

Luke Chapter 19 v 28 - 44

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Date: 20 March 2016

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[0 : 00] One of the great wonders, of course, is that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to us, and that through Him we can and do come to God in prayer.

So let's come in prayer together now. Let us all pray. Words really fail us, O Lord our God, when we think of the wonderful love that you've displayed in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can't fully explain, we can't fully describe what it must have meant for you, the everlasting Son of God, to take on the frailty and the weakness of our humanity, to become one with us in every way, apart from sin, because in every way you have lived our life.

You've lived through the sorrows, the pain. You've lived through the heartache. You've lived through the grief. You've lived through the joys as well and the blessings of family and friends.

In everything, O Lord, you have walked where we walk. Accept, Lord, you have never sinned. You never did anything wrong in thought and word and deed. And when we look at you, Lord Jesus, the Son of God, and we consider how you lived without sin, then we are again brought to mind that we are sinful, that in our lives, day by day, we do act in selfish ways, thoughtless ways, arrogant ways.

[1 : 38] We think wrong thoughts of you and of one another. We live as those who have no concern or care for your commands, which are so good for us.

And, O Lord, again, we recognize that we do not love you as we should. That's the greatest, the worst, most terrible of our sins is that we do not love you, the God who made us, who is the author of creation, the God who sustains us and provides for us day by day, the God who again and again has poured out loving kindness upon us in so many ways, especially, particularly in the giving of yourself, the Lord Jesus, to come to us, to die for us, to suffer in our place and to take the blame, the guilt we deserve.

How can we not love you? How can we not count you as being the most wonderful, marvelous, delightful person in all the universe? And so, O Lord, we do come and ask you to forgive us for our sins.

We ask, O Lord, that you'd put within us a heart and a desire to turn away from sin and to live for you those lives of holiness, those lives which show that we do love you.

Because how else do we show that we love you? We can't show it by giving to you anything that you need. Lord, we can tell you we love you, but Lord, truly, the evidence and the proof is in the pudding when we live and show we love you by turning from sin, turning to do what is right.

[3 : 08] We know what is right, Lord. We know what you've said in your word. We know what your conscience says to us too. We pray, Lord, that even as we come this morning, it may be evidence that in our hearts, our desire is to please you, to love you, to serve you, to follow you.

And we pray that, O Lord, as we meet together this morning, that you would continue to do that work in our hearts, that we might love you more and live for you more. And that, Lord, by our lives, show the reality and the power of your love in our lives to those who don't know that love, who are ignorant of it and far from it, Lord, because of their own sins.

And we pray again, O Lord, that you would draw near to us and speak to us and help us. And that, Lord, we might be the people you want us to be, not just on a Sunday for an hour, but, Lord, through the week, day by day.

And we ask again that you would draw near to us by your Holy Spirit, that you would speak to us and that, Lord, you would bless us. For that very reason you brought us here, Lord, the very reason you want us to seek your face is because you want to do us good, to make us ready to receive from you good things.

For we ask it all in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. We're going to read one of the accounts of that first Palm Sunday from the Gospel of Luke.

[4 : 36] And that's Luke chapter 19. And if you have one of the Red Church Bibles, one of the New Red Church Bibles, that's page 1054.

So page 1054. And reading from Luke chapter 19, beginning at verse 28.

So Luke chapter 19, verse 28. Jesus has been teaching. And one of his famous parables, a parable of the Ten Talents.

And we pick up the story from there in verse 28 of Luke 19. After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead going up to Jerusalem.

As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples saying to them, Go to the village ahead of you.

[5 : 38] And as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, why are you untying it?

Say, the Lord needs it. Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, Why are you untying the colt?

They replied, the Lord needs it. They brought it to Jesus. Threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen.

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, Teacher, rebuke your disciples.

[6 : 40] I tell you, he replied, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out. As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace, but now it's hidden from your eyes.

The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls.

They will not leave one stone on another because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you. And we thank God for his faithful word.

If the children... Please would you turn to Luke 19 where we read of Luke's account of that first Palm Sunday just a little while ago.

Again, that's page 1054 if you have the Red Church Pew Bible. Now I'm sure all of you have had the experience of having to wait in for a delivery or a tradesman at some time in the past.

[7 : 53] You know, you've arranged for that plumber or that electrician or that parcel to be delivered. And, of course, when you book the appointment, they'll say almost certainly, well, sometime between 8 o'clock in the morning and 1 o'clock in the afternoon or midday or from 1 o'clock in the afternoon to 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

And so for those four hours, you put everything off and you're a prisoner in your own home and you try and get all the jobs done you want to do. But time is passing. It's invariably never at the first hour, probably not the second hour.

And probably by the time you got to the third hour, you're thinking, well, I've got to get that washing out on the line. So I'll go and put the washing out on the line. And that's the very moment, of course, that they come knocking at the door and you're in the back garden so you don't hear the knock.

And so the postman or the deliverer leaves a card saying, please call us to rearrange another appointment. Or even worse, of course, that's the day that the battery in your doorbell doesn't work and goes off.

It's just inevitably that's the way it's going to be. So that's infuriating, isn't it? So you phone them up again and say, please, can you come again? I'm sorry I missed you. So on. Well, the next available slot is in three weeks' time.

[9 : 10] We all know the frustration of such occasions. To miss that appointment, to miss that opportunity, it can be very annoying.

But certainly it will not have the consequences that Jesus speaks about here when that first Palm Sunday, they, the people, missed an important appointment.

Luke 19, the very last verse we read, verse 44, the second part of it says, you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.

You did not recognize the time of God's coming to you. The people of Jesus' day were people who were expecting the coming of God in his Messiah. And for good reason, because throughout the Old Testament, as we were saying with the children, God had promised again and again, he was going to send this special, chosen, anointed king, this one who was coming to be a savior, coming to do something for God's people in a very special way.

And the people knew these promises because they repeat one of them here in Luke and in other places as well when they think of the promise in the Psalms. Psalm 118, blessed is the one or the king who comes in the name of the Lord.

[10 : 33] So they understood the promises of God and they were looking forward to it. And we read there with the children, didn't we? He looked at the promise from Zechariah, one of the final prophets before the Savior, the Messiah, came.

He says, rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, daughter of Jerusalem. See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey.

And then, of course, we know that around Jesus' life there were many promises which he himself fulfilled by his birth. We know that he was born in Bethlehem.

We know that he lived in Nazareth. We know that there were things that he did, the things that he did, opening the eyes to the blind, the miracles he performed, the miracles that we're told that the people praised God for here on that very day, all pointed to Jesus being the king who was coming.

In fact, so much so, there was speculation about Jesus. Could he be the Messiah? Could he be God's king? We're given an insight into that in the Gospel of John in chapter 7 when Jesus had been speaking.

[11 : 42] On hearing Jesus' words, some of the people said, surely this man is the prophet. That's the one that Moses spoke about, a prophet to come. Others said, he's the Messiah. Others asked, how can the Messiah come from Galilee?

Doesn't the Scripture say the Messiah will be a descendant of David and come from Bethlehem, the town where David lived? So the people were divided because of Jesus.

Some thinking, yes, he is the Christ. Some thinking, no, he can't be. And so, here is Jesus. For three years, he's been ministering. For three years, he's been showing the reality that he is God's appointed king.

He is God's messenger. He is God's person who has come into the world, come to the people of Israel, God's chosen people.

They had plenty of time to make up their mind, plenty of time to gauge the evidence. And now we come to this final week in Jesus' life as he comes to Jerusalem once more.

[12 : 44] Is he coming as a last-ditch attempt to win over the skeptics so that he might recognize him as their king? Is that why he rode the donkey in? So they might recognize that promise and say, here's the king, let's accept him.

Perhaps he was hoping to win those and convince them the reality of his person and work. But no, of course, that wasn't the case.

Jesus knew very well what was going to happen. He knew that he was going to Jerusalem to die. He knew his entering Jerusalem would be a time when rather than being received as king, being received as God's Messiah, he was going to be rejected and turned away.

In fact, he told his disciples on several occasions about that. One of them is here earlier in Luke in chapter 9. He tells his disciples very clearly what must happen to him using the title of himself the Son of Man, which again was a description of the Messiah, the one who is coming on God's behalf.

He says this, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law and he must be killed.

[13 : 57] And on the third day, rise again. So Jesus is riding in, but they weren't going to receive him. They were going to reject him, as we know only too well.

They were going to turn away from him. They weren't going to see him as God coming to them with grace and love. They were going to miss the appointment.

They were going to miss that divine appointment. We might say, well, what has Palm Sunday really got to do with us? Is it just to do with what Jesus is heading to?

Has it got anything personally to say to us? Does it make sense? Is it relative? Relevant? Well, yes, it is. You see, Jesus' words to the people are very, very powerful words which can apply to us as well.

You did not recognize the time of God's coming to you. See, Jesus coming into Jerusalem was representative of the fact that God himself comes to each and every one of us at some time and in several occasions.

[15 : 04] And I wonder, have you recognized God's coming to you? And you might say, well, when has God come to me? When has God come to me? When has God ever shown himself to me or made himself known to me that I should be able to receive him or that I should have rejected him?

Well, there's many different ways in which God has come to you and spoken to you and made himself known to you and I wonder how you've responded to those comings.

The first way that God comes to us is when he visits us in the gospel, the message, the word of God. Whenever we hear the truth about Jesus being preached like this or whenever we might hear somebody talking to us about Jesus and sharing with us good news or perhaps even when we've read the Bible ourselves or read something in a book.

It's God coming to us and speaking to us about his love and his grace and his wonderful desire that we should know him. Perhaps you went to Sunday school as a child.

The children there this morning will have God coming to them. Perhaps when somebody has spoken to you, just a friend or a relative or a parent, they've spoken to you.

- [16 : 22] That's God coming to you. Here's what Paul says about when he went and spoke to the people of Thessalonica about Jesus. He said, we also thank God continually because when you receive the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as it is actually the word of God which is at work in you who believe.

That's why it's so important that we don't discard what God has said in the Bible. That's why it's so important we don't discard what we hear about Jesus and say, well it's nothing to do with me.

Yes it has. It's God wonderfully, graciously, lovingly coming and speaking to you through another person. Coming and speaking to you through the truth of the Bible about what he wants to do in your life.

About the fact that he wants you to know him. Have you missed that appointment? Have you sat through sermons like this? Have you heard Christians speaking but you've just said no?

Well that's not for me. You're missing God coming to you. And following on from that as I've already said God comes to us in the lives of other Christians.

- [17 : 36] See every Christian, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is an ambassador for God. That's what the Bible says in 2 Corinthians. Paul speaks to them.

He says, we are therefore Christ's ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on God's behalf, Christ's behalf be right with God.

Be reconciled with God. If you're a Christian this morning then you've got a huge responsibility dear friends as I have as well that everyone we meet is having a meeting with God.

God is coming to them through you and through me. Our lives are to be lived so that they might recognize that. So they might see that. So they might acknowledge that God is real.

That they might come to know him. So you may say well it's just an accident that I happen to have a friend who's a Christian or a relative who's a Christian. It's just by chance.

- [18 : 36] No it's not. God has so appointed that you should have those Christian friends or those Christian neighbors or those Christian relatives because God wants you to recognize that he's coming to you through them.

And dear Christian friends again let me encourage you let me encourage you that whenever you go wherever you are you're representing Jesus. You're his ambassador. Whoever you're meeting with you are showing to them the reality of God.

Now that's a serious thing. It may make you feel like I wish I was a monk and could hide away. I don't want people to see because I know I'm full of failings. I know I get it wrong. I know that I do things I shouldn't do and say things I shouldn't say but dear friends let's not throw away the challenge.

Let's not throw away the opportunity. Let's not throw away the privilege of being a Christian in our workplace, in our school, in our supermarket, in our home.

Let's do all that we can and let's pray for the Lord to help us to be just the people he wants us to be. Lord make me an ambassador. Make me be someone who I speak with today may know that they have met with you even through me.

- [19 : 56] God comes and visits us and makes himself known to us through our conscience. Everybody has a conscience. It's something that God has given us. It's one of the evidences, one of the proofs that we are not creatures that have evolved from apes.

It's one of the evidences that we are created in the image of God because we have a conscience that says that's wrong. That's right. Even though we've sinned, even though sinners marred that and dirtied our conscience and it's not as good as it used to be and doesn't work as well as it should, the fact of the matter is it's there.

It's an evidence to the truth. Paul writes about people who don't know God. He says this, the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences bearing witness and their thoughts now accusing or now defending.

You know what that conscience is. When you do something you shouldn't do, say something you shouldn't say, it's there, it's just that nagging bell ringing in your head.

You shouldn't have said that. That feeling of guilt or conviction that that was wrong. That's God speaking to you. That's what God has placed and left with you.

[21 : 14] It's a precious thing. It's an important thing. The trouble is, of course, we don't like it, do we? We don't like having a conscience because it gets in the way of having fun. It makes us feel bad when we do things that we know we shouldn't do but we like to do because they feed our lusts or they feed our pride or they feed our arrogance.

But you see, if we keep on ignoring our conscience, if we keep on pushing it to one side, if we keep on rejecting the voice that God has given us, then we are ignoring God but more than that.

We're going to stifle our conscience. It's going to become quieter and quieter and quieter. Why is it that men and women can do the things that they do? How can they do those atrocities? How can they carry out such evil things?

Because they have rejected their conscience again and again and again and again until at last that conscience cannot be heard, will not be heard.

What about you? How is your conscience this morning? Is it still active? Are you still listening to it? Are you still being guided by it?

[22 : 27] Are you still willing to receive its chastisement, its correction? Or have you got to such a place that even now when God speaks to you through it and through other things as well, that's it.

I don't want to hear. I can't hear. Has your conscience been so quietened? God's given it to you. It's him coming to you.

It's him speaking to you so that you might know not only what's right and wrong but you might know what's truth and what's a lie. That you might know that God wants you to be right with him.

The conscience isn't there to push you away from God. It's to show you how much you need God. It's not just to show you how wrong you are but to show you that there's forgiveness with Jesus if you'll come to him.

Conscience is that same warning bell that we have like pain. When you touch something that's hot it hurts, doesn't it? Why? But because it's warning you that if you keep your hand on that which is hot it's going to damage your skin.

[23 : 34] It's going to damage your body. So conscience is the same. It's that warning to say don't touch that sin. Don't go that way. Don't do that thing. It's going to damage you.

Damage you spiritually. Damage your relationship with God. Damage your relationship with others and with yourself as well. And so speaking of pain we think again that there's another way in which God comes to us and that's through our suffering.

And we might think that's very strange. That seems a... God comes to us through suffering. How can God have anything to do with the sufferings and pain that we go through? Well C.S. Lewis famous for the Narnia Chronicles The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe wrote many other books.

He was a man of faith. And he spoke... He wrote a book called The Problem of Pain. And it is a problem. We don't understand it. It's a mystery. We can't comprehend it. But this is what he wrote. God whispers to us in our pleasures.

God speaks to us in our conscience. But God shouts at us in our pain. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

[24 : 43] Why is there suffering in the world? It's a big question. It's a question that many people... Why are there wars and conflicts in Ukraine? Why is it that people are ill and die of awful diseases?

Why do we see things going on on our newspapers and in our televisions which seem to us to be so wrong and bad? Why do things go wrong in my life? Why do I have to suffer?

Why do I have to deal with these things as well? Why do people reject me? Why do marriages break up? Why do these things happen? The Bible makes it very clear. The problem is not God but us.

The problem is our sin. The problem is our rejection of God and doing things our own way and going our own way. Not that God is punishing us when we're sick. No, that's not what I'm saying.

Or God is punishing us when a marriage fails. Or God is punishing us when we're involved in conflict. No. But because this world as a whole, us included, have turned away from the God who made us and created us and because we have ultimately sought to please ourselves in one way or another, then basically sin has brought with it all the consequences of disease, of sadness, of suffering, and of pain.

[25 : 57] And so when we suffer pain, God is not punishing us. Now there's consequences for our wrong behavior. If you're an alcoholic, then there's things that will happen. Your liver will get cirrhosis.

It's a consequence, not a punishment. But what God is doing through the sufferings that we face, through the pains that we go through, through the hardships, he's saying this. You need me.

You can't make it on your own. You need me. God is getting our attention. You see, the problem is, as we know, that when life is comfortable and things are going well, well, we forget full of God.

That happens even with Christians, would you believe? But more so with those who are not Christians, those who aren't believers. We go through life. Life is well. We do our own thing. We've got enough money to pay the bills. We've got enough money to go on holiday.

Work isn't too hard, and so on. But then something happens. Then something awful happens. Something sad happens. Something tragic happens. And our attention is caught. And we realize that life is more than just what we have, or what we experience, or what we feel.

[27 : 01] We realize that we're mortal. We realize that we're getting older. We realize that we're not going to have these bodies forever. God is getting our attention. That's what's happening.

Has God got your attention? Have you seen that the problems that you face and the pain that you're going through are all God's way of saying, I want to be part of your life. You need me.

You can't manage on your own. You need my care, my forgiveness, my love, my grace. In so many ways, God comes to us.

In many ways, perhaps as well, that we recognize elsewhere. God has come to you. Whoever you are, there's not one of you here this morning who has not had an experience I've spoken about.

Not one of you has not had God coming to you and speaking to you, making himself known to you. You may say, what does it matter? What does it matter whether I recognize God's coming or not?

[28 : 00] What does it matter that these people in Jesus' day recognized God's coming or not? Well, it does matter. It matters so vitally. It matters so importantly as we see and hear here.

See, because the people had rejected God's coming to them, it moved Jesus to weep. You see that? As he approached Jerusalem, verse 41, and saw the city, he wept over it.

If you even knew you had only known on this day. If you had recognized, if you saw this was God coming to you, he weeps. Now, Jesus is not recorded as a man who bursts into tears on every occasion.

There's only one other occasion recorded, actually, in the Bible here, of Jesus weeping. It's when he's at the graveside of his dear friend Lazarus. Now, we can appreciate why somebody would weep there.

We've all wept there. But why would somebody weep like this? Why would Jesus weep here and now? Why would he weep about the rejection of the people of God?

[29 : 05] Is he weeping out of his own frustration? Weeping because I've spent three years trying to convince these people of who I am and they still haven't got it. No, he's not weeping out of frustration.

He's not weeping because they're rejecting him. He's not even weeping here because of the prospect of his death and suffering to come. No, he's not weeping for himself.

Jesus never wept for himself in that way. He's weeping for those who've rejected God. He's weeping for those who are soon going to be calling out for his death, a symbol, a signpost to the fact that they were rejecting God, the God who made them and the God who blessed them.

He's weeping over the sin of the whole of these people, this whole city, this nation. Sin is making him weep when he realizes the consequences and the terrible thing that sin brings about and the horror that it brings.

It causes him to weep. What about you and me? Do we weep over sin? Do we weep at the hardness of men and women's hearts against the Lord Jesus?

[30 : 13] Does it break your heart as it did Jesus that men and women today are people who would rather have their sin and rather go their own way than embrace and receive the wonderful love of God?

I'm not just talking about being heartbroken over the suffering we see, whether it be children or whether it be families or whether it be people. I'm not just talking about the grief that we see at the acts of atrocity in the world but grief over sin in our own hearts as well.

Do we grieve over the way that we behave and do we grieve over the fact that we are people who in spite of the love of God in spite of all he's done for us still continue to be selfish and proud and self-serving and self-pleasing?

Do we weep over those who continue to reject the Lord Jesus? We say, well why? Why weep over sin? I mean sin nowadays, let's be honest, alright, yeah, I know what you're saying about the atrocities in Syria and those sort of things but really the sin of our nation in this world, well, you know, rejecting Jesus, well, there's nothing bad about that, surely there's nothing to weep over that, it's people just having the freedom of choice and going their own way and doing their own thing, what's wrong with that?

Why should Jesus weep over that? Why should we weep over that? Well, because Jesus makes it very plain that their rejection of the Lord God coming to them in Jesus, their rejection of God robs them of peace.

[31 : 44] If even you, verse 42, had known on this day what would bring you peace, but now it's hidden from your eyes. Jesus says that their rejection of God ultimately is the robbing of them of peace.

What peace is he talking about? Are you talking about warfare? Are you talking about conflicts? No, he's not talking about that really. He's talking about something much more important than just the cessation of people fighting with each other or disliking each other.

He's talking about a peace which is far more lasting and far more personal. He's talking about the peace that we need to have with God. That's the most necessary peace.

It's very plain, as I said before, that sin is that which is going against God and rejecting God. That makes us God's enemies. That places us on opposing sides in a conflict.

Our sinful hearts, our sinful words, our sinful actions are counted by God as acts of aggression against him, of enmity towards him. That's what the Bible teaches.

[32 : 52] That's what Paul says here in Colossians chapter 1. He says, speaking to believers, once you were alienated, cut off from, separated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Have you ever considered that? That you are an enemy of God because you have sought to go your own way, because you've sought to please yourself, because you've said, God, I do not want you, I've rejected you and you've come and spoken to me and met with me, you've made yourself his enemy.

Now, if there's a conflict that's taking place between God and you, there's only two ways that conflict, that war can end, isn't there? Either you can surrender to God, you can surrender to the greater power.

Let's be honest, who's going to win the battle between you and God? You certainly are not going to win the battle and I am not going to win the battle. No human being can win against God. So we either sue for terms of surrender, terms of peace with God and enjoy peace with him and are reconciled to him and made friends with him.

But if we don't do that, if we continue to reject him coming to us again and again to make peace with us, if we continue to stay, no, I will remain in this position of warfare against God, I'll continue to be his enemy by continuing to do what pleases me, then there's only one possible outcome.

[34 : 20] It's the one that Jesus speaks about what will happen to the people of his day because they've rejected God. Verse 43, the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.

They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls, they will not leave one stone on another. He's talking about judgment and punishment.

Now Jesus was talking 40 years before the events that took place because in the year AD 70, the Roman emperor at that time fed up with unrest in Israel, sent his armies to Israel, decimated the country, destroyed the temple, destroyed Jerusalem, killed a vast number of its inhabitants and scattered the entire nation.

But worse than that, there is things worse than death, yes. Worse than that, these people who had enjoyed God's blessing for thousands of years lost that privilege.

They lost that relationship with God which was so special. They lost God's wonderful love and grace to them and became outcasts from God from then on.

[35 : 39] By not recognizing God's coming to them, by not recognizing and receiving God in the love that he came to them, they brought upon themselves by their sin God's judgment. And that's the case too with us.

You see, if we receive Jesus, if we accept him as God coming to us when he comes to us through our conscience, when he comes to us through the message, when he comes to us through Christian people, when he comes to us through sufferings, we hear him and receive him, then God promises us wonderful things.

In John chapter 1, we're told this, to all who received Jesus, to those who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God. Instead of being God's enemies, we're not just made his friends, but we're made his children.

We're brought into his family. We're brought into his embrace. We are brought into a place of knowing and receiving and enjoying his love and care, protection and provision for now and for eternity.

Our sin's forgiven. But if we don't, if we continue to hold up our hands and say no, if we continue to ignore him and reject him, if we continue to go the way we're going, it can only mean one thing.

[36 : 51] We continue in alienation from God, not only in this life, but in the life to come. And at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we're told that there will be a day of judgment, a day of punishment, a day of justice, when sentence will be passed.

And we shall forever be sent into hell itself. So, have you received? Have you recognized God's coming?

We say, how can I do that? What should I do? How should I receive Jesus? How should I recognize his coming when he's speaking to me even this morning? When he's been speaking to me through my life in many other ways, what must I do?

Recognizing Jesus' coming means first of all recognizing that I'm a sinner, that he came to save sinners and that I'm a sinner, repenting of that sin, turning away from going my way.

Repenting means changing my mind. Instead of doing what I want and following my way, my mind is changed. I'm saying, no God, I'm going to go your way. It means repenting and putting our faith and trust in Jesus as the one who took the punishment for our sins on the cross, recognizing that my sin which deserved God's alienation, he endured for me and thanking him for it and trusting that my standing with God, my friendship with God is based upon what Jesus has done and not anything that I can do for myself.

[38 : 25] Dear friends, this morning, Jesus has come to you. Just as surely as he rode into Jerusalem, he's here now.

He's here now with mercy, he's here now with grace, he's here now with the opportunity and the offer of forgiveness, of life, of peace, of God.

Have you recognized his coming? Can you really reject him again? Can you reject him as they did?

Can you really just move and leave this place with your heart unchanged, with your life unchanged, with your relationship unchanged? Can you continue? You've got no guarantee that this, like for them, is the last opportunity.

There may not be another occasion when God comes to you, may not be another time, but he's here now and he's faithful to all his promises. He's faithful.

[39 : 27] When Jesus says, whoever comes to me, I'll never drive away, you can be sure that as God comes to you, if you come to him, then all these things, all these blessings and so much more, he will give you.

Come to him. He is here and he comes with love. Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.