

# A message for all of us

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Date: 14 June 2020

Preacher: Chris Fry

[0:00] A welcome to everyone listening now to the evening meeting of 14th June 2020 from Calvary Church Brighton.! Whatever has caused you to come online, you are heartily welcome and I hope you will enjoy spiritual benefit from this time.

My name is Chris Fry and I'm one of the three elders of the church. Details and points of contact with the church will be on screen or on PDF slides at the end of the meeting.

We're going to read the Bible and it's Psalm 32, titled of David. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.

[1:15] I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found.

Surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. You are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will counsel you and watch over you. Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding, but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous.

Sing, all you who are upright in heart. Let's pray. Our Father, we thank you for so many reasons to come and give you adoration and thanksgiving.

[2:25] We praise and thank you that you are a God who draws sinful people to yourself. You show us our need and you show us that no one can help us except you.

By your grace, you make us willing to confess our sins and come in humility to you. We praise and thank you that though we are deserving of nothing but rejection and judgment, you provide a way in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, by which you can be both just and merciful.

We are blessed. We praise and thank you that we can come freely to you in prayer. In our times of anxiousness, fear and turmoil of spirit, you are our rock and refuge.

You deliver us. We praise and thank you that you guide and discipline us so that we learn to turn our back on the world's thinking and get wisdom and direction from you.

We praise and thank you that your love is unfailing and you surround and support us with this love all the days of our life. We praise and thank you that you put a song in our hearts.

[3:36] We have never-ending reasons to rejoice and be glad in you and your ways. In Jesus' name, Amen. We're now going to sing the song, Sing to God, New Songs of Worship.

Sing to God, New Songs of Worship.

All His deeds are marvelous. He has brought salvation to us with His hand and holy arm.

He has shown to all the nations righteousness and saving power. He recalled His truth and mercy to His people Israel.

Sing to God, New Songs of Worship.

[5:11] Sing to God, New Songs of Worship. Sing to God, New Songs of Worship. Sing to God, New Songs of Worship.

Let the sea now make a noise. Hold on earth and in the waters. Sound your praises to the Lord. Let the hills rejoice together. Let the rivers clap their hands. For with righteousness and justice, He will come to judge the earth.

Let us pray. Our Father, we thank you that you invite and encourage us to bring all matters to you as a child might speak to their father about anything and everything.

We thank you too that the Holy Spirit helps us to pray in accordance with your will. May your kingdom may come to God. May your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. May your kingdom authority be seen more clearly in your people.

[6:25] May your kingdom increase through the saving work of Jesus in many lives. We remember our families, our work colleagues, our neighbours and friends and this city of Brighton and Hove.

May your kingdom come in every life. We pray for your presence and help in the churches of Jesus Christ throughout the world. We remember those who are suffering persecution.

Please continue to uphold them every day, especially those who are grieving through loss of family contact, kidnapping, violence and death. We pray especially for the pastors of churches targeted.

May they continue to be faithful in every circumstance. Supernaturally provide for them and the churches which they shepherd. We remember our good friends, Joel in Cambodia, George and others in the churches of Manar in Sri Lanka, Jamie and Laurie and children in South Albania, Michael and Mary in Italy, Victor and Judith in Mexico.

May they know your keeping and guidance, wisdom in decisions, fruitfulness in testimony. We pray for churches local to us in Brighton, New Life Molescombe, Park Hill, Ebenezer and their pastors.

[7:50] Help them and all of us to adapt and even flourish to your glory in these days of Covid-19. But we pray also for those who are struggling at this time with weariness, loneliness and fear.

May they and all of us be daily strengthened by your promise. I will never leave you or forsake you. In Jesus name. Amen.

Tonight we are going to be continuing in the Gospel of Matthew and in chapter 23. We heard a message last Sunday night on the first 22 verses of the chapter.

But in order to help us have a strong sense of the context and strength of the message, we are going to read the whole of Matthew 23 tonight.

Gospel of Matthew chapter 23. Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

[9:06] So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Everything they do is done for men to see. They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long. They love the place of honour at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues.

They love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them Rabbi. But you are not to be called Rabbi, for you have only one master and you are all brothers.

And do not call anyone on earth Father, for you have one Father and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called Teacher, for you have one teacher, the Christ.

The greatest among you will be your servant, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

[10:20] You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Woe to you blind guides!

You say, if anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing. But if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath. You blind men!

Which is greater, the gold or the temple, that makes the gold sacred? You also say, if anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing.

But if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath. You blind men! Which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

[11:24] Therefore, he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it.

And he who swears by heaven, swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

You give a tenth of your spices, mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law, justice, mercy and faithfulness.

You should have practised the latter without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel! Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will be clean.

[12:30] Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, and you say, If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.

So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of the sin of your forefathers.

You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers.

[13:36] Some of them you will kill and crucify. Others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!

You who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings!

But you were not willing. Look! Your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Let's sing. All heaven declares. The glory of the risen Lord.

[15:07] Who can come in. With the beauty of the Lord. Forever he will be. Forever he will be. Forever he will be. The Lamb upon the throne. The Lamb upon the throne. I gladly bow the knee. The Lamb upon the throne. I gladly bow the knee.

With the beauty of the Lord, forever he will be, the Lamb upon the throne.

I gladly bow the knee, and worship him alone. I will proclaim, the glory of the risen Lord, who once was slain, to reconcile man to God.

Forever he will be, the Lamb upon the throne. I gladly bow the knee, and worship him alone.

Let us pray. We pray, our Father, that by the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, that you will speak to us through this message from the Bible.

[16:36] In Jesus' name, Amen. Tonight we're continuing in the Gospel of Matthew, and picking up from last Sunday's message, which covered Matthew 23, verses 1 to 22.

This was brought by John Woods, and could be found on both YouTube and the Calvary Church website. I encourage you to listen to this, if you haven't done so already.

My title tonight is, A Message for All of Us. A Message for All of Us. This arises from the context of Matthew 23.

Who was there? Who was listening? And he wasn't there to hear Jesus' words. We don't have a call blocker device on our landline, so we get some strange and unwanted calls, some of which have automated voices, or are clearly coming from a call centre in Asia.

Cold calling. They really don't have any personal interest in me. It's a scam or some bait to get me involved in paying for something. I put down the receiver. The call is not for me, even though they use my name.

[17:53] This can always be the case for anyone who hears Jesus' words. They can see it as an unwelcome cold call, and can't wait to put the receiver down. Or you might just be confused and think that Jesus' words are for someone else, a religious person, or someone with a specific need.

And you don't put yourself into either category. So again, you put the receiver down, or in this case tonight, by the click of the keyboard, you can stop the voice.

Now, if you find yourself in that place tonight, I'd like to encourage you to carry on listening, because this message is genuinely for all of us, regardless of age, education, background, lifestyle, and ambitions, exactly as it was 2,000 years ago when Jesus first spoke these words.

It's a very special time. It's Jerusalem, the focus of God's attention. It's Passover, the grand annual remembrance of how God delivered his people from Egypt under Moses, solemnly and cheerfully celebrated with animal sacrifices and a vast number of deeply symbolic family meals.

It's a noisy, busy, chaotic time. Thousands of people have made journeys, some from a great distance, to be in the city of Jerusalem, to be together with others in these Passover days.

[19:17] The city is packed. It's a time of heightened tensions as the Jewish people celebrate their Jewishness under the nervous, watchful eyes of the Roman occupying army, who can't identify with what's going on.

And there are the radical hotheads, who can use the mayhem and confusion to strike back at the Romans and slip back into the crowds. It's a time for going to the temple.

Herod's vast and imposing construction throng with Jews and Gentiles, for there are Gentiles who have sought refuge with the God of Israel. Everybody who is anybody is found in the temple at some point over these days, and you need to go to the temple to purchase animals for sacrifice, or perhaps the lamb for the family meal.

It's the near end of the public ministry of Jesus Christ. Three years of teaching, miracles in discipling, that started proper with a sermon on a mountaintop, recorded in Matthew chapter 5, a sermon which declared blessings.

And now Jesus speaks again to a crowd in the temple, on another mountain, the Temple Mount, with a message marked by woes. In two days or so he will be arrested, tried, punished, mocked, carry a crossbeam upon which he will be crucified on another mountain or hill called Calvary, outside the city walls.

[20:45] The ultimate sacrifice, the one and only effective sacrifice, the Lamb of God slain for us, in our place. And in this busy end time, you can sense the urgency in Jesus' voice and movements as he completes the work that his Father has given him to do, down to the last miracle, the last message, the last conversation, the last supper.

These are the words of a man who is going to die in a matter of hours. What will he say? Who will he say it to? When you read Matthew 23 in that context, it's rather strange.

The religious leaders, known as the Pharisees, or teachers of the law, are clearly present in chapter 22, when Jesus gives them a final challenge, an opportunity to recognise him as the Messiah.

For the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, the temple would be a second home, especially at Passover. But come to chapter 23, and they're absent.

Matthew is very careful in his Gospel account to tell us who's around when Jesus is at work. Here in chapter 23, it's just the crowds and Jesus' disciples, the curious and his followers.

[22:08] I say just, but notice that Matthew says crowds in the plural. Groups of pilgrims and friends, now hearing the preacher from Galilee, and coming close.

Not a handful, but a large number. So one could well imagine Jesus targeting this audience for the last time. Many in those crowds would no doubt have come across Jesus before in Judea and

Galilee and the Gentile outskirts, being fed with thousands of others, seeing astonishing miracles, some even who had been near Mary and Martha when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. So once more, they're looking forward to hearing the preacher and the miracle worker. But until Jesus gets to the end of his message in verse 39, they don't realise it's the last time they'll be hearing him, unless they gather round a cross in a few days' time and hear the words of a dying man.

Jesus speaks to them and his disciples, possibly just the twelve. He speaks strongly, forcefully, unambiguously, but it mostly seems to be for another audience.

Look at verses 13 to 36. Who is Jesus talking about and talking to? It's the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

[23:30] And they're not there. It's as if Jesus is making a very public declaration, a clear statement about a missing audience. Perhaps if any Pharisees had loomed up, they would have been so scandalised by Jesus' language that they would have stormed off or got the temple guards to arrest Jesus for stirring up trouble and division.

Hate speech in modern parlance. But of course it wasn't that. It was truth speech. As it is, Jesus says all that he wants to say and Matthew records it for us.

So I'll come back to the title of this talk, A Message for All of Us, and why it is so. Well, we know that the crowds and disciples heard these words firsthand.

And Jesus has a message for the Pharisees and teachers of the law, and we can be sure that the message was reported back to them. In verses 37 to 39, Jesus raises his voice beyond the crowds and his disciples, and seeing the vast numbers, addresses Jerusalem as a whole.

Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Not the city itself, of course, but its people and the fact that it stood as a symbol for the whole of the nation.

[24:49] And then there are Gentiles, the very ones that the Pharisees evangelise to follow the God of Israel, even travelling long distances to do so.

Look at verse 15. And one of Jesus' disciples, with the prompting and equipping of the Holy Spirit, recalls it all in his gospel, so it is found in the Bible, a book for all nations.

So, in a curious way, what Jesus plainly intends for the Pharisees and teachers of the law is also intended to tell all of us important things.

This is a message for all of us. Please stay online. We're going to look at verses 23 to 39 under three headings.

Firstly, there are the four woes of verses 23 to 32. Secondly, the summary of verses 33 to 36. And thirdly, the final cry to the nation in verses 37 to 39, with application in every case.

[25:57] So, firstly, the four woes of verses 23 to 32. Last Sunday, the message covered three woes in verses 13 to 22.

So, we have seven woes in all. A complete statement. The rather old-fashioned word woe is found frequently on the lips of the Old Testament prophets as they proclaim a message of judgment.

It's a strong warning, a fearsome warning, of God's judgment, not based on a prophet's personal opinion, but spoken on behalf of and by revelation from God.

These woes are never generalised, but quite specific. In this case, the woes are squarely directed to the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

You can see that in the case of every pronounced woe. And the reason for the statement of coming judgment is very clear in every case. Jesus spells out the things that are abhorrent in God's sight and will result in judgment.

[27:02] But we should also note, and this will emerge, that God's warnings are frequently associated with opportunities of repentance and forgiveness. Let's look at the things that God finds abhorrent and worthy of judgment.

So we read verses 23 and 24. Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

You give a tenth of your spices, mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

You should have practised the latter without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. What God really cares about is justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

But these are forgotten and neglected and the days are filled with foolish minutiae which God hasn't even mentioned as a footnote to his law. Everything is out of proportion.

[28:13] There was a place for tithing of the fruits of the field and Jesus encourages that you should have but actually slicing off a tenth of spices was not prescribed.

Another pharisaical add-on which conveniently overshadowed the elephant in the room or perhaps as a camel of justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Is it just Pharisees who did this?

I think not. We're all guilty of getting our spiritual priorities wrong and doing the things that please us rather than the things that please God. And that is worthy of God's judgment.

And what compounds the problem for the Pharisee and for us is that this isn't done in childish ignorance but because we're hypocrites, we're play-acting, we're ignoring the things that matter to God although we're pretending that we are observing them.

And now there's woe number five in verses 25 and 26. Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

[29:34] Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish and then the outside will be clean. Using superficial cleaning to cover up our selfish sins.

The cup or dish is just a vessel. What matters is what's in or on it. It was no secret that some Pharisees having no income stream of their own applied emotional pressure on others to get money or goods in kind.

Yes, even daily bread. The gospel records speak of the exploitation of widows by such as these.

The drink or food was ill-gotten and staring them in the face.

But they had cleaned the cup and dish beforehand on the outside so that kind of made it better. Not so. How we all manipulate our consciences and try to do little bargains with God so that our good works are slightly tipped beyond our bad deeds.

And what compounds the problem for the Pharisee and for us is that this isn't done in childish ignorance but because we're hypocrites. We're play-acting and ignoring the things that really matter to God.

[30:49] Verses 27 and 28 Woe 6 The Extreme Cover-Up Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees you hypocrites you are like whitewashed tombs which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

In the same way on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. The Extreme Cover-Up I'm very pleased to say that I've never seen a decayed body but my imagination can stretch that far.

At Passover time the tombs in and near Jerusalem were whitewashed so that no pilgrim or resident might inadvertently become unclean by touching a tomb in any way.

The tombs actually looked rather nice but hid something pretty awful to see and to think about.

Jesus is now ratcheting up the causes of judgment for the Pharisees and for us.

We can paint ourselves beautifully whilst corruption is within us. This convinces us and others but doesn't deceive God. And what compounds the problem for the Pharisee and for us is that this isn't done in childish ignorance but because we're hypocrites.

[32:19] we're play-acting and ignoring the things that deeply matter to God. Verses 29 to 32 Woe 7 Blatant Hypocrisy Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees you hypocrites you build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous and you say if we'd lived in the days of our forefathers we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets so you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets fill up then the measure of the sin of your forefathers.

the Pharisees knew their history they knew that God had sent prophets and they knew that those prophets had been put to death in some cases by the authorities and even by the religious leaders but the Pharisees distance themselves from the behaviour of their forefathers we would never be like that they say and they prove it by refurbishing the tombs monuments of the prophets of old but

at the end of chapter 21 it's the Pharisees who are looking for a way to arrest God's final and ultimate prophet Jesus to silence him in chapter 26 it's the chief priests who take up the baton by arranging a betrayal and arrest and in chapter 27 persuade the crowd to engineer the crucifixion of Jesus these all have the DNA of the religious leaders of previous generations in themselves and Jesus says to them you hypocrites you're the final generation you're just following the behaviours of your forefathers and you're filling up the nearly filled cup of sinfulness which will soon tip into the judgment of God sin is very advanced and hearts are very hard when blatant hypocrisy staring us in the face can be ignored these are the four last opportunity warnings of judgment the given reasons would not be applicable to every

Pharisee or every one of us but sufficiently so that we are silenced and we are found guilty before God because we all have our hypocrisies there is now a summary in verses 33 to 36 strong words again you you snakes you brood of vipers how will you escape being condemned in hell therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers some of them you will kill and crucify others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town and so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah son of Berechiah whom you murdered between the temple and the altar I tell you the truth all this will come upon this generation strong language and more and more we find Jesus reaching an end point all this will come upon this generation judgment is knocking at the door and the Pharisees and teachers of the law by their behaviour through the gospel record are indicating that their hearts have become increasingly hard their spiritual eyes blind their spiritual ears deaf as they have turned from mere critics of the Lord Jesus to those who want him to be crucified they can't wait for that day to happen for the voice of this prophet this ultimate prophet from God to be completely silenced oh what hypocrisy that on the one hand they claim allegiance and brotherhood as it were with their forefathers who killed the prophets before them and they're no different at all

I want to speak briefly about why Jesus should single out the Pharisees and teachers of the law for such stinging rebuke and warning when you might think that there are plenty more deserving candidates we were reminded last week that all Pharisees were not the same just as we are not all the same but one thing that did mark them out was that they were regarded and acted as religious or spiritual leaders they had responsibility for the spiritual well-being of others in one sense that's a position for every Christian caring and looking out for others but to have recognised spiritual leadership is an awesome and daunting responsibility in New Testament language elders in Christ's church are those who each one must give account on the final day for the way in which they have undertaken their ministry they will be asked by the Lord Jesus to give account one would so hope that we could stand with a good and clear conscience on this matter but we know that this requires constant recourse to God for cleansing and forgiveness and notwithstanding we must still give account it's spiritual leaders who can either strengthen or discourage and damage the sheep of the flock it's spiritual leaders who by false teaching can lead a flock into places of spiritual danger it's spiritual leaders who by exposed personal immorality can cause some sheep to be disillusioned and give up on the journey it's also the case that spiritual leaders are exposed to specific temptations that can cause wreckage of a ministry and the division of churches notably the issues of pride status and self sufficiency the old testament story is full of this disappointing narrative and god will hold each leader to account it's the inevitable impact that spiritual leaders have on the flock they care for that means that god holds them to a high standard it is said to us it can be said to the pharisees and teachers of the law to whom much is given much is required please remember and pray for church elders not just our church but for many churches for all churches returning now to the final section of

[39:20] Matthew 23 and verses 37 to 39 oh Jerusalem Jerusalem you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings but you are not willing look your house is left to you desolate for I tell you you will not see me again until you say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord these words tell us something of the spirit in which Jesus conducted his ministry on earth his attitude to the weak and helpless and failing but also and even to hypocrites and murderers whatever category you find yourself to be in by the convicting work of God's Holy Spirit you need to know that Jesus comes to you even in the

teeth of God's judgment even at the eleventh hour with the offer of forgiveness brought into

God's family under the protection of Jesus Christ these these are final words of appeal because very soon Jesus will return to his father and will not return to this earth again until that final day when he will appear as the saviour of those who put their trust in him and the judge of those who turn their backs on that offer of God's grace in any case and on that final day all will acknowledge willingly or not who he really is every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord and here lies the answer to Jesus' question in verse 33 you snakes you brood of vipers how will you escape being condemned to hell it was as we know addressed to the Pharisees and teachers of the law but 2000 years later it seems to land with us in a way that can't be ignored this is a message for us we are found deserving of God's judgment how can we escape that how can we avoid being condemned to hell the answer is all found in Jesus Christ crucified buried risen again ascended to heaven doing all this to pay the price for our sin by receiving the judgment of God by his death being vindicated and endorsed by his father in his magnificent rising from the dead into a new life and calling us to come trust and follow him now here's a message for all of us and a message for you personally we're coming to our closing song today your mercy calls us to wash away our sin our ever the great address God, whatever we have been However long from mercy our hearts are turned away Your blood for Christ can cleanse us and set us free today Today your gate is open and all who enter in shall find a father's welcome and pardon for their sin The past shall be forgotten A present joy begin A future and grace be promised A glorious crown in heaven

Today the Father calls us The Holy Spirit moves The Son has given his life God for every soul he loves No question will be Christmas No I wish I have come Oh I always wondered This is our Father's home Oh God I Oh ever open noon What should we do without you How can we ask the Lord When all things seem against us to drive us to despair

[45:05] We go and gates open and you will hear our prayer Let us pray Our Father we thank you for your word your precious inspired word we thank you it's been preserved for us and we thank you for the things that we have read tonight we thank you because we know that those though these things are challenging they're exactly what we need to hear we know how deceitful our hearts can be how desperately wicked and we come to you tonight and ask that you would show us the reality of that so that we would be honest and straightforward with you for those of us who know you we pray that you would cleanse us of these dirty things inside of us these things which are against you that whilst we can appear to be okay on the outside we know that there can be so much which is wrong inside and we confess this to you and ask for your cleansing because of the blood that Jesus

Christ shed upon his cross and Father we pray we pray for all those who are listening who do not yet know you in this very personal way and we ask Father that they would not turn away from this message not turn away from this warning even perhaps a final warning because we don't know what a day will bring and in these days of Covid 19 our life is like a mist that vanishes our Father pray for all of us that there will be a sense of urgency about us having good dealings with you about us coming honestly before you about us recognising that we need to be right with you we cannot face the day of judgment unless we have Jesus as our Saviour and Lord now so please grant that mercy in our lives turn us to yourself forgive us for our sin take away the penalty that we deserve and bring us into that loving relationship with

Jesus to be our Saviour and Lord and we ask this in Jesus name Amen Amen Thank you.