

Luke Chapter 6 v 12 - 26

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] Good morning. A warm welcome to every one of you, particularly a warm welcome to those of you who are visiting us.

We've got quite a lot of visitors this morning, which is great. A few of our folk are away. So we trust that already you've enjoyed some of the delights of Whitby and trust that together as we come to worship our God, we might know again his presence, his help, and we might know that joy of our salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Who is this Jesus that we're coming to worship? Well, we may be surprised to know, though I hope you aren't too surprised, that Jesus appears and is spoken of all through the Bible, not just the New Testament, but the Old as well. Lots of places refer to him.

And one place is in Psalm 24, where we're asked the question, who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, is the reply.

Who is this King of glory? Our Lord Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, we're told. We know that he is the one who has all authority and power. He is the one who has battled, battled and overcome, battled with death and hell and sin and risen victorious from the grave.

[1 : 17] That's why we meet on a Sunday morning, because it's the first day of the week when we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus our Lord. So let's sing together our first hymn, the Lord is King, lift up your voice, O earth and heavens, rejoice.

Number 54 in our hymn books. Let's stand as we sing. Let's continue in our worship of God as we pray together. Let us all pray.

You, O Lord, our God, are indeed the King. Not a King, not one amongst many, not one amongst others, but the King, the sole King, just as you are the only God, the only Lord, the only ruler.

We thank you again that there is exclusivity about you, our God. You are alone, head and shoulders, more than that, way and above, beyond anything that we can imagine or understand or know or experience in this world.

You are the creator and everything else is your creation. You're the originator and from you everything comes. Every good gift that we have has its source in you.

[2 : 38] The fact that we have life and health and strength this morning is because it's your gift. The fact that we have had homes to sleep in or beds to sleep on, food to eat, clothes to wear.

These are all tokens of your wonderful goodness to your creation. We thank you that we have beautiful weather, sun and warmth. We thank you too, Lord, that you give us rain when we need it.

Because, O Lord, you are the God who cares for this world that you've made. And you care for the people of this world with an inexpressible and a marvelous love.

A love which is way and beyond providing the practical, material things of life. But that love which is so perfectly expressed in the giving of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, we thank you that your word declares that it was that God so loved the world, he gave his one and only begotten son. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you came as the love gift of the Father.

[3 : 39] Thank you that you came gladly and willingly to give yourself for us. To provide for us our greatest need. To provide for us something that we need more desperately than even the air we breathe.

To provide for us salvation. The forgiveness of our sins. Life everlasting. Peace with God. Oh, Lord, we thank you that you did that at great cost and price to yourself.

That you suffered in our place. That you died our death. That you endured the punishment of our sin upon yourself. Oh, how, in one sense, impossible it is for us to grasp.

That you, the sinless, the perfect son of God, should pay our penalty. Oh, Lord, we ask that you would help us never to forget this.

Help us every day, not just on a Sunday, but every day. To delight and rejoice in the fact that our sins are forgiven because of Jesus. And if we are perhaps people here this morning and we've never known that forgiveness of sin.

[4 : 45] And we've never known that newness of life that Christ brings. Lord, speak to us today. Lord, give us no peace and no rest until we gladly bow the knee and bow the heart to Jesus as our King, our Lord and our Savior.

Help us, we pray, by your Holy Spirit this morning. As we come to worship. As we come to hear your word. As we come to listen to it preached and explained. Lord, we ask that your Holy Spirit may be at work in our hearts, our minds, our lives.

That you would do us good because that's your great desire. That's why you gathered us and brought us here. You long to do us good. To bless us. We pray, oh Lord, that you would make us ready to receive that blessing of your grace.

So we bring these prayers to you. And we give you thanks that we have a King, a Lord, a Redeemer and a Ruler. Who we know is faithful. Work out your purposes and plans.

And fulfill your good will amongst us we ask. Not just this morning but throughout our lives day by day. For we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, John.

[5 : 57] Thank you, Richard. Just going to add to that notice about the open air this afternoon. I need somebody who would be willing to give their testimony. Okay. We usually have somebody give a testimony during the afternoon.

Just a three or four minute testimony. So please, can you think about that? Have a word to me after the service this morning. If you don't, then I will pick somebody. So it's better to jump than be pushed, isn't it?

So please have a word to me about that. And then can I ask you, if you're going to be there, can you try and come around about ten to four? So we get all the chairs out, set up, ready to go for four o'clock. And again, it's not like an open air you've probably been to before if you're a visitor.

It's very much like our evening service planted out on the cliff top. And very easy to find. You go out the front door here, turn left until you reach the sea. Or before you get to the sea, there's a cliff.

Don't go over the cliff. Just on the right, you'll see us gathered there. And there's some benches there. If you've got chairs, bring your own chairs or rugs to sit on. And it's a wonderful opportunity not only to fellowship but to take the gospel to those around and about.

[7 : 06] We're going to read together from God's word together now and from the gospel of Luke. We've been going through the gospel of Luke over the past several weeks and months, on and off.

And we're in chapter 6 now. And we're going to read from verse 12. So chapter 6 of Luke, verse 12. That's page 1033.

If you've got one of the church editions of the Bible. 1033, Luke chapter 6, verse 12. We're going to read down to verse 26. But we're not going to be covering all that material this morning.

So let's hear the word of God. One of those days, Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God.

When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose 12 of them, whom he also designated apostles. Simon, whom he named Peter, his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, son of Alphaeus, Simon, who was called the Zealot, Judas, son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

[8 : 22] He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him to be healed of their diseases.

Those troubled by impure spirits were cured. The people all tried to touch him because power was coming from him and healing them all. Looking at his disciples, he said, Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil because of the Son of Man.

Blessed are you who are poor, for you will be satisfied. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven, for that is how their ancestors treated the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you.

[9 : 42] That is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. If you want to make use of the creche or the Sunday school, if you'd like to go to those activities now, please.

If you have a Bible, and I'd encourage you to have one, open Luke and chapter 6, then that will be a help to you as we turn there to the reading that we looked at before, verses 12 and following.

I wonder if you've ever heard your own echo. Echo, echo. Have you ever heard your own echo? Have you ever been to one of these mountain gorges or to maybe a large cave or something, and you've called out, hello, and you've heard your own voice repeated as the sound waves are bounced back from the rocks around about you?

I don't think I ever have. I was trying to think when I was thinking about it. I don't think I ever have. It's one of the things I really want to do. It's on my bucket list to do before I die. Hopefully go somewhere I can hear the sound of my own voice. You may say, surely you're sick of hearing the sound of your voice by now, preaching every Sunday, but no, that's something I like to do.

Of course, the echo that we hear is our real voice, but it's not the original voice, isn't it? It's our real voice. It's us speaking, but it's a copy.

[11 : 00] It's a reflection in one sense, a bouncing back. Now, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, which, of course, is what Luke is all about, his teaching, his ministry, especially his death, his atonement, his resurrection from the dead, all of these things took place that we might recognize he is the original word of God.

The original word of God. That's how John describes him, doesn't he, as he opens up his gospel. In John chapter 1, the very first verse, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

And we know that he's talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, because just later on in that same chapter, the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We've seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the original. He's the true. He's the one and only. That's why, as Christians, though it may seem to many others as arrogance, we have to declare that salvation is found in no one else but Jesus Christ.

There is no salvation in Muhammad. There is no salvation in the teachings of Buddha, or in the religion of Hinduism, or Sikhism, or anything else, because there is but one.

[12 : 26] Jesus is the one, the original, the true. And what we read before Jesus is coming, in the Old Testament, is the echo of the original.

Unlike the echo that we have when we speak comes after the original, the echo of Jesus himself, his ministry, is before he comes. The Old Testament is the echo.

Hebrews uses a slightly different illustration to describe the Old Testament relationship to Jesus. It uses the illustration of a shadow being cast back. And so, Hebrews in chapter 10, the law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities themselves.

Hebrews is all about showing Jesus as the fulfillment of everything that's shadowed, or echoed in the Old Testament. Even the priesthood are of the sacrifices.

We read in Hebrews chapter 8 and verse 5. They serve, that's the priests, at a sanctuary that is a copy and a shadow. So all that God commanded in the Old Testament, all he commanded of his people, Israel, in the ceremonial law and the civil law and the moral law that we're given, it was something which was to point forward to, the coming of Jesus.

[13 : 45] It was only something temporary until the full picture, the full revelation of God's truth and will. That's why Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 5, makes very plain to his hearers, do not think I came to abolish the law or the prophets.

That's the Old Testament. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. And so when we come to Luke's gospel and the life of Jesus, what we're meant to see and what Luke wants us to see, and all the gospel writers as well want us to see, that in Jesus we have the full picture.

We have the original. We have the true voice. The original voice. We have the one that we must listen to and pay attention to. And here in these verses that we read, I believe that we can find two realities that have an echo in the Old Testament that we're meant to see as original in the work of Jesus.

Now those of you here last week, remember we looked particularly at the battle that raged between Jesus and the Pharisees, the religious teachers of his day. And they had taken, the Pharisees had taken the Old Testament, God's word and revelation there, and they'd interpreted it wrongly, falsely.

They'd made it into something harmful instead of a blessing. And that particularly centered around their use of the Sabbath. And we saw there that Jesus answers by speaking to them about how his ministry was something which could not be, as it were, aligned to something that was human or earthly or worn out.

[15 : 29] So he gave two parables in verse 36 of chapter 5. No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. And later on, no one pours new wine into old wineskins.

Jesus' ministry was something which was wonderfully new. He wouldn't kowtow, as it were, to the religious leaders, the Pharisees, to their man-made laws, which they imposed upon all those who followed them.

But he insisted that he had the unique authority to declare what God's will was. Verse 5 of chapter 6, Jesus said to them, The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

In other words, I can tell you exactly what the Sabbath is for and the laws pertaining to it. I have the authority to do that. And later on in verse 9, he questions them.

Is it lawful, I ask you, on the Sabbath, to do good or to do evil, to save life or destroy it? Again, I'm the one who can tell you what is right and just.

[16 : 34] And he heals a man, much to the rancor and the anger of the religious establishment. So we come to verse 12 and in verse 12 and following we have a sort of a mini Sermon on the Mount, don't we?

Matthew gives us this great three chapters of the Sermon on the Mount. 5, 6, and 7. A wonderful display. Here Luke condenses it, but we're meant to see something very similar and something much the same.

The first reality we're meant to see is that Jesus speaks the true word of God rather than Moses. Jesus speaks the true word of God rather than Moses.

What do I mean by that? How does Luke show us that? How is it reflected here? Well, verse 12 is a shadow really of what we find in Exodus 19.

In Exodus 19, God's people have come all the way through the wilderness and they've reached Mount Sinai, this mountain that God had directed them to particularly. What happens when they get there?

[17 : 39] We're told in chapter 19, verse 3, Then Moses went up to God and the Lord called to him from the mountain. Moses went up the mountain to meet with God.

What do we find happens in Luke in chapter 2? Jesus goes up the mountain to meet with God. We're meant to see that echo. We're meant to see that shadow.

That Jesus is fulfilling something seen in the life of Moses. And why did Moses go up the mountain to meet with God that he might receive the word of God?

Verse 3 again of Exodus 19. This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob, what you are to tell the people of Israel.

And what do we find about Jesus? He goes up to meet with God so that immediately when he comes down, he speaks the word of God to them. He declares to them the will, the purposes, the desires, and the pleasures of God.

[18 : 42] Moses was there 40 days, wasn't he? With God. God spoke to him all his will concerning the tabernacle, the sacrifices, the priesthood, about the law, about their behavior and their worship and their future.

When we studied that as a church, we studied Exodus just earlier on this year. We saw again just in full detail what that all meant. But now Jesus is on the mountain and he's seeking the will of God, isn't he?

That's why he's praying and he's praying for his people, his disciples. And what happens when he comes down the mountain? We know exactly what happens. We're told there he went down, verse 17, with them and stood on a level place.

Then verse 20, looking at his disciples, he said, blessed are you. And so on. He's delivering the will and the word of God. Just as Moses had done in Exodus in chapter 19, Moses went back down, summoned the elders and the people, set before them all the words of the Lord, commanded him to speak.

There's these two great men, as it were, Moses and Jesus. Moses, the great law giver. But he was only God's messenger.

[19 : 57] He only relayed what God had to say to the people. He was highly revered, wasn't he? Particularly by the religious people of Jesus' day. Moses was the greatest servant of God.

He was the one who in the whole history of Israel was elevated and exalted and thought greatly of. But of course, he was only a man. A man who had faults, as you read through the rest of the Old Testament in Numbers and Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

A man who lost his temper. A man who got angry. He had his own sins. In fact, we know that when Hebrews speaks about Moses, it speaks about him as being a servant in God's household.

Hebrews in chapter 3 in verse 5. Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house, bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future.

But Jesus is the reality. He's not the servant. He's the faithful son. But Christ, Hebrews chapter 3 verse 6, is faithful as the son of God's house.

[21 : 06] And we are his house. Moses promised the people that after him there would come someone greater.

There would come a prophet. Stephen picks up it in his sermon in Acts, but it's there in Deuteronomy 18. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me.

From among your own brothers, you must listen to him. This one who is coming is indeed not the messenger of God, but he is God himself.

Jesus speaks with the authority of God because he is God. When he comes and speaks to the people, he doesn't say, God has told you to do this. He himself declares, blessed are you.

all woe to you. When up the mountain, he came down and he delivered the word of God.

[22 : 03] It means we just cannot ignore Jesus' words. Nearly everybody that we meet or speak to even today has some sense of reverence for the Ten Commandments.

Most people say, yes, you should keep those commandments. You shouldn't steal and you shouldn't kill and you shouldn't lie. Yes, we can see there's some merit in them. But dear friends, the words of Jesus are much greater.

They're not the echo, they're the original. They're not just the shadow, they're the reality. They're the truth. And you and I, dear friends, we can't ignore the words of Jesus. We can't just turn a deaf ear to them or choose from them those which we like to hear.

When Jesus' disciples later on in John chapter 6 struggle with the teaching of Jesus, some of them leave. Peter and some of the others stay. And Jesus says to them, why aren't you going to leave?

Or are you going to leave? And they said, Lord, where are we going to go? Because you have the words of eternal life. Jesus' words are not merely about ceremony or civil obedience.

[23 : 08] They're not simply words which direct us and teach us. And indeed, they do that at least. But they are the words of eternal life. Only if we will listen to Christ and obey his word, only if we will take his word seriously as the word of God, then there is imparted to us something which is beyond anything else.

Life everlasting, death conquered, sin forgiven. How seriously, dear friends, do you take Jesus' words as the word of God?

And you might say to me, oh, Peter, but I take it very seriously. I do believe the words of Jesus and I, when did you last read the words of Jesus? When did you last listen to the words of Jesus?

If you really believe them to be the words of God, why isn't it that every single day you aren't in the scriptures, looking, searching, saying, Lord Jesus, speak to me the words of eternal life?

Why is it, dear friends, that sometimes as Christians we come to God's word and we think, what a pain, what a burden, why is it that we think of it as something other than it is the joyful delivery of God's truth, the life-giving word, the life-transforming word, the blessing word?

[24 : 30] Is it perhaps that we've got a wrong view, that the problem is our hearts, not the word of God, our attitude, not the word of God, our sins?

When God's word, when Jesus' word hits against our sin, which one gives way? God's word or our sin? Jesus has the original word of God.

We must listen to him and we must hear him. Not just, not just as James says in his letter, listen and then forget as a man looks at a mirror and then forgets his face, he says we have to listen and do.

It's no good to us, is it? Just listening and ignoring. It's a bit like when you're driving along the road. None of you have ever done this, of course. You drive along and you think, I wonder what the speed limit is. Oh, there's the sign, it tells me it's 30.

Oh, I'm doing 45. Never mind, I'll carry on the speed I'm doing. None of you do that. But just imagine that you did. It's foolish, isn't it?

[25 : 37] If you know the speed limit and you ignore it, who's to blame? The speed limit, the sign, is the sign not clear? The sign's clear. The way that you drive, that's your responsibility.

Dear friends, we have a responsibility if we are believers to live out the word of God because it is plain and clear to us. Dear friend, if you're not a Christian, then you have a huge weight upon your shoulders.

How can you ignore? How can you reject? How can you dismiss the words of Christ when they are so very plain, when they're so very clear?

Must put your faith in him. The second thing that I believe that we're meant to see here, and it comes out particularly with the men that Jesus calls apart, clearly there was a great number of disciples.

We don't know how many. We know when we get to the day of Pentecost, of course, there was 120 disciples, but they're told he called his disciples, all sorts of different people, and he chose from that group.

[26 : 41] So we've got to get out of our minds that picture. Sometimes we get that picture, don't we? There's Jesus, and he's journeying. He's got just 12 men. There's just 12 there, but we know that women were there, and we know that others were there.

There's more than just 12. There may have been, who knows, 50, 60, how many, but here they are. But what we're meant to see here, I believe, is this, that Jesus establishes or sets up the true kingdom of God as compared to the kingdom of Israel.

The true kingdom of God as compared to the kingdom of Israel. Do you ever think, why did Jesus choose 12 apostles? Why did he just pick those 12? Why didn't he pick 10?

That's a good decimal number, isn't it? A nice round number. Why didn't he pick 13? Not because he was superstitious, of course. Why? Why that particular number? And these 12 are very clearly set apart, aren't they?

Well, the phrase used here is designated apostles. They're marked out as 12. And that goes all the way through Luke's gospel. They're referred to as the 12.

[27 : 47] In fact, that became almost a saying, a phrase to refer to them, even after Judas had left them. Even in Acts and chapter, sorry, in 1 Corinthians 15, when Paul is talking about the resurrection of Jesus, how he appeared to certain people.

And he appeared to Cephas, he says, meaning Peter. And then to the 12. Well, there weren't the 12 because Judas wasn't there, but they were still referred to in that way. That number is important, so important that when Jesus died and, of course, Judas Iscariot hung himself after he had betrayed him, the apostles, the disciples, sought to appoint another apostle.

And you find that in Acts and chapter 1. There's an event that takes place where they talk about who they should have to replace.

And two men are put forward as possible new apostles and Matthias is chosen. These men, these 12 men here, were the foundation of the church, the ones that Jesus built his kingdom upon, Ephesians and chapter 2.

You are fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone.

[29 : 11] In one sense, it was from those 12 that the church was built, wasn't it? It was from those 12 as they took the gospel out and preached it from the day of Pentecost and throughout the world.

The church is based upon, founded upon, originates with this 12. What are we meant to see here?

What's the echo that we're meant to see? Well, immediately, I hope, in your minds, there's the thought, where else do we find 12 in the Old Testament? 12 tribes of Israel.

And those 12 tribes, we know, were the 12 sons of Jacob. Genesis 35 tells us about them. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali.

They were all the sons of Jacob. They were the ones from whom all the 12 tribes came. They were the originators of the kingdom of Israel. It was built upon them, built through their bloodline.

[30 : 17] But the kingdom of God is always going to be and always meant to include people from every nation, every tongue, every race. Israel wasn't the perfect, it wasn't the complete, it was about the shadow.

The kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament was just a looking forward to, a reflection of the true body of God's people, which was to include people of every nation, tongue, and time, which Christ established.

The Old Testament people were the people of God heard the echo of Jesus. They heard the echo of Jesus through the sacrifices and the ceremonies and the rituals and the prophecies.

That's why the Old Testament is so rich for us, it's a blessing for us, because it keeps popping up and showing us something of Jesus in an echo type, in a shadow type. But it was never the full voice of God in that sense.

It was never the original word of God as Jesus is and as we've received it through him. This is what Peter writes in his first letter, chapter 1.

[31 : 27] Concerning this salvation, the prophets who spoke of the grace that was to come to you searched intently and with the greatest care. Talking about the Old Testament.

Trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you. In other words, the New Testament, the church, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

In other words, what he's saying is simply this. All the Old Testament, the prophets and those who knew about the coming of the Messiah, the Christ, they were looking forward to, they were seeking out, trying to find out.

They'd heard the echo, they'd seen the shadow, but they didn't have the reality because it wasn't going to come until the church had come. Until Jesus had come. That's why as Christians in the church, we do things which are the real picture compared to the shadow.

[32 : 33] Think of baptism. We practice the baptism of believers and their children because the echo was circumcision in the Old Testament. We celebrate the Lord's Supper, the gathering, as we do because it is the reality of the echo of the Passover meal, which was looking forward to the sacrifice of Christ and we look back.

Dear friends, we don't have shadows anymore. We don't have echoes of the voice as the Old Testament did. They only had it partly revealed.

We may read through and look at the mistakes they made, the terrible sins and blunders that they fell into and they were there and there to be an example to us. But dear friends, we have no excuse.

We have it clearly revealed, clearly spoken, clearly seen. As again, Peter writes in his second letter, chapter 1, weave the prophetic message as something completely reliable or certain or sure or solid and you'll do well to pay attention to it as a light shining in a dark place.

Dear friends, to belong to the church of Jesus Christ is no small thing. To be a Christian and be part of God's kingdom is no trifle.

[34 : 03] It's not something unimportant. It is essential. It is imperative. It's what everything in history was leading up to. It was, the church is what Christ has determined and established in the earth.

You can't be a Christian, dear friends, apart from being part of the church of Jesus Christ because as soon as you become a Christian you are part of the church of Jesus Christ and you're part of the kingdom of God.

That's why the very first thing that Jesus teaches when he speaks on that Sermon on the Mount according to Luke is, blessed are the poor for yours is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God.

We are citizens of a king we belong to a kingdom. Our citizenship is not of this earth Paul says. We belong to heaven to that heavenly kingdom to that spiritual kingdom.

Whatever our loyalty is to our nation to our country to our government to our family our first loyalty is to Christ and his kingdom.

[35 : 06] We belong to him and we belong to one another as well. And therefore dear friends again let me say to you do you treasure the church of Jesus Christ?

Do you count it in incredible honor and privilege to be part of the kingdom of God? And do you treasure one another as believers in that kingdom?

That kingdom that Christ has established that church that he has put in place. You cannot dear friends despise the church the people of God and be a Christian. That's why what did Jesus say was the very first commandment.

Sorry not the first commandment the new commandment love one another as I have loved you to his disciples. We can't allow fighting between us.

We cannot allow unforgiveness between us. We cannot allow sides and cliques and groups and parties. We have to declare and say we are part of the kingdom of God.

[36 : 09] We belong together. One of the great tragedies wasn't it that you saw through the Old Testament was how Israel and Judah split and became warring with one another and tribes fought against one another.

There's no place for tribalism in the church of Jesus Christ. There is one body one people. Yes we're different. Yes we have different facets and we have different takes on things and we have different different ideas and we have but we are one in Christ.

We belong to the kingdom of God. We belong to one another. If you're a Christian then you are my brother or my sister and I am your brother. Closer bonds than blood.

A bond of the spirit and a bond of Christ. Let me urge you two things. If you're not a Christian why aren't you part of our family? Let me urge you we all have that sense of wanting to belong of needing to belong and so we join a group and we join the golf club and we join a group and the bowls club or we join the reading circle.

We all have a sense of needing to belong but actually what we need to do is belong to the people of God. The family of Christ. And dear friends if you are a member of that family of Christ why put that away are you spending time with your family?

[37 : 28] Do you pray for your family? Are they the ones that you love? Are you loyal to them? That when somebody says a nasty word against them no you'll stand to their defense.

When they sin against you which we all do to one another you'll forgive them and seek to put it right. That you don't lord it over one another or boss one another. Dear friends this is such an important aspect of the ministry and the kingdom that Jesus Christ brought.

And just as we bring to a close let's just look at some of the members of that kingdom of that family. Let's look at these original twelve just for a moment as we close. Not going to go into a great deal with them. But you'll see that the kingdom of God the church of Christ has always included people of every sort people of every kind.

first of all you've got Simon who's called Peter his brother Andrew, James, John they're all sorry James and John they're all fishermen they're all working class men they're all salt of the earth they're all men who were physically material getting stuck in laboring type of men they were not the kings the officials they were the everyday salt of the earth bottom of the pile and they had to work if they didn't work they didn't eat and if they didn't eat their families didn't eat it was a hand to mouth existence it was tough but then you do get a civil servant Matthew he's the same person that we met earlier on Levi the tax collector he was a civil servant he was an office job sort of fella he was also a bit crooked as we know because he was a tax collector before he became a Christian but he was an office worker then we have of course an extremist

Simon the Zealot may have just been a nickname because perhaps he was really zealous but more and certainly it was to do with a party that he belonged to a group he belonged to basically they were a group of terrorists who did all they could to terrorize the Romans so they could drive them out of the country they were not they were not adverse to killing Roman soldiers or setting up ambushes whether he was involved in that we don't know but put it this way he was a terrorist of his day extremist then we have someone who was a bit of a religious and pious man we have the name there Bartholomew but actually that's just another name for Nathaniel Nathaniel we meet in John chapter 1 Jesus calls him an Israelite in whom there's no deceit he was a genuinely pious and religious man looking for and seeking after doing God's will Bartholomew just means son of Ptolemy so it would have been one of his maybe his nickname or his other sort of name he was known by people who are religious not everybody is religious but some people are they seem drawn to that but religion cannot save you religion cannot make you a disciple of God religion can't bring you into the kingdom of God it must be faith in Christ it must be becoming a disciple of Jesus and then of course we have a nasty traitor a thieving traitor we know

[40 : 58] Judas Iscariot we know elsewhere that he used to take from the the money purse as it were which was for the poor and then he went on to betray Jesus a man who gives the impression on the outside that he's a real follower of Jesus but inside he's rotten to the core dear friends there's a warning isn't there do I look good on the outside but inside I'm full of rottenness have I been following Jesus externally perhaps because my parents are Christians or because my spouse is a Christian and I've gone along to church and I've gone through the motions and I give the appearance of being a nice person or even a follow Jesus but inside my heart is not changed there's a grave grave grave warning to each one of us there we cannot take for granted because we do Christian things that we are Christian people get that heart right we don't know all the inner workings of Jesus' heart but let me put it this way he had three years of listening to the preaching of

Jesus and his heart was not changed and then we've got three other people we don't know much about these other people we're not really told anything about them particularly occasionally they speak but we don't know anything about their background or their job or their previous existence or anything they were just ordinary everyday people the truth is whoever you are you can become a disciple of Jesus you don't have to be religious and you don't have to be terrible you have to know you're a sinner of course because only sinners come to Jesus he welcomes sinners but there's nothing else that can bar you from coming to Jesus you can come to him you can put your faith in him and you can be saved by him whoever you are whatever age you are whatever background you're from whatever obstacles or hindrances that you might face in life but the only way you can come to him is by listening to him the one who has the words of eternal life and believing in him and he will bring you into his kingdom close with these words from Colossians chapter 1 where Paul describes what's happened to everyone who puts their faith in

Jesus he has rescued us from the dominion that's the rule of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son he loves us in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins let's sing together our final hymn this morning it's number 704 come thou fount of every blessing tune my heart to sing thy grace 704 you have come to mount zion to the city of the living god the heavenly jerusalem you have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly to the church of the first born whose names are written in heaven you've come to god the judge of all to the spirits of the righteous made perfect you've come to jesus the mediator of a new covenant amen