

# Our Penitence and God's Patience

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, for a short time this evening, let's turn back to Luke chapter 13. We're just picking up our studies in Luke, having taken a break for some time from our study of Luke's Gospel.

And tonight we're looking at verses 13 through to the end of verse 9. We could call this passage penitence and patience.

The penitence or repentance that's required of us, and the patience that is exhibited toward us by God. That's really what the parable attached to the first few verses sets out for us.

Let me just, for a few moments, just cover again how necessary it is for us at times to do this kind of study.

Because, although it takes quite a long time to go through a book if we're doing it in a way that does justice to its teaching, we've done over 50 studies already in Luke in the course of the last few months or over the last year or so, but consecutive study like that, whether it's in preaching or in your own study of the Bible, privately or personally, it's a very important kind of study.

[ 1 : 20 ] Because these books in the Bible were written as books. The letters of all these Gospels, they were written as whole units of teaching.

And so, although it's possible, of course, as we do at times, take a passage from that and study it in itself, or even a verse, a text and do a sermon on that, or look at some of the words in it and bring out some of the theological or spiritual teaching on it, it's also necessary to take the whole of a book such as Luke and the other books of the Bible and look at the whole of that teaching as it hangs together.

You know what it's like when you look at a cloth, or just take, for example, a length of Harris Tweed, where there are many different threads used, maybe quite a few different colours nowadays with the kind of patterns you get, and different types of patterns in the cloth as well.

Now it's possible just to look at a little section and see what's in that little section. It's possible just to take one thread and follow that one thread through the whole length of the Tweed.

But you only really get a complete sense of the mind of the designer, or of the person who's woven it, when you take the whole thing. When you put all the parts of it together, and then you begin to see the purpose or the mind behind it.

[ 2 : 46 ] Well, that's how it is in our study of Scripture as well. To go to a Gospel like Luke, or a book like the Gospel of Luke, and just only take small passages or texts out of it all the time, or any other book of the Bible, and never actually come to study it as a whole, is going to really miss out on the purpose behind it, the design of the writer, the whole teaching of what it comes to lay before us.

And we've already seen, as we've gone through it thus far, how certain things like questions that are asked in respect to Jesus, who is this man? You remember, we saw that question asked a number of times.

It's then as you go along from that, that you begin to see more of the pattern, if you like, emerging. More of the teaching being covered, and so the whole pattern begins to grow before you.

And then hopefully when you reach the end of the book, you've then got the whole design, the whole pattern, and the way that all the parts of it have come together, to form this great teaching, which is primarily about that great question, who is this Jesus?

What is his ministry about? Why did he come into the world? What is it about him? That's significant more than any other person. And when you do that, you come to realize that that is one of the great necessities of studying the Bible.

[ 4 : 18 ] You take books like that and study them as a whole. That's what we're trying to do with Luke, even if it seems that we're taking a long time going through it. It will be, I hope, beneficial to see the whole picture.

Now we come to this passage here. And when you come to this passage, we don't know why these people, some of those who are present, why they actually told Jesus about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

There are some historical references to that in other writings. Not really all that much is known about it. And then the next thing that Jesus mentions, the 18 on whom the tower in Siloam fell, this is the only place where you read about that event.

It's not mentioned anywhere else in any writings that we know of. So we don't know why they came with this reference to him. But as you often find, when Jesus is asked something, or when something is put to him, you get a clue to the way that, the reasoning behind why they asked, or why the statement was made, from the answer that Jesus himself gives.

You find that so often, in the way that Jesus answers questions that are put to him. We've seen that in Luke itself, actually. And we've seen, for example, with his temptation in the wilderness by the devil, that you can get to the devil's motives and see what was really moving the devil's, what his intentions were, what his motives were, by looking at the answers that Jesus gave.

[ 5 : 56 ] And as he answers these people here, it looks as if they were of a mind, something that was very common at the time, that whenever any tragedy or disaster like these, struck this tower falling on the 18 people in Siloam, and killing them all, or Pilate cruelly putting to death some people in association with their worship, whatever that entailed, some people would take the view, it's a common view, that it must have been some bad thing in the lives of these people that caused such a providence to come about.

A bit like you find in John chapter 9, and verse 2, where again you find a question being put to Jesus, his disciples asked him, there's his disciples actually asking him, they saw a man who was blind from his birth, and they asked, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

And Jesus answered, it was not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. In other words, Jesus is saying to us, it is not proper for us, whenever you find a tragedy happening to a family, or to a group of people, or even to an individual, it is not at all proper for us to say, there must have been something really drastically wrong, in the life of that person, for God did bring this about.

That's the mistake that Job's friends made, when Job had, in the providence of God, all of these terrible things that happened to him, he was a man of God, a pure, upright man of God, and yet, look at all the things that happened in a short space of time, he lost his family, he lost his health, so many things, that you could say, were really the tragedy of Job's life.

And his friends kept at him, to admit that he had done something really bad, something specific, some sin, for which God was punishing him. And of course, Job knew he hadn't, and his friends couldn't see that.

[ 8 : 02 ] And that's what we're warned against here, by the response of Jesus. We live in a world, where things happen, where people experience tragedy, where you have sudden loss of life.

We live in a world, where there are tsunamis, earthquakes, poverty, deprivation, all of these things, and many other similar things, exist in our world.

The reason is, not because people to whom these things happen, are worse than we are, or we are better than they are. And not because God is cruel, or acting in some tyrannical way.

It's because, as the Bible tells us, the world in which we live, is a fallen world. It's a world that's come to be, devastated by our sinfulness, by our departure from God.

It's a world that's distorted, that's not working properly, the way it should. A world that needs redemption, salvation, restoration.

[ 9 : 12 ] That's what should be in our minds, when you see, through the disorder that you find, certain tragedies coming about. Never think, that it's because these people, to whom these things happen, are worse somehow than we are.

We're not any better, not any more deserving, of good, than anybody else in the world. So whatever the reason was, that seems to have been, the thinking, of those who brought this to Jesus.

Maybe whether they were coming, specifically to test to see, what his reaction would be, as is often the case. In any case, they came, they made this statement, and this is Jesus' response.

And what Jesus does, is turn their minds, to the thing that they ought to have been, thinking of more than anything else. And that is, their own relationship with God, their own, their own salvation, and especially the issue, of their repentance.

This is how he put it. Do you think, that these Galileans, were worse sinners, than all other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will likewise perish.

[ 10 : 32 ] They had come, talking about some other people, other people, that have been caught up, in a tragedy. What's Jesus going to make of this? What's this great rabbi, going to say to us?

How is he actually, going to deal with, such a difficult issue, of people who were killed, for no good reason, just to the cruelty of Pilate? What's he going to say, to us about this? How is he going to deal with this?

Is he going to have, a ready answer? Are we going to catch him out? What does Jesus do? He says, you, have to think of yourselves, before you think of others.

It wasn't, what you're thinking, that these people, were worse than others, but I tell you, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

And that's why he then went on, and said, those 18, on whom the tower in Siloam, fell at the people, they would have known, about that at the time. Do you think, that they were worse offenders, than all the others, who lived in Jerusalem?

[ 11 : 33 ] No, I tell you, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. You'll find some people saying, if only we just had the teachings of Jesus, if only we cut out, all that Old Testament stuff, about a wrathful, vengeful God, a God who, mentions such things, as these disasters, that he brought upon people, and punishment, if only we had, this Jesus, and his teaching, would be a lot better off.

And if only Christians, and if only the church, would confine themselves, to the teachings of Jesus, how much easier, it would then be, for people, to accept that teaching, rather than, all this other stuff, that's in the Bible.

Well, if you look at the teachings of Jesus, nobody ever mentioned hell, as frequently as Jesus did. And it is that Jesus, this same Jesus, who is here vehemently, responding, very pointedly, very graphically, very certainly, in this very personal way, to these people.

Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. if we get tired, of that sort of teaching, we are really not concerned, or serious, about our salvation.

If we try, and extract, such things, as repentance, from the teaching, of the Bible, you are taking away, such an important plank, in the teaching, of the Bible, that everything, has to do, with our reception, of salvation, actually falls, around us.

[ 13 : 27 ] Because, in the teaching, of Jesus himself, to go no further, than that, the matter, of repentance, turning from sin, back to God, is so crucial, that without it, we can't be saved.

And there is no better, commentary, I am not going to go into, what repentance is tonight, because, we are concerned tonight, to come and look at, the conditions, that God gives us.

What we are saying, first of all, is that, repentance, is required, if we are not, to perish. And the best, commentary on that, is what we will come to, God willing, in chapter 15, that famous, parable, of the prodigal son.

Just to, anticipate that, briefly tonight, look at verses, 11, from there, downwards. The man who had, the two sons, you know the story, he went and left home, he took everything, that the father gave him, he went away, and he found himself, eventually, longing to be fed, with the pods, that the pigs ate, when he was looking, after them, in the far country.

But, when he came, to himself, he said, how many of my father's, hired servants, have more than enough bread, but I perish, here with hunger, I will arise, and go to my father.

[ 14 : 48 ] And that's what he did. You notice the words. You notice what he's saying. It's so, very like, what Jesus is saying here, except you repent, you will all, likewise perish.

What is repenting? It's coming back to God. It's coming back to God, to Jesus specifically. That's what this prodigal said.

There are so many, in my father's house, that have more bread, than they can eat. Why then, am I perishing here, with hunger? I will arise, and I will go, to my father.

In the Westminster Confession of Faith, that summarizes, the teaching of the Bible for us, on all the important doctrines, of the Bible, when it sets out, a chapter on repentance, and there is a chapter, on repentance, because that shows you itself, that itself shows you, the importance, of repentance, along with faith, or alongside of faith, as two, indispensable things, in our salvation, in our coming to, possess salvation, to be saved.

But in repentance, the confession, defines, repentance, and what it is, that it's turning from sin, turning round, to God again.

[16:06] And it says this, although repentance, be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction, for sin, in other words, it's saying, repentance itself, is not the cause, why God forgives our sin.

It's not to be rested in, as any satisfaction, for sin, anything that, satisfies God, nor any cause, of the pardon, of sin, which is the act, of God's free grace, in Christ.

Nevertheless, it is of such, necessity, to all sinners, that none, may expect, pardon, without it. Now isn't that crucial? Repentance, although it's not the ground, of our acceptance, with God, it's not the reason, why God forgives our sin, all of that, is in Jesus, in the work of Christ, God's work of grace, in him.

Nevertheless, it is, is the confession, of such necessity, to all sinners, that none, may rightly, expect, pardon, without it. That's why we're saying, if you extract repentance, our turning, from sin, to God, and then say, you can still be saved, this, teaching of the Bible, is saying to us, God is saying to us, that's a great mistake.

[17:31] That's what we ourselves, would prefer to think, perhaps. That's what the world, out there, would want you to think. That repentance, is just one, of those things, that this Bible, sets before you, as so severe, in its teaching.

And we've got to get rid of, all of that stuff, nowadays. Well, this does not change. This is the teaching, of Jesus, the teaching, of our Lord, who knows, what's necessary, for us, to be saved. And what he's saying, is that, except, you repent, you will all, likewise, perish. In other words, there isn't anything, really more important, for us, for you, and for me too, tonight, than that we repent. That we turn, from our sin, to God. As the catechism, puts it, as we mentioned, this morning, with full purpose, and endeavour, after new obedience. And people can say, that's very hard, teaching is the teaching, of the Lord.

And people can say, well, but you don't need, to mention that, so often. Well, the Lord mentions it, that often. And the epistles, of Paul mentions it, that often. When he mentions, how the people, he writes to, whether it's the Ephesians, the Colossians, whatever, you turned, from idols, he says to the Thessalonians, to the living God.

[18:59] That's how you came, to be saved. There's a turning, there's an about turn, there's a you turn. Very often, when you go down, a motorway, you'll come to, sign after sign, that says, no U-turn.

And that's what, your own heart, will tell you, under the gospel. That's what, the enemy of your soul, will tell you. No U-turns here. Don't turn round, just keep on the way, keep on in the way, that you're going.

Everything will turn out, all right. Well, it won't. And your Lord, tells you, without a U-turn, you're going to perish. You'll end up, with the lost, with the damned, with those who will be forever, in hell. Except, you, repent, he says, you will all likewise perish. But let's move on, to the parable. That's the emphasis, that Jesus laid upon, the necessity of repentance.

It's required, if we're not to perish. But, he gives us, God gives us, the right conditions, for repentance. And I think it's, when you go into this, and you realize, the advantages, that God has given us.

[20:14] That, that itself, will surely bring us, to turn to God. To love the Lord. To walk in the ways, of the Lord. Let's see what the parable, is saying.

First of all, look at, our advantaged position, under the gospel. Because, we're like, this fig tree. A fig tree, planted, in a vineyard.

Now that was, a very favorable position, for a fig tree. A vineyard, was a very fertile place. And the fig tree, planted in the vineyard, would have all the advantages, of, the way the vine dresser, looked after his vines.

He would look after, this fig tree, which is what he did. And for three years, the owner of the vineyard, came, looking for fruit, on this fig tree. And for these three years, the fig tree, failed, to produce figs, to produce fruit.

And, after three years, the owner of the vineyard, came and said, to the vine dresser, look, I've come for three years, now, looking for fruit, on this tree.

[21:22] Cut it down. Get rid of it. It's taking up ground, in the vineyard, that could so easily, be taken up, by another tree, that would bear fruit. So get rid of it. Cut it down.

It's had enough time. And the vine dresser said, Sir, give it another year. Let it alone, this year also. Until I dig round it, and put on manure. Then, if it should bear fruit, next year, well and good. But if not, you can cut it down. The reason that this, fig tree didn't bear fruit, was not lack of care, on the part of the, vine dresser, the person, who was looking after the vineyard.

Nothing here to suggest, that he had neglected, looking after this fig tree, as he was going about, looking at the vines. Fig tree, would have been, well attended to, well manured, everything done, that was possible, to bring forth fruit, would have been done, for this tree.

But it didn't, bring forth figs. Isn't that how it is, with some of us, under the gospel?

[ 22 : 40 ] It's not that, we don't have the advantages. It's not that, we're not placed, favorably, in a position, where God, gives us, all the advantages, all the things, that are really, the right conditions, for our bringing, forth fruit.

God, has lovingly, placed you, in the soil, of this congregation, of the church, of God, in the world. He has given you, the favorable conditions, of the fellowship, that you have, in this congregation. He has given you, the soil, of the gospel, in which you are, actually planted. He has given you, the favorable conditions, of the preaching, of the gospel, that you regularly receive.

The climate, in your life, is just right, for the production, of spiritual fruit, on the branches, of your life. Now God, is coming to your life, tonight, and asking the question, are you, bearing fruit, in these conditions? Do you have, all these advantages, and yet, failing, to bring forth, the fruit, that shows, you are my disciple?

[ 23 : 57 ] I have to put that, to myself, as a preacher, of the gospel. Is my life, really, the kind, that is bringing forth, such fruit, in such an amount, as is commensurate with, or corresponds, to the many advantages, that I have.

What favorable conditions, we have. You know, I met people, in the ICRC, who told me, about their churches, one of them, in Africa, for example.

Their children, can't be put to school, unless, they guarantee, that they'll become, Muslims. They can't get, basic aid, from the agencies, that distribute aid, in South Sudan, that come from, different countries, in the world, it's given, to certain agencies, run by the government, and people, who go, for basic necessities, to these agencies, are told, we'll only give it to you, if you become, Muslims. There are people, in Nigeria, whose churches, are growing, but as they erect, buildings, they're burned, to the ground, their families, are killed, they're put into prison. You wouldn't think, that that's a favorable, soil for them, to grow, spiritual fruit, on the branches, of their lives, but you listen to them, and are they zealous, are they committed, to the Lord, are they indeed, committed, to bearing fruit, to his glory, and to showing, even those, who persecute them, that Christ, is their Lord, that they are pleased, to suffer for him.

Friends, we have, far more, favorable conditions, in a general way of speaking, in the peace, and prosperity, that we enjoy, in the placement, in which God, has placed us, in the vineyard, of his church, in the climate, of free, and full, preaching, of the gospel, and fellowship, with his people, and he's looking, for fruit, are we failing, to produce, the fruit, that God expects, you see, the owner, of this vineyard, had every right, to expect, that this fig tree, would bear fruit, everything, about its situation, and its conditions, was white, and yet, it failed, to produce, the fruit, that the owner, expected, and so, it is, with me, and with you,

[ 26 : 46 ] God, has every right, tonight, to examine, your life, and mine, and expect, that he will find, spiritual fruit, there, that he will find, the fruits, that the Bible, describes, of holiness, of life, of commitment, to him, of open confession, to him, of him, in the face, of the world, and all the other, things you find, that characterize, a Christian, and so, that's, the question, that God is putting, to me, and to you, when he says, what better conditions, could I have given you, than those you have, so, show me your fruit, let your life, flourish, produce that, which God, rightly expects, of you, and, in accordance, with the advantages, that God, has given us, our advantage, position, under the gospel, but then, you see, you move on, to God's patience, and his reluctance, to uproot our lives, or to uproot us, looking again, at how that's, illustrated in this, fruit, fig tree, and how it was dealt with, the owner said, cut it down, why should it use up the ground, and the vine dresser said, sir, let it alone, this year also, until I, diground it, and put on manure, in other words, he's saying to the owner,

I'll do everything, possible, in this year, to make sure, that every single thing, that needs to be done, is absolutely, and certainly, done, for this fig tree, and after that, if it fails, then you can cut it down, well, isn't it like that, with ourselves, why should God, leave you, and me, as a fruitless, individual, in

the midst, of all of these advantages, are we really, of the mind tonight, that says, I guess, but God is under obligation, to leave me, in my favourable condition, no he's not, it's due to his grace, and to his patience, that he leaves us, you and I, in the midst of such, favourable conditions, even if we're failing, to bring forth, the fruit that we ought to have, that's not because, we have a right to be left, it's not because, we have any deserving, of more of these advantages, it's because,

God is patient, and God's desire is, that none will perish, but that all will come, to repentance, this is the vine dresser's response, and you know, in a sense, it really brings us, into the heart, of God, we always, have to be careful, how we speak, but, as we look into, the heart of God, as the scripture, gives us, sometimes to do that, what you find, is, a picture really, almost of, of God, arguing against himself, if we can put it that way, with respect, because, on the one hand, God is saying, there's a person, who's had all of these, advantages, for so many years, their life, is not showing, anything at all, to do with any, spiritual fruit, therefore, cut it down, put someone else, in their place, on the one hand,

God is saying, it would be, perfectly valid, and right, and just, for him to do so, on the other hand, there's the other argument, where God says, no, I'll, be patient, a bit longer, I'll exercise, more forbearance, yet, I'll make sure, that, they have even more, of the advantages, they possess, and enjoy, I'll add, even more, of these, over the next, while, and one of the places, that you see that, in an amazing way, is the passage, we read in Hosea, Hosea, Hosea was a prophet, sent by God, to Israel, remember, we saw this morning, Israel, the northern kingdom, when the kingdom, divided under Rehobo, Israel, became the northern kingdom, and by and large, they, departed from the Lord, and exercised, gross idolatry, that's what God, is saying to them, through,

Hosea, mentioning the judgment, that's going to come, to them, because he says, in verse 5, of chapter 11, they refused, to return to me, he's saying already, they were, as a child, picturing them, as a child, being reared, by God, out of Egypt, he brought them, he taught them, how to walk, that's how, he brought them, into this relationship, with himself, he led them, with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, he gave them, so many, favorable conditions, such favorable, climate spiritual, in which to grow, and yet, my people, he says, are bent, on turning away, from me, and even then, God turns, as it were, to speak within himself, and, there really is no language, that can adequately, describe, this, inner being, of God, in his concern, in his desire, that none, will perish, in, the wonder, of his grace, in the forbearance, and the patience, that he exercises, towards the likes, of you and I, this is how, the Bible itself, puts it, how, can I give you up,

[ 32 : 47 ] O Ephraim, that's another name, for Israel, how, can I hand you over, O Israel, how, can I make you, like Adma, how, can I treat you, like Seboam, what are these cities, they are towns, that existed, on the plain, where Sodom, and Gomorrah, were located, that were destroyed, along with Sodom, and Gomorrah, in the destruction, of that time, God is saying, this is in fact, what these people, of Israel, bent on turning, away from me, this is really, what I should do, to them, but how can I do it, my heart, recoils, within me, my compassion, grows warm, and tender, I will not, execute my burning, anger, I will not, again, destroy Ephraim, for I am God, I am not a man, on the one hand,

God is saying, this is what, they deserve, this is really, what I should do, with them, on the other hand, he is saying, how can I, give them up, how can I, destroy them, how can I, make them, like Adma, like Seboam, under my judgment, I will not, exercise, the fierceness, of my wrath, I will not, destroy them, then he says, for I am God, and not, a man, what, a magnificent, statement, why, will God, not do this, because, he is God, if you, and I, were in the position, of God, with rebellion, against us, the way, we rebel, against him, with fruitlessness, in our advantage, position, against, all that he has, given us, we wouldn't, wait too long, before we cut it down, but he is God, and not man, he is different, to what we are, we would not, put up with this, we would not, put up with further, cause, of grievance, on the part, of those, to whom, many advantages, are given, and yet, the fruit is not there, we would say, about such people, they have had enough time, let's put someone else, in their place, let's get rid of them, cut it down, why does it take up, so much ground,

God is saying, no I am God, I am the patient God, the God of grace, the God of mercy, the God of forbearance, the God who pleads, with sinners, to accept his word, the God who gives them, time they don't deserve, the God who adds, to that time, though they don't deserve it, for I am God, and not man, isn't the patience, of God, persuasive, isn't the patience, and forbearance, of God, the fact, that he has left you, for further advantages, to be given to you, right up to this moment, isn't that itself, something, that so deeply, will touch your heart, tonight, that you will say,

I can't go on, any longer, not bearing fruit, in the position, that God has given me, I can't, any longer, go on, as if, I didn't have, all these advantages, I must look, to my life, and come, to bear fruit, for him, who has given me, so many favors, and placed me, in such a favorable position, and that, of course, is true, for all Christians, as well, it is not just, a word, to any, who may not yet, be saved, or bearing fruit, to his glory, as a Christian, tonight, I know, it is very easy, to discourage people, and that is not, what we are setting out, to do, and especially, when you come, to look at, fruitfulness, and where there may be, fruit, seen in our lives, spiritually, it is all, too easy, to get despondent, when you look, at yourself, and think, well I don't have, much fruit,

I can't see it, it is easier, for you to see it, in the life, of someone else, but having said that, every one of us, truly, as believers, as Christians, as professing Christians, will have to take, this, and say of ourselves, tonight, Lord, when you have given me, so many favorable things, and placed me, so favorably, in your providence, help me, to bring forth, more fruit, even if I don't, see it myself, even if I'm not, persuaded, that it's there, let it be there, let it be obvious, to others, and let it be obvious, for your glory, to be made known, and for me, to live for you, none of us, can see, we're already, bringing forth, enough fruit, herein, said Jesus, shall all men, know that you are my disciples, if you, bring forth, much fruit, so we have to go on, bearing, more fruit, for the Lord, and seek to add, to what already, has been brought forth, with, but there is, in closing, a limitation, to all of this, the patience, of God, does not go on, forever, sir, let it alone, this year, until I dig around it, and put on manure, then if it should bear fruit, next year, well and good, but, if not, you can cut it down, now that surely, should, tonight, for every one of us, avoid, presumptuousness, avoid, us presuming, that God's, patience, with me tonight, is going to last, through the whole, of my life, and it should certainly, bring out of our minds, any thought, that the patience, of God, is going to meet us, on the other side, of death, if we have died, fruitless in this world, there is no such thing, on the other side, because when we are, cut down by God, as a fruitless tree, we are going to remain, fruitless forever, there is nothing, to encourage the idea, that somehow, or other, without being concerned, to bear fruit, for him, things will turn out, all right, and even if I die, the way I came, into the world, somehow, or other,

[ 40 : 44 ] God will make it up, to me, in his kindness, and patience, on the other side, that's not, what Jesus is saying, if it should bear fruit, next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down, you can uproot it, you can replace it, so we're back, to the same emphasis, that Jesus has, in the previous passage, aren't we, with all, our advantages, with a favorable climate, in which he's given you, to grow as a human life, with all the, privileges that we have, with the way, that he fertilizes us, with the teaching, of his truth, that comes back, to this great statement, of Christ, I tell you, except, you repent, you too, likewise, will perish, let's pray,

Lord our God, we acknowledge, that, there is a solemnity, to your word, that that solemnity, is built in, in your own authorship, of it, that it is impossible, for us to avoid it, if we are through, to your word, and we pray, that that solemnity, will impress us, this night, when we hear, of your own teaching, in regard, to repentance, to fruit bearing, to being the kind, of people, that our favorable, conditions, would truly, bring forth, Lord, we ask, that you would, make it to be so, for each of our lives, and give us, that concern, each day, to bring forth, that fruit, which will be, to your praise, to your glory, and to our advantage, hear us now, we pray, for Jesus, Amen, Amen, you,