could be like a Pharisee.

Jesus warns his disciples that actually they mustn't follow their example. They mustn't live that sort of way. Because ultimately their way of living was utter hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy means to pretend to be something you're not to other people. It's to live a false sort of life. It's to say things which you don't really mean just so that others will like you, be impressed by you, accept you.

It's to dress in a way which means somehow it's not exactly what you would want to wear. But it's what everybody else is wearing. You've got to be accepted.

[16:07] And it means that you will sell your soul. You'll give up your real self. You won't be true. And so the Pharisees, this group of religious people, they pretended that God was the most important person in their lives.

They pretended that they did everything so that they might please him and live for him and do what honors and glorifies him. But in reality, God wasn't the most important person in their life.

In reality, they were the most important person in their life. And so they did everything they could to make themselves look good. They gave the impression that they were good people, clean living people.

They did lots of religious things. Down to the very nitty gritty. Jesus knew what was inside their hearts was far from a life and a love for God.

And so earlier on in chapter 11, he'd said to them, you Pharisees, clean the outside of the cup. In other words, and the dish, you look outwardly clean, but inside you're full of greed and wickedness.

[17:12] That's why we read from the end of chapter 11 about how they were fiercely opposed to him. They did not like the fact that Jesus would not be a hypocrite to them, but he would tell them as it was.

And he warns his disciples not to follow their example because their teaching, their way of life was like yeast added to bread dough. Now, everybody in Jesus' day would understand that.

Some of you may have been here, may be home bakers or watch Bake Off, and you know that you put yeast into dough. You can get a big batch of dough, just a little bit of yeast. It will spread through the whole of the loaf.

So the whole of the loaf will rise and do what it's meant to do. Well, Jesus and the rest of the Bible tells us that sin is like that. Paul, as he writes to some Christians in Corinth later, says, don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads the whole batch of dough?

So the reality is once we start trying to impress other people, once we live that hypocritical life, we will never be able to stop. It will affect every single thing that we do.

[18:24] We will be constantly living a lie. And Jesus' disciples, perhaps they felt a little bit like that. They felt tempted. Here were these thousands upon thousands around about them.

Perhaps they felt here was an opportunity to impress the crowds. They were the disciples of Jesus. Earlier on in chapter 10, when Jesus sent them out, they had done miracles as well in Jesus' name. So perhaps there was a temptation. We can stand out to these people. We can become heroes. We can become people they look up to. But Jesus says, no.

Don't be like that. Avoid hypocrisy. And you might say to me, well, as a Christian, it's difficult to stand up for what I believe in. As a Christian, you don't know what it's like in my classroom, in my university lecture room.

You don't know what it's like in my workshop or in my office. You don't know what it's like in my family. It's so tempting to say what others want me to say. It's so tempting to say what they want to hear.

[19:29] It's so tempting to join in with the crowd and to bend a little and to compromise a little and to be, well, be what I'm not. Jesus takes his disciples aside and he teaches them how to live in the freedom that God wants us to live in.

Because to live a hypocritical life, to be someone who lives, to obtain the affection, the impression, the acceptance of others is a life which is hideously entrapping.

If you're a Christian, then you have been tempted, I'm sure, to follow the crowd. So Jesus' words are very helpful to you. Maybe you're not a Christian this morning.

You're not somebody who follows Jesus. Then I say to you, please don't switch off. Don't think that this is not important for you to hear too. There's some things especially for you that Jesus has to say and that you really need to pay attention to.

So how do we avoid being hypocrites? How do we avoid being those sort of people who live that impressing life or attempting to impress others' life? How do we avoid it?

[20:48] Well, the first thing Jesus says to his disciples in verse 2 is really something along these lines. Be true to yourself. Be true to yourself.

Be true to who you are. To be a hypocrite is to deny who you really are. To be a hypocrite is to allow other people to rob you of your own personality and character, your individuality and your identity. To be a hypocrite is to not be who God created you to be. You're a unique creation of God, whoever you are. There is no one like you in the whole world.

There has never been anybody like you in the whole world. Even your twin brother or sister is not like you. You are unique. You have worth. You are created by God with certain attributes and qualities.

Be yourself. See, we live in a world, don't we, which is always trying to press us, to squeeze us into a particular type of mold.

[21:53] Trying to make us like everybody else. You've got to be part of the group. And one of the false lies in one sense that says you've got to be just like one of the group by being extrovert, by being totally different, by being radical.

But actually, that's just actually what everybody's trying to be. So you're being squeezed. And I don't know what it's like for you, but if you put on weight, as some of us occasionally do, trying to get in clothes that are too small for you, squeeze yourself in those drain pipe jeans.

It's uncomfortable. It's unpleasant. It's unpleasant. So being squeezed by the world to be something we're not into a particular mold is not a joyful experience.

It's a painful one. Be yourself. Why? Why must we be ourselves? Because ultimately, you can't hide forever.

You can't wear a mask forever. You can't pretend forever. You're going to be found out. Ultimately, you're going to be found out by God because God knows you completely.

[ 23 : 06 ] He knows what's in your heart. He knows what you're like. He knows how he made you. He knows your problems, your qualities, and everything else. You can try and impress other people.

You can try and be something to other people, but you can't impress God. You can't pull the wool over his eyes. You can't pretend to be something you're not to him. He knows you. And eventually, it will come to light.

In fact, it isn't exactly what the tabloid newspapers of our day delight in. All over and over and over again, people who've been celebrities, people who live lives to try to impress or to be some sort of figurehead, whatever, they're again and again on the newspaper, exposed, exposed, exposed, because they've tried to hide who they are, and it's come to light.

You cannot hide forever who you are. It will eventually come to light. So nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, hidden that will not be made known. Those things that you've said about somebody.

You know, when you were in that group and you wanted to keep in with them, and so there was some gossip spreading about the other person at the other desk in the office, and you joined in. What happens?

[ 24 : 21 ] They find out. You're found out. So why bother in the first place? And the reality that God is speaking about here, particularly, or Jesus speaking about here, is talking about the day when we shall all stand before God.

When everything that has been secretive, everything that's been hidden will be exposed. You will be exposed, and so will I, for exactly who we are and what we've done. Warts and all. Sins and all. It doesn't matter if you've been a hypocrite all your life, if you've pretended all your life long that day's coming, when the curtains are going to be pulled back, when everybody's going to see just what you've been like.

So why bother? Why bother? Be yourself. Be free. Be the person you're made to be. Secondly, Jesus gives to his disciples and to us some very helpful encouragement.

Encouragement, verse 4. Being true to yourself means that you can be unafraid of others. I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid, says Jesus in verse 4.

[ 25 : 33 ] Isn't that really the reason why we try to impress others? Because we're afraid. We're afraid of what they will think of us. We're afraid of what they'll say about us. We're afraid of what they'll put on Facebook about us. We're afraid of what they'll tell our friends about us.

Isn't that why we're afraid? Isn't that actually the whole basis upon which much of our world lives? Fear? We're afraid of a no-deal Brexit. We're afraid of what will happen to our country. We're afraid if this person becomes prime minister.

We're afraid if we lose our job. We're afraid. We're afraid. And so all our lives we live in fear and we seek to do everything we can to keep our status quo.

Jesus says don't be afraid. Be unafraid. Be unafraid. What's the very worst that anybody can do you? What's the very worst they can do when they call you names or mock you or ridicule you or unfriend you or whatever they do?

[ 26 : 33 ] What's the very worst they can do? The very, very worst they can do is kill you. Jesus says that's not the worst thing. I tell you my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.

Hold on. Surely that's the ultimate, to kill you? And indeed the reality is that there are even today people, Christians, simply because they have faith in Christ who are being put to death, who are being murdered, being executed for no other reason than they love and trust Jesus Christ.

Now thankfully in our own nation that is very, very unlikely to happen to you. What's the very worst they can do to you? Ultimately nobody can take away from you what God can give you.

Nobody can take away from you, dear Christian, what you have in Christ and that's everlasting life. This world is not all there is. This life, the possessions that we have, the relationships we have, that's not all there is.

It's only brief. It's only here for a while. You aren't going to live forever in this body, in this world, in these relationships. You are going to one day pass from this world into another world.

[ 27 : 52 ] No matter how young you are, you guys who are maybe 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, before you know it, you're going to be 80. Yeah, it's going to happen.

Not quite overnight. It's going to be like that. It's going to happen quickly. One minute you're full of energy and you're able to leap over gates and fences. You're able to run and play sport.

The next minute you're hobbling around with a poor back and you're moaning about your arthritis and your rheumatics. And I'm not wishing to undermine those who have those things because I know that they can be extremely painful.

But time flies. This life is not all there is. There is a life to come and it is everlasting and it is eternal. And if we only live for this life, if we only live for now, then dear friends, we are going to find ourselves sorely disappointed.

[ 28 : 54 ] Don't be afraid, says Jesus, of other people. When you're in the school playground, when you're in the, wherever you are, don't be afraid of them. What's the worst they can do? They cannot take away from you if you're a Christian. They cannot rob you of God's love, of his care, of his friendship, of his fellowship, of his forgiveness.

They cannot take away from you the joy of knowing that you are a child of God and that you're headed for heaven and you've got a home. They can't take that away.

No matter what they do. But, and this is the simple thing. And it may not seem simple to me or to you, but this is the simple thing.

Jesus says, we can be unafraid of others when we understand how to be fearful of God. Verse 5, but I will show you whom you should fear.

So be unafraid of those who kill the body, but I will show you who you should fear. Fear him who after your body's been killed has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.

[ 29 : 54 ] Fear God. Be fearful of God. That's what he's saying. Be unafraid of others, but be fearful of God. Now we often think only of fear as a negative thing.

A negative concept. A negative force. But in fact, fear is a very positive thing. Fear is good for us. It keeps us safe. Fear helps us in making our choices.

And fear is always present in love. Because love fears hurting the one it loves. You cannot love without fear.

Fear. Someone who says that they love you, but they insult you, or they abuse you, or they hurt you. That person does not love you because they are not afraid to do those things to you.

So when Jesus or the Bible talks about fearing God, it always means something positive. It means honoring God. Respecting God. Respecting God. Trusting God. Loving God.

[ 30 : 55 ] Obeying God. Often over and over again in the Old Testament, but in the New as well, we find how songs of praise are given to God concerning fear for him and the blessing of fear.

Psalms 128. Blessed are all who fear the Lord. Blessed means happy, fulfilled, content. You'll eat the fruit of your labor.

Blessings and prosperity will be yours. Yes, this, verse 4, will be the blessing of the person who fears the Lord. And later on, in Psalm 34.

Fear the Lord, you his people, for those who fear him lack nothing. We sang in our hymn just before we came to this passage, verse 6 of our hymn.

Fear him, you saints, and you will have nothing else to fear. It's a positive thing. That's why Jesus immediately goes on from talking about fearing God to the blessings of knowing God.

[ 31 : 56 ] 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're worth more than many sparrows. Sparrow was the cheapest thing in the market.

Poor people would eat them. I don't think they got a great deal of nutrition out of a sparrow. I've seen... Anyway, I won't go into that. But here, Jesus is implying and telling the disciples and telling us, dear friends, that we are vitally important to God, that we matter to God, that he cares for us.

Now, if he wanted us to be afraid of God, that's not what he would say. But the fear I'm talking about is this wonderful assurance and confidence that God is the giver of good gifts, that he's our heavenly father.

Positive fear of God. Bound in to the wonderful way he provides, the way he knows, the way he cares, the way he loves.

[ 33 : 08 ] Those are his. Don't be afraid. You're worth more. God went to show just how much... Jesus went on to show just how much you are worth and what your worth is to God by going and giving his own life in exchange for your life.

In giving himself to suffer and to die in your place so that you might know God and enjoy him. However, however, if you do not trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you do not have a healthy fear of God, then you need to have a very real fear of God.

Look at what he says there. We've already read it in verse 5. Show you whom you should fear. You should fear God. He's talking about God as the authority after you've been killed to throw you into hell.

Later on in verses 9 and 10, whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

[ 34 : 25 ] There is a day coming, dear friends, when every single one of us, every single person who's ever lived in the world at any time will stand before God and be judged for what they have said and how they have lived.

That's what Jesus was talking about, everything being concealed and open and disclosed. All those secret sins, all those secret attitudes, those nasty things that are hiding down in your heart and mine, they'll be open.

We'll be an open book for all to see and we will be judged by God according to who we are and what we've done. Without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to rescue and save us, then we shall be cast into hell.

That's the unequivocal word of Jesus. It's not me. It's not what I'm saying. It's not my thoughts in that sense. It's not my ideas, not the ideas of Christianity, not the ideas of some religious nutters. It's the very words of the Son of God here. If we are determined not to follow him, if we're determined not to live those lives that demonstrate that we are his disciples, then we cannot be saved from our sins, but we'll be judged and punished justly.

[ 35 : 46 ] And so when Jesus speaks here in verse 9, he says, whoever acknowledges, disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God.

In one sense, in that very courtroom of heaven, all of humanity that's ever lived will be there and all of the hosts of heaven will be there, all the angels will be there. They will be the witnesses, as it were.

Whoever disowns me before others will be disowned before the angels of God. In other words, whoever rejects me will be rejected by me. That's your choice. Your choice is to reject me.

Your choice is to live without me. Your choice is to not be saved. Then you shall have what you've chosen, to be rejected and to not have life. But, he says, everyone who speaks, sorry, yeah, before that, he says, I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.

In the courtroom of heaven, where you and I will stand in the dock, all our sins, our selfishness, our wicked actions, our words, our thoughts, will be read out, as it were, put up on the screen for all to see, as we are accused.

[ 37 : 03 ] But, here Jesus says, if you have trusted in me, if you've looked to me to save and to rescue you, if you know that I am the one who died for you and took your sins away, then I will stand up, as it were, as your advocate, your lawyer, and will declare to the court that all your punishment has been paid in full, that everything that is held against you has been wiped clear, that you are forgiven.

This is the picture that we read about in John's first letter. If anybody sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one.

He's the atoning sacrifice for our sins, not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world. When Jesus went to the cross and suffered and died, he went there to pay the debt that you owe, to pay the price for your forgiveness, to pay the punishment that is justly yours and mine for the way that you have lived in rebellion and rejection of God and done your own thing.

That is the greatness of his love for us. But the reality is this, if we do not want Jesus to be our advocate, if we do not want him to have paid the price for us, then we must pay the price ourselves.

And the price for our sinful rejection, denial of God is to be forever rejected by God in a real existence, which Jesus himself calls hell.

[ 38 : 46 ] And Jesus says, whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. There's forgiveness. Nearly every single person who becomes a Christian before they became a Christian lived a life which spoke against Jesus, spoke against him, denied him, rejected him until something happened, something wonderfully happened, when we realize that this Jesus is not the one to be rejected, but the one to be received, the one to be trusted in.

Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Can't pass by that, can I, without making some comment on it.

The unforgivable sin. I wonder if you think, have I committed the unforgivable sin? Let me put it simply like this. The unforgivable sin is not just to say one thing, or to act at one occasion.

The unforgivable sin is the sin of a life which is lived constantly in rejection of God's call to you to come to Jesus. To reject the Holy Spirit, who is speaking to you even today, even now, even through this idiot standing at the front, to say you must come to Christ, or you are lost for eternity, you must trust in Jesus, or hell awaits you.

If you continue to say, I want nothing to do with him, with that, then you cannot be forgiven.

Because forgiven can only come from repentance.

[ 40 : 23 ] Seeing that you've gone the wrong way. Seeing that you've treated Jesus and God as you shouldn't have done, and turning to him, and saying, please forgive me. Thank you for dying for me.

Bring me into the fullness of your forgiveness and love. And if Jesus is your savior, if Jesus is the one you put your trust in, then very finally, dear friends, you can be confident in every situation. You can be confident, verse 11, when you are brought before synagogue rulers, authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourself, or what you will say. The Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

The Holy Spirit lives within the Christian. The Holy Spirit is the one who never leaves us. Wherever you go, tomorrow, dear friends, whether you're going back to school, or uni, whatever, if you're a Christian, God is with you.

He's not going to leave you. You may feel lonely at times. You may feel isolated. You may feel without anybody on your side, but God is on your side. Just saying at the very beginning, the Lord of hosts is with us forevermore.

[ 41 : 32 ] You can't go anywhere where he will not be there. And that means he will be there to help. That's the sense, isn't it? Those disciples of Jesus, every one of them, at one time or another, were called up before a court, called up to be punished and persecuted for being a Christian.

All of them, apart from John, died at the hands of an executioner. Wherever you go, you can be brave.

Whatever you face, you can be confident. Whatever happens, you're not alone. You don't have to give in to the pressure. You can be strong in the strength that God gives.

If you do it in your own strength, if you try to be a Christian in your own ability, if you try to be something and stand up in your own strength and you'll always fail, it's impossible.

But with God, it is possible. All things with him are possible. Be confident. Dear friends, you don't need to impress others or to live in that way.

[ 42 : 45 ] Least of all, you need to impress Jesus because he knows exactly what you're like. But when you're true to yourself, when you're a true disciple, which is who you are if you're a Christian, then you will be impressed by what he will do for you wherever and in whatever circumstances you face.

I close with these wonderful encouragements from Paul as he writes to the Christians. He tells them, now to him, that's God, who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. And listen to this, according to his power that is at work within us, the believer, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout every generation forever and ever and ever.

Amen. Jesus calls us and says to each one of us, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

[ 44 : 12 ] Amen.