

# JESUS ON HIS PURPOSE

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Date: 15 February 2015

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, we thank you for your word. Father, in a country like ours, at a time like ours, parts of your word sound wonderful, parts of your word sound really hard.

But Father, we thank you for Jesus, we thank you that he died upon the cross for us, we know that you love us. We ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would gently but deeply be poured out upon us, pour out your Holy Spirit, Father, upon our minds, upon our hearts, upon our wills, upon the depths of our souls.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that we might hear your word written, that it might come deeply into our lives and that we might be disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel to live for your glory.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior, amen. Please be seated. Those of you who are lifelong Anglicans know that it's not cricket to interrupt the flow of the liturgy to make comments before you read the gospel, but I thought that it was appropriate today, especially that verse 26 and 27 didn't completely and utterly catch you out of the blue, or that you just snoozed through it.

You've got to be able to hear it. So here's the thing about this text. ISIS is in the news all the time because they like to slaughter people.

[ 1 : 35 ] They seem to, in fact, I mean, not only do they behead innocent people, they are so proud of beheading innocent people that they film it and post it so that as many people as possible can see what they've done.

And wherever they go, obviously there's some people who are flocking to join ISIS. That's a bit of a problem in our society. We worry about Canadians fleeing Canada.

Imagine fleeing Canada. For many of us, that's how we think about it, to go and join ISIS to engage in these acts of slaughter. And so the question is, is Jesus saying that God is like ISIS?

Is that what Jesus is saying? Does God delight in slaughter the same way that ISIS seems to delight in slaughter?

That's the question before us. For many people in our culture, they make no particular distinction between Christianity and Islam and ISIS.

[ 2 : 40 ] They just see it as all religion. And so for many people, they interpret and understand the Christian faith from that lens.

And texts like this then are deeply, deeply troublesome. In fact, they would probably say, as my friend said to me, how can you possibly want to love and worship and adore a God like that?

Don't we fight ISIS? Don't we send soldiers there to participate in the struggle? So why on earth should we worship and adore a God like this?

So let's read the text again and have a look at it. And so if you have your Bibles, it's Luke chapter 9, sorry, 19. And just as you're turning in your Bibles, I've already said that there's some extra ones there that you can use.

Luke chapter 19, just as we're reading it, just a couple of things to remind us about it before we start reading it. This text, interestingly enough, what we now call the Gospel of Luke or the Book of Luke, was written just over 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

[ 3 : 54 ] And it was written by a pagan who was a doctor who became a Christian. He himself was not an eyewitness of the events in Jesus' life, but he obviously had gone through some type of intellectual fact-finding journey before he became a Christian.

And in some ways, what we see in Luke is him recording his historical inquiry into who Jesus was. And the book is written for a pagan.

That's why the sermon titles, the sermon series, by the way, is called Luke, Jesus for Pagans and Skeptics. It's also obviously for Christians and Muslims and everybody, but it's originally written for probably a skeptic, definitely a pagan, by a pagan who had become a Christian.

That's who wrote this text. And today, as we're reading, one of the ways that Luke organized his Gospel was around a very, very long journey that's taken 11, almost 11 chapters of Jesus predicting that he's going to go to Jerusalem to die.

And then all of these texts from chapter 9 to chapter 19 up until his death in chapter 23, it's all this long journey towards Jerusalem.

[ 5 : 12 ] All within the mind, he keeps reminding his disciples that he's going to Jerusalem to die. In fact, if you were here last week, you'll know that just a few verses above, chapter 19, verse 1, which we're about to read, he once again reminds his disciples that he's going to Jerusalem to die.

And these are the last few verses before Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. Verse 28, which we won't read today, Jesus arrives in Jerusalem. So that's sort of the context.

You sort of have a bit of the flow of the book, and here's what happens, chapter 19, verse 1. Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. Just sort of pause there for a second. If you're wondering where Jericho was relative to Jerusalem, it's just under 30 kilometers away.

There's sort of two Jerichos. At the time, there would have been like a ruined, the Jericho ruins of the old city, and there was a new city that was just a few decades old, very new by those standards of those days.

And it's about, in other words, it's about a six-hour walk, and that's where Jesus is. He entered Jericho, verse 1, and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus.

[ 6 : 19 ] He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. He was loaded. And just if you're not familiar with some of these types of terminologies, it doesn't mean that he works for CRA.

We have at least one person in our congregation who works for CRA. He's a really good guy, not evil at all, and not rich. But in those days, the way that the Romans, so the Romans had conquered, this pagan empire had conquered Jerusalem, and the way that they raised taxes is they said, well, one moment, Rome's a long way from Jerusalem.

One's a long way from Galilee, a long way from Judea. How on earth are we going to figure out who has the money and how they hide it? So what they did is they hired locals, and they said to the locals, okay, I think that we can raise, you know, whatever it is.

You know, I think, I'll use dollars. I think we can raise \$5 million in this region. And so a local would say, okay, I'll raise you \$5 million in taxes in this region. And the Romans didn't care if the guy collected \$7 million as long as they got five.

Okay? So Zacchaeus is Jewish. He's not only a tax collector, he's a chief tax collector. That either means he's like, you know, those real estate agents that advertise in the top 1%?

[ 7 : 41 ] It either means he's like a top 1% tax collector, or he's over other tax collectors. And he's become very rich, and for the Jewish people, they would hate him.

He works for the pagan occupying forces to rip off the local people, take their hard-earned shekels away from them, and give it to the Romans who pay their soldiers to keep Jerusalem and environs under their thumbs.

That's who Zacchaeus is. So verse 3, and Zacchaeus was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd, he could not because he was of small stature.

In other words, he was a big man, but a small man at the same time. He was a big guy in that area, probably one of the richest guys in Jericho and in regions, but he happened to be very short. And here's the other thing about this text.

It's very, very curious, and you'll see the significance of it later. We have no way of knowing why Zacchaeus was just curious. In 1997, I think it was, Billy Graham came to Ottawa, and at the time this church was called St. Albans, and I'd only been there a couple of years, and there was a revolt amongst a whole part of the congregation because they did not want our church to support Billy Graham.

[ 9 : 07 ] They didn't want me to advertise it. They didn't want me to try to get people to be volunteer counselors. In fact, the revolt was so strong, I'm not making this up, had a small leadership team that was going to help to promote it in the congregation, and after the service where it was announced that we were going to be supporting this, there were so many people who complained, the entire volunteer leadership team resigned.

But I had one of my, several people in the congregation, and we went on and supported it, by the way. But one of the people who supported it, he wasn't particularly a follower of Jesus. He just said to me, George, Billy Graham is like one of the most important figures of the 20th century. Like, why wouldn't anybody just want to go hear him? Like, it was just, he's just curious. Who's this guy that's known so many presidents and influenced so many people's lives? I'm just curious. And it looks as if that's what was going on in Zacchaeus. He's just curious. He's really curious. He'd like to see who this Jesus guy is. Sort of eyeball him and see if he looks different or what's all these rumors I hear about miracles and raising the dead and doing all these things.

[10:20] Like, who is this guy? So he's motivated by curiosity. That's what it seems to be. So go back to reading the text. Verse 4 again. So Zacchaeus ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him.

He's really curious because it's very undignified for a rich guy to climb a tree. Imagine Conrad Black climbing a tree to see somebody. Okay? Or the head of the, I don't know, just, you know, Canadian billionaire climbing a tree to see somebody.

It would look, it would be in the paper. It would be on Twitter if we got a picture of him. For Jesus was about to pass that way. Verse 5. And when Jesus came to the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry down, hurry and come down for I must stay at your house today.

A completely shocking turn of events. That Jesus wants to spend time with this notorious betrayer of the Jewish people. And so Zacchaeus hurried down and came, hurried and came down and received Jesus joyfully.

And when the crowd saw it, they all grumbled. He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. In the original language, a sinner is emphatic.

[11:36] In other words, if we were doing a bit more literally, it would be bolded. That's how we would do it today. A sinner, it's bolded. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, notice he calls him Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, and in the original language, this is a very accurate translation, but what it's not capturing is that it's an idiom.

And in the original language when he says, if I have defrauded anyone of anything, it's a polite way of saying, I have defrauded people. He's confessing to fraud. And it's in that, it's a sort of a, you know, an elliptical way of making a confession that some cultures do.

And that's what it says. He's actually, in the original language, is he's confessing to fraud to Jesus. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house, since he, that's Zacchaeus, also is a son of Abraham.

So it's a fascinating story. And here's the, here's the big takeaway point for us. Jesus uses small things in bringing about the miracle and the mystery of conversion.

Jesus uses small things in bringing about the miracle and the mystery of conversion. This is a conversion story.

[13:01] It's the conversion story of a rich guy who is a betrayer of the people of Israel. And when he starts to climb the tree, not a believer in Jesus.

And sometime between Jesus saying his name and saying he wants to spend time with him, and by the time it comes to Zacchaeus saying he's confessing publicly to fraud and willing to give away half of what he earns and repay those he's defrauded by four times.

In between, that word of Jesus and that public confession, somewhere in that process, Zacchaeus becomes a Christian.

He is converted. He is, in the language of the scriptures, saved. And it's really an interesting story because the Bible doesn't give you the specific moment.

And on one hand, you look at it and you say, all Jesus did is say his name, look happy to see him, and say he wants to spend time with him. That doesn't add up.

[14:09] But that's how it works. My conversion story begins with seeing a poster on a pole on Elgin Street. That's how my conversion story begins.

Maybe in heaven, I'll meet the person who put that poster up. Maybe the person who put that poster up grumbled all the way down Elgin Street.

Maybe he did it because his girlfriend or his pastor roped him into doing it and he was embarrassed and angry. Maybe he did it with great prayer. God used that small thing to catch my attention and

make me curious.

And it ended about a year later with me becoming a Christian. The second small thing that he used was the way a speaker was dressed.

Don't despise small things. Do not despise small things. I'm sort of quoting Zechariah 4. For those of you who know the Bible.

[15:22] And that's really sort of a relevant thing. Do not despise the day of small things. It's always a mystery. Jesus uses small things in bringing about the miracle and the mystery of conversion.

And in some ways, because conversion begins with the heart and at some point in time, the heart professes with the lips what's going on. But you know, on one level, I don't know if I can tell the precise moment that I turned from just being curious about Jesus to actually being a believer in Jesus.

I don't know if I know that precise moment. You don't have to know the precise moment. Some people do know the precise moment. That's fine. But we don't all know it. I just know that at some point in time, I crossed a divide.

And then, in my mindset in those days, you had to make it real. You had to go down to the front for an altar call. That was just the way I understood it. And that was a big stumbling block for me.

But it's not all about coming down for the altar call. It's that inner change in the heart that's a mystery and a miracle. God uses small things. Jesus uses small things.

[16:27] We shouldn't despise it. We shouldn't despise how important it maybe is that we just say hi to somebody who comes to the church. Or we walk across the room during the dessert time and the coffee time because we see somebody standing by themselves.

where we smile. Or we pray. Or we give them a leaflet. Where we just share about something that happened to us in the day. We don't know if telling a barista at a coffee shop that we went to church on Sunday morning will somehow or another begin a journey for them that you will never hear the end of.

But when you go to heaven, you'll find out that they're there. And it started with a small thing. It's an amazing conversion story.

And the other thing about it is there's just two other things about it and then we're going to rush in is that when we just when we give our lives to Jesus and he comes in and there's this miracle of the new birth which is beyond what this text is talking about.

It's sort of part of the overall New Testament understanding which underlies this text which people like Paul and other writers start to make clear. But you see once we come to Jesus then coming to Jesus starts to bear fruit.

[17:37] In this man's life it bears three types of fruit. It makes him honest, it makes him just, and it makes him generous. And conversion bears fruit in our lives.

In Galatians it talks about the fruit of the Spirit which is we receive the Holy Spirit when we become followers of Jesus. And that singular fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

There's much different types of fruit and the Bible's going to talk about it. Jesus is going to talk about fruitfulness more in a moment but it follows upon conversion. And the second thing is that if you go back later, those of you who were here last week know that we read the story of the rich young ruler who comes to Jesus because he wants to inherit eternal life.

And Jesus says to him that you have to give up all you possess and we talked about how what that really means is is there something in your life that you would choose over eternal life?

And that's what Jesus reveals. He goes right to the heart in the presence of the living God. And the disciples when they hear all of this thing what they say is that this is completely and utterly impossible.

[18:44] Nobody could possibly be saved. It's completely impossible. And Jesus says you're right it is impossible. Camels will go through eyes of needles before you're going to be able to accomplish this.

But then he says God does the impossible. And here we see a rich man and God does the impossible in this rich man.

And in fact he ends up not giving all because it's not like there's a it's not like Jesus is calling us all to be monks. Jesus goes to the heart. The heart. I mean for us you know as a general for those of

you who are followers of Jesus the general basic way to deal with the problem of money in our lives which is a problem for every person is to give 10% back to God.

10% or more. Some people he'll call to a lot more but that's just sort of like the garden variety way of dealing with it. But here at the end of the day God does that's why I said that Jesus uses small things in bringing about the miracle and the mystery of conversion.

Now a little while ago in a different Starbucks I happened over here you know I don't when I go to Starbucks I don't sort of sit there thinking I'm just going to pretend to read the Bible and I'm going to listen to conversations.

[ 19 : 59 ] I don't do that. But some people talk really loud. And some people in fact talk so loud I have a hard time working and I don't I wish I could say oh I when I they're so talking so loud I'm just filled with love and compassion for them and I just spend my time praying for them.

No I look daggers at them wishing that they'd speak more quietly. And I'll confess that further later on in the service it's part of what I have to confess I'm not always charitable. But sometimes people just talk loud and and at this time the two women got very very heated they were talking about a friend a mutual friend and the whole conversation I wish I'd heard the beginning of and then I guess they maybe realized they were talking really loud maybe they noticed other people looking daggers at them and they got quieter so only heard a little bit but the thing that they kept talking about is that this woman had to keep to her path she has her path she has to follow her path she can't get deflected from her path because it's her path and they kept on talking about her path and following her path and being true to her path and and that's sort of a very interesting analogy I don't know if it's something that Oprah's talking about or I don't know if it's Deepa Chopra or somebody that talks about it but they seemed it was their language so they'd probably be deeply offended to what Jesus says in the comment about Zacchaeus leaving his path to become a follower of Jesus because look what Jesus says in verse 10 and actually this is when I read this verse 10 just so you know you know sometimes people say well that's just what you say

Jesus is all about or you know like that but you know listen listen the book of Luke is a book that's one of the things I try to bring out as we go through the book we're going through the book and it's written in a particular way Luke's thought a lot about how to write this book and in the course of the book you'll notice that basically half of chapter 19 all of 20 all of 21 all of 22 all of 23 all take place in Jerusalem you'll notice that out of a 24 chapter book over 20% of it all takes place there in fact those are even longer chapters it's even more than that and a lot of it focuses on the crucifixion the death of Jesus and in fact Luke organizes his whole book saying that this this man Jesus keeps saying I'm going to go to Jerusalem to die and so Luke is writing a book to try to communicate a particular type of thing and in the course of it Luke reveals what Jesus understood his purpose in life to be so this isn't me imposing something on Jesus it's not just oh yeah you know you're just like an evangelical or you know or someone to say you know you're this or that or that no no no you just try to you just read a book you just read a book and if you're reading the book the book reveals

Jesus reveals what his purpose is and it's in verse 10 for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost in fact if you could put up the second point here's the second takeaway point Luke records Jesus' self-understanding of his purpose I am the son of man who came to seek and to save the lost Jesus Luke reveals Jesus' self-understanding of his purpose I am the son of man who came to seek and to save the lost son of man means that he's quoting from Daniel chapter 7 and Daniel chapter 9 who in that in that particular case almost is you know Jewish people didn't have a category at the time of understanding that there could be something like a trinity but it sure almost looked like God and it's a and he's a majestic figure who will come to rule and is in God's presence and has all of this authority and Jesus is saying that that whole promise of authority and reigning and ruling that's me and the one who has that's going to fulfill all of these promises and predictions of God about coming to rule and to reign this one who just seems to be all about power actually is coming to seek to seek and to save the lost that's why I've come and he says this this is he says this and then there's the parable and he's in Jerusalem and in Jerusalem at this point in time it's like he's on going down on the roller coaster and it's just inevitable at this point in time or not entirely because he keeps doing things he could he could avoid it if he wants but he keeps doing things that will culminate with his descent to the cross and his descent to death and he explains to us his purpose and and and and here's the thing about it you see if you go on and you read that Luke also not only wrote the book wrote the book of Luke but he wrote the book of Acts we see that in the

book of Acts it's all about the Holy Spirit coming upon the followers of Jesus to continue the purpose and the mission of Jesus it means that what's part of our purpose if we understand ourselves as a congregation of followers of Jesus to seek and to save the lost means that we seek out soccer moms and the poor and high tech executives and government leaders and people who work in theater and Muslims and gay activists and academics and entrepreneurs and stay at home moms and stay at home dads and people in China and people in Kazakhstan and people in the Arctic and people in India and we don't just say well we're just going to pray for them but we seek we seek because that's what Jesus does we are very heart to be a go to faith not a come to religion we seek the Bible describes them as lost and that would probably be an offensive term to those two women in the

Starbucks and I think I would have viewed it as offensive as well but all I'll say about this is that there's two types of ways there's two stages of being lost the first stage of being lost is not knowing you're lost the second stage is knowing you're lost but you're equally lost there's a thing in the paper a little while ago but I think she was a tourist from Sweden or Norway I can't remember which and she was out in a part of in BC and she was sort of in a remote area where you do some remote snowboarding and she was with a group of house mates and she wandered off on her own and sometime way off long after she wandered off on her own she realized she was lost but she was lost long before she realized she was lost right that's how it works and probably when Zacchaeus climbed up the tree that's not the way he would have used to understood himself but as he confessed fraud as key to his way of life it was a confession that he was lost you see the interesting thing about that expression of lost which even though we might find it on it's actually a very homey type of illustration it implies something about what

[ 27 : 15 ] God wants for us you know it implies a home and safety and civilization and ones who love you and it implies a place where there's healing and resources and it implies all of these things that there's this waiting for you for you to enter into I mean in the story of the young woman it's her parents I can't remember if it's Norway or Sweden talk to her so glad she's safe her housemates so glad she's safe the resources of Canada to find her to make her safe lost while on one hand it might be offensive on the other hand it's actually a profound image of a civilization of care of food of shelter of loved ones of that's what Jesus is is available and many of us we live in a world where people maybe don't know that but that's what Jesus is saying and he's saying that we know that that's the case and we're to seek and save

I mean Jesus doesn't save but we're to seek and tell him about Jesus that should be the purpose of our church now some of you might say okay George you know those old pirate movies where people walk the plank and you know how in those old pirate movies you walk the plank and I don't know if let's say over there that mark I can see it there that's the end of the plank and you know they walk along and they talk to the cat pirates maybe hoping or whoever's going to make them walk the plank hoping that there'll be some deliverance that a boat will show up that people will change their heart and George was all began with verse 26 and 27 and Jesus using this parable about slaughtering people and you've been chatting away to us with all sorts of types of things but George you've come to the end of the plank unless you keep chattering away about verse 10 verse 11 comes and that takes you right to verse 27 so just restate it I mean it's very interesting for Jesus to say that he came to seek and to save the lost it's very interesting to hear that Jesus uses small things in the mystery and the miracle of conversion it's a very interesting thing but what about this portrayal of Jesus and God as delighting in slaughter is Jesus like Isis is God like Isis it's time to read so let's look at verse 11 as they heard these things he proceeded that's Jesus to tell a parable because he was near to Jerusalem and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately just pause notice there that Jesus understands that the way that they've understood all of the Old Testament promises they've misunderstood it and they think that when the Messiah comes he will act as a political conqueror and they don't understand that that's not how it's going to work at all and so he tells them this parable to prepare them for the truth verse 12 he said therefore a noble man and that's correct but in literal language it actually is a man of noble birth a man of noble birth went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return and he sort of noticed that that's just a bit of an aside Jesus is warning them he's the person of noble birth he's he's God's son and he's going to go to a far country that's going to involve his death and his resurrection and he's going to go to a far country to receive a kingdom and then he's going to return he's warning his disciples that there's going to be a time when he's absent and then

he's going to return that's what he's warning his disciples verse 13 calling ten of his servants he gave them ten minas and said to them engage in business until I come but his citizens and that's actually the literal word in the original language is subjects actually but his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him saying we do not want this man to reign over us and the original language this man is derogatory it's they're really putting him down it's like this man we don't want this man to rule over us they taking a posture of being superior we don't want this Nazarene of uncertain birth with all his pretensions of seeking and saving the lost we don't want this man to rule over us that's the original language and that's going to come back to this at the end verse 15 when the man of noble birth had returned having received the kingdom he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him that he might know what they had gained by doing business the first came to him saying lord your minna has made ten minnas more and the lord said to him well done good servant because you have been faithful in a very little you shall have authority over ten cities and the second came saying lord your minna has made five minnas and the lord said to him and you are to be over five cities and just sort of pause there here's the first thing for us to understand as we get into this until Jesus returns or calls me home I am to use his resources under my care to be fruitful as I glorify him to those of us who are followers of Jesus that's what Jesus is saying to us we live in that in-between time our Lord and Savior has died upon a cross and risen from the dead ascended to heaven he will return and how are you and I to live our lives in this in-between time we are to understand that the things that we possess whether it's our our mind whether it's our strength of will our iron resolve whether it's our looks our youth our age our wisdom our connections our financial resources our job our position in the community our position in the family the fact that we have a family or we don't have a family the number of children grandchildren singleness whatever it is that are resources they are ultimately his resources not mine not the not the states either by the way okay this isn't like a way of sneaking in socialism it's neither socialism or capitalism it's something different you and I have resources and and and they're not really my resources or our church's resources they're always God's resources and he's made me a steward of his resources and he says that I am to be fruitful with these resources as I glorify him notice in verse 19 look at verse 19 he said to him oh sorry not verse 19 um uh uh uh verse uh 17 16 sorry verse verse 16 my notes aren't very good here the first came before him saying lord your minna has made ten minna more he doesn't say lord I took your minna and I made ten minnas more he doesn't say that he said your minna has made ten right there's this humbleness in the face of the resources for some reason God blesses some of his followers with spectacular vast resources some of us have very small resources but we're all in a sense equal in the sense that whatever the resources are that he's given they're under our care and we are to be as fruitful as we possibly can with them to his glory and fruitful here means it means not just gospel proclamation it means honesty and generosity and justice it means good works it means act of love it means loving our city it means if we're called to be an entrepreneur to be an entrepreneur like to be the type of boss that ends up that the papers want to talk about you being like one of the best employers in the country and it means about being profitable and providing jobs for the city or the region or for parts all around the world it means if you're given musical gifts that you write beautiful music or paint beautiful paintings it means gospel proclamation it means loving your husband or your wife or your kids and being kind to your neighbors and being just and generous and faithful and honest where you work it means being fruitful it doesn't just mean gospel proclamation but it includes gospel proclamation as we have these wide resources and we are to love the city and love the world and bring glory to God as we as we fulfill and do these things with generosity and honesty and justice to the glory of God that's what he calls his followers to do until he returns or calls me home that's what the

[ 36 : 48 ] Bible is calling us to that's what it's calling us to as individuals and as a congregation and then there's these two very sobering images of justice and of hell and the Bible doesn't try to reconcile them it gives two different images but they're very sobering and before I read verses 20 to 27 I want to give you the point and help you to try to see how my summary point helps to explain what is said in verses 20 to 27 if you could put it up in mercy God judges me by my knowledge my judgments and my desires in mercy God judges me and you remember I always put the I always make my points that if you want to write them down that you put it down it's not talking about I don't want I try as much as possible when I write these points not to say oh yeah I'm reading this point down for Susie and

Fred no no write down for yourself so you say it right in mercy God judges me by my knowledge my judgments and my desires this is one of the many many many many reasons why this text is not at all betraying God like Isis who seems to show no mercy have obscure medieval hateful standards many many reasons why God is not like Isis and it begins that it's done in mercy and in mercy he will judge us in this text with my knowledge my own in a sense standards or rules and or judgments and my desires let's read verses 20 to 27 and the first is dealing with the religious deals with those who go to the Anglican Church of Canada the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada the Associated Gospel Churches the Presbyterian Church in America the United Church the Roman Catholic the Orthodox probably also very specifically refers to Jews and Muslims and in probably in some type of way anybody who understands themselves as being religious and spiritual verse 20 then another came saying Lord here is your minna which I kept laid away in handkerchief didn't even keep it safe didn't even bury it in a field so Robert couldn't put it threw it on his desk covered it with a napkin didn't show any respect to the minna not at all didn't care if it was stolen didn't care about doing anything about making business said to do business with it I have better things to do than make business do business there's TV to watch couches to sit on I don't know my own interests I have my own money to make you know whatever it is so he just says here is your minna which I kept laid away in a handkerchief for I was afraid of you because you are and the word here translated as severe is it's a good word but it's another equally good word that they could have used is exacting I remember when I was in university there was a professor that everybody had to take a course from in those days her name was Gertrude Nerwith and she nobody most people didn't most students didn't like taking courses from her she was exacting you wrote a paper for her she was exacting in terms of grammar she was exacting in terms of how you understood if you said that Marx said this or Durkheim said this she was exacting to make sure if you were fuzzy she didn't let you get away with it she didn't think that her job was to write smiley faces and say you really have good intentions she'd say no your grammar is atrocious and you haven't understood Durkheim I mean she was actually very pleasant if you got to know her but she was exacting that's what it's saying here for I was afraid of you because you are an exacting man you take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not so and the

Lord said to him notice how he condemns him he doesn't say to him he doesn't actually agree with him that that's a fair way to describe him the master doesn't say actually you've completely misunderstood me just look what I just did with these other guys like I actually I'm really generous like a man is approximately four months wages and or five months depending how you count four or five months wages an average working guy or gal in Canada and I just gave you this much and if you say it's five months for an average working guy or gal in Canada and they made the equivalent of 50 months and as a reward I'm going to let you rule over the ten cities in Canada I'm actually really generous I'm like your biggest fan I'm rooting for you to succeed I plan to the master doesn't say actually you've completely misunderstood me the master just says okay this is what you believe this is your knowledge okay

[ 42 : 16 ] I'm going to take your knowledge as the basis and I'm going to take your judgments and I'm going to take your desires because you ultimately just really are more concerned about your own business and mine I'm going to take your desires your knowledge and your judgments and that's how I'm going to judge you that's how I'm going to judge you ISIS doesn't say that to us does he you don't want to have anything to do with me you want to do your own business you you think I'm severe and not really worthy of sort of listening to and you want to misunderstand me and that's really what you want to do and you probably saw other people understood things different and you weren't even curious like you're not curious about me at all I'm going to give you what you want I'm going to give you what you want why then did you not put my money in a bank and I might have collected it with interest and he said to those who stood by take the minute from him and give it to the one who has from the 10 and they said to him has will be taken away and the image in this particular case the judgment the image of judgment or hell is a man alone completely separate from God with nothing that's the image that's God's judgment you don't want to have anything to do with me don't have anything to do with my resources you got it you have nothing and then it turns to verse 27 and now I guess in a sense he's dealing with those who they don't make any pretenses about being religious they don't make any pretenses about being spiritual they just the fact of the matter is is that they just don't want to have how dare you say there's any rule that I have to follow how dare you and in their inner life that's their theme song how dare you how dare you presume to

tell me what to do or how to live my life as long as

God doesn't impinge upon them at all and they can be their soccer moms or they can be a conservative party activist or a liberal party activist or a gay activist or a professor or a rich entrepreneur as long as they can live their lives and and they don't they don't even any type of rattle or noise or hum but the second there's any type of rattle or noise or hum it's how dare you how dare you who asked you to speak how dare you but as for those verse 27 those enemies of mine who did not want me to rule over them bring them here and slaughter them before me and in a sense they also are given exactly what they desire they in a sense the theme song of how dare you how dare you rule over me is that they would choose anything other than being ruled and so they are given what they desire which in this particular case they don't realize they desire death but they desire death because you see the fact of the matter is that

God can't stop being God he can't stop being God and at some point in time right now we can live in a veil we can sort of suspect I was just talking to somebody the other day who studied biochemistry the idea that the DNA and the RNA and the cells could all happen by chance there must be some type of design or intelligence or creator and there this sense of order there must be something like a God world we'll die in an ongoing world we're subject to physical laws you know and you can make a case that there's moral laws and legal laws and there's society and there's all these things around us and we live in this entire world but we want to try to pretend as if there's nothing like that which is over us but at some point in time that type of pretend and that type of ignoring will be completely and utterly renewed and you only have in a sense in the presence of God and at that point in time you say I would choose anything over being subject to you and God says but I am you are desiring death and so you will have here's the thing about this text which makes it so unbelievably different than

Isis look at verse 27 again but as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them bring them here and slaughter them before me and verse 28 and when he had said these things he went on ahead coming up to Jerusalem and in the rest of the book of Luke who is slaughtered Jesus Jesus is slaughtered in Jerusalem it goes from slaughter to Jerusalem here's the thing which is so breathtaking about this text and about how it is that Jesus seeks and saves the lost to seek and to save the lost Jesus came to be slaughtered in my place by subjects like me to seek and to save the lost Jesus came to be slaughtered in my place by subjects like me

[ 48 : 24 ] I can just say it again to seek and to save the lost Jesus came to be slaughtered in my place by subjects like me it could have been my hands that put the thorns upon his brow it could have been my hands that nailed his feet to the tree it could have been my voice in the crowd that chose the murderer rather than the one who came to seek and save the lost Jesus was slaughtered in my place so that I would be saved no longer lost that friends is the gospel please stand you know there's no better time than today if you've worried that

God is a is a hard cruel man who just wants to crush you and you haven't realized that in fact he's a God of mercy who wants to change how we understand who he is and has actually sent his son set aside his glory and splendor and divine prerogatives to become a human being to become poor and even to the point of dying and being slaughtered by his subjects all for love all for you all for me all to seek us all to save us that is who Jesus is that is who the real God is and I'm not going to lead you in a sinner's prayer I'm going to say to you there's no better time than today than to say Jesus save me I was lost save me your own words cry out from your heart

Jesus save me and for those of us who've prayed that prayer before then the cry of our heart should be Jesus make me fruitful to your glory forgive me for thinking these are my resources my triumph make me fruitful make me honest make me generous make me just make me loving make me full of good works make me share the gospel make me fruitful for your glory make me a disciple of Jesus gripped by the gospel living for your glory let's pray just have a moment of silence and then I'll pray a moment of silence for you to pray your own prayers before God Father if there are any here who have called out to you maybe for that first time recognizing that you've worked a miracle of conversion a mystery of conversion in their hearts and they've cried out to you Father I ask that you pour out your Holy Spirit upon them and us and seal that and deepen it in them and Father for us who are here make us disciples of Jesus gripped by who Jesus is and what he did upon the cross for us who can now live for your glory

Father may your Holy Spirit fall upon us as a praise to you that reads your word and talks about your word and shares the good news of Jesus and has a heart of love for this city and has a heart

of love for the world and is willing to go and to be sent and to go Father may your Holy Spirit fall upon us as a congregation and make and build us into a congregation like this that does all things not for our glory but for your glory may Jesus increase and may we decrease may you increase and may we decrease and this we ask in Jesus name Amen