

John 12:34-43

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0 : 00] Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.! But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name. Then a voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.

The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, An angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world. Now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself. He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. So the crowd answered him, We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever.

How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.

The one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become sons of light. When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

[1 : 05] Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. Lord, who has believed what he heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.

Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him. But for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

For they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. This is the word of the Lord.

Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, God, I ask, we ask as a church, Lord, that you would be gracious to us and bless us.

[2 : 07] That you would make your face to shine upon us this morning through your holy word. Lord, let this be a demonstration of your spirit and of your power, O God.

And Lord, I pray that as your word goes forth and is heard and received, God, that it would be so that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.

God, have your way by your spirit and by your word in the hearts of those who are listening this morning. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. I know many of you are sick this morning, and I am joining you in the ranks, so if my voice falters, it's okay, because as I was just praying, it's not about the strength of our voices, the strength of our song.

It's about the one that we're worshipping. It's his power. It's his word. My name is Mike. Good morning to all of you. One of the elders here at Shoreline, and we are so glad that you have joined us this morning.

My children have been learning about our solar system the last few weeks, which has been pretty cool for me, actually, as I've gotten to learn along with them, remember some of the things I've learned in school.

[3 : 25] Did you know that Saturn has 146 moons? Did anybody know that? Like, that's pretty awesome. I don't know why we don't talk about that more. And that's way cooler than, you know, that double sunset on Tatooine, for all you Star Wars nerds.

146 moons. Did you know that 1,600 Saturn-sized planets could fit inside the sun? 1,600. And the sun, it measures 864,000 miles in diameter.

Massive. Now, for those that don't remember their physics one in high school, the force of gravity is directly proportional to the mass of an object.

Bigger mass, bigger gravitational force. Does that make sense? All right, I know that was a long time ago. The sun's mass is over 3,500 times greater than the mass of Saturn.

And yet, those 146 moons, they just keep right on orbiting around Saturn, right? Like, almost as if the sun isn't even there. They don't realize how powerful the sun is, right?

[4 : 31] Like, why aren't they orbiting around the sun? The pull of the sun is strong. It's extremely strong. But so, too, is the pull of Saturn because of how close to Saturn those moons are, right?

Now, what we see in this passage today is that the pull of sin and unbelief, the gravity of darkness, if you will, is so strong and difficult to overcome in the human heart.

But unlike the moons of Saturn, which are constrained by gravity, right, by the gravitational pull, you and I actually have a choice to make, right?

Will we turn and move towards the great and powerful God of glory revealed in Christ and become children of light? Or will we remain in our little orbits of sin and darkness?

Now, the text for today is verses 34 to 43 of John 12. But because we're picking up in the middle of an interaction between Jesus and the Jewish crowd that was gathered before him, Rene started the reading from verse 27.

[5 : 38] And if you remember from last week, the arrival of Greeks, of Gentiles, who are seeking Jesus, it prompts him to declare, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

See, Jesus will gather the Gentiles to himself, but first he must die. Now, this brings anguish to his soul, as we see.

But Jesus is laser-focused on the Father's glory, right? So he yields to the will of the Father, and he sets his face to the cross. And by being lifted up to die on the cross, Jesus would, in an unparalleled act of love and self-sacrifice, as he says in verse 34, draw all people to himself.

Now, this, of course, defies the first century Jewish expectations of the Messiah. And this is where we pick up in verse 34 this morning.

The first section, so we're going to move through the sermon in really two major sections. And so I've titled the sermon, The Gravity of Darkness and the Glory of Light. And those are really the two sections that we're going to see here.

[6 : 52] And the first one is this, A Call, the Glory of Light. And that's what we're going to go through right now in verses 34 to 36. So in verse 34, John says, So the crowd answered him, We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever.

How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? So as we've been talking about all throughout our sermon series in John, the Jewish people were expecting a Messiah who would vanquish Rome, right?

And who would establish a literal, physical, earthly kingdom. And this kingdom they expected would last forever. Many Old Testament passages predict the eternal reign of the coming Messiah and of his kingdom.

Take, for example, Isaiah 9, 6, and 7, which is commonly read around the time of Advent. We read this last week. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

[8 : 16] But here, Jesus is claiming to be the Messiah. He's claiming to be the Son of Man predicted in Daniel 7. And at the same time, he's hinting at his imminent death.

The Jews are saying, like, you don't sound like the Messiah and the Son of Man that we've been expecting all these years. Who are you really then? Who are you? And so verse 35, so Jesus said to them, the light is among you for a little while longer.

Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light that you may become sons of light.

And jot this down if you're taking notes. Believe in Jesus, become children of light. Believe in Jesus, become children of light. Now notice, Jesus' answer to their question isn't really an answer to their question, is it?

He doesn't really answer exactly what they're asking. But, if you read between the lines, Jesus is, he's basically saying here, like, look, I've already told you.

[9 : 28] I've already revealed my identity to you, right? In my words and in my works. What remains is for you to believe. Because who is the light that he's referring to?

Who is it? It's himself, of course, right? It's himself. In chapter 8, verse 12, Jesus said, I am the light of the world. In chapter 9, verse 5, right before bringing sight to the man born blind, Jesus had said, as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

Jesus is the light. And here he is calling the Jews to walk in his light, meaning to believe in him, to surrender themselves to him, to follow in his footsteps.

And he's calling them here, you see, there's an urgency in this, he's calling them to believe now. Because he's about to depart, and it's going to be that much harder for them to believe in him when he's gone.

When he is gone, when the light has departed, the gravity of darkness is going to be strong. It's going to be difficult to overcome. But even though his departure is inevitable, if they believe in him, if they believe in him, they will become, as he says here, sons of light.

[10 : 46] And so live in the light, even in the midst of the darkness. So what is a son of light? What is that? It's a true child of God. That's what it is.

It's a true child of God. John had said in his opening prologue, 1 verse 12, to all who did receive him, Jesus Christ, the word made flesh, to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become, what?

Children. Children of God. So a true child of God. It's one who is guided by and who follows in the light of Jesus, right?

Modeling their life after his. A true child of God is one who, through their union with Christ, shares in the light of his glory and honor. Right?

Like, all the goodness of God becomes theirs in Christ. And that's basically a condensed summary of our entire sermon last week. Psalm 84, verse 11.

[11 : 48] Listen to the ties to these two passages. For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Right? He's talking to the children of God, the chosen people of God. He is a son to them. He bestows favor and honor to them. Right? His face shines upon them as they walk uprightly.

And he doesn't withhold any of his goodness from them. That is what it means to be a son, a child, a daughter of light. So believe in Jesus. Right? Believe in Jesus.

And you can become a child of light. That's the call that Christ is making in this passage. And that's the promise as well. It's a call to faith. It's a call to discipleship. And it's a promise of glory.

And again, notice the urgency of the call. Right? Believe in Jesus today. Believe in Jesus now while there is still light.

[12 : 49] Now that was the call to the first century Jews. Right? Because Jesus was about to leave physically from the world. His light, the light of his physical presence was going to be gone. But the thing is that today he's broadcasting the same call to us.

Right? He rose from the dead and he ascended back to the Father. Right? He removed his physical presence from the world. But the light of his presence remains. It's still here.

Through his word, through his spirit, through the church who is the fullness of Christ. Right? Even through the natural world. Right? Like the sun and Saturn and its moons.

We see the light of Christ in this world today. And we must choose to walk in that light while it is still day. Lest the darkness of sin prevail.

And oh, it is strong. So Jesus, he warns the Jews of this coming darkness. And then John shows us that Jesus, he essentially acts out what this is going to look like.

[13 : 55] And that transitions us to the next section. A warning. The gravity of darkness. When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

Now we saw a similar occurrence back at chapter 8, if you guys remember. Jesus was in the temple. Right? He was surrounded by the Jews. And he says, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.

Right? And what happened? The Jews picked up stones to hurl at him. But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. Right? And Jesus would never again actually return to the temple, the place that was supposed to be the presence of God in their midst.

Jesus' presence was removed. It's gone. And now we see that Jesus withdraws not just from the temple, but entirely from the public eye. Right?

And that is, he's going to spend the next several days with his disciples, with the true disciples, and he will only emerge when he's going to the cross. Right? His arrest, his trial, his death on the cross.

[15:08] The removal of his presence from the people acts out, as D.A. Carson puts it, the judicial warning he has just pronounced. Believe in me, the light, while you still have me.

Right? That's what Christ is saying. Otherwise, the darkness is going to overtake you. This was his pronouncement. Right? And then, as they tarry in their unbelief, Jesus, he removes the light of his presence from them.

Now, Jesus' withdrawal from the public eye, it also provides an introduction to the Apostle John's own reflections on the unbelief of his fellow Jews. Right?

Jesus, he warns of and he acts out the darkness to come, and then John explains for us two forms that this darkness has taken in the hearts of his fellow Jews.

And here's the first one. The danger, what I'm calling the danger of complacency, persists in unbelief, God may harden your heart.

[16:11] How am I getting this? Verse 37, John says, though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him.

Now here, John is lamenting the Jews' persistent unbelief, even in spite of all the miraculous signs that Jesus did before their eyes. We've walked through all those for the last several months.

All of those signs, including even the most recent one of Lazarus raising from the dead, including the one before that of the blind man who had been born blind receiving sight back from the Lord.

Even in spite of all those, they did not believe. Jesus' works, his signs, they were meant to awaken faith. And yet, the people remained skeptical unbelievers.

And this unbelief, though, John says, is something that was actually foretold 700 years earlier. John says it was, verse 38, so that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled.

[17:19] Lord, who has believed what he heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Where's John quoting from here?

Isaiah 53, right? Isaiah's fourth and final and most well-known what we call servant songs. This is the song of the suffering servant.

Jesus had just alluded to it in his final public address that we read last week. And as we saw last week, he is saying that that is me.

What is pictured in Isaiah 53, the suffering servant, is me, right? And John is continuing to make that link to the song of the suffering servant. And John's also making a link not just to Christ, but to the present-day Jews.

He said what is pictured there by Isaiah is also you guys, right? The present-day Jews. Now the song begins in Isaiah 52, verse 13.

[18:17] And Isaiah says this, behold, behold, behold, my servant shall act wisely. He shall be high and lifted up and shall be exalted. As many were astonished at you, his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and his form beyond that of the children of mankind, so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings shall shut their mouths because of him. For that which has not been told them, they see. And that which they have not heard, they understand. And then comes Isaiah 53, verse 1, which John quotes, who has believed what he has heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

See, according to Isaiah, the servant of the Lord, he will be lifted up and exalted, but at the same time, the people will be astonished at him because of his marred figure.

This is a difficult message to believe, Isaiah says. The arm of the Lord, God's strength, it's going to be revealed in one who is despised and rejected by men.

Who can believe this message? It's basically what Isaiah is saying. And the apostle John is saying that this prophecy from 700 years prior finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and these first century Jews.

[19 : 38] Jesus has come proclaiming his identity with both words and works, and the people have found his message to be too unexpected, too offensive even for them to believe.

And John says in verse 39, therefore, they could not believe. For again, Isaiah said, he has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.

Now, this is a difficult thing to understand. John is saying that they could not, would not, sorry, John is saying that they would not believe and therefore, they could not believe.

They would not believe as foretold by Isaiah in chapter 53, verse 1. Therefore, they could not believe as foretold by Isaiah in this second passage, which is taken from Isaiah 6, verse 10.

Now, many of you know Isaiah 6. It's another very famous chapter in the book of Isaiah, right? It's where Isaiah sees the Lord sitting up on a throne, high and lifted up, right, with the train of his robe filling the temple.

[21 : 00] And in this vision of Isaiah, he sees that angels are gathered around the throne of the Lord of hosts and they're proclaiming this, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. And then Isaiah volunteers to go on behalf of the Lord to Israel, right? And in this commissioning by God, God says to Isaiah in verses 9 and 10 of chapter 6, God says, go and say to this people, keep on hearing, but do not understand, keep on seeing, but do not perceive, make the heart of this people dull and their eyes heavy and blind their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed. God is telling Isaiah that the message he is going to proclaim to Israel will actually have a hardening effect on them, right?

His own generation that he's prophesying to will be hardened by the message that he brings to them, right? Isaiah is going to call Israel to repentance.

He's going to call them to return to the Lord, right, and to find healing if you return, but they will actually do the opposite. And the reason they will do the opposite is that God in an act of judgment will himself harden their hearts.

[22 : 42] And John is saying that that is exactly what has happened to his own fellow Jews in the first century, right? In their complacency, they have willfully rejected Jesus.

They have refused to believe his message. And because of this persistent unbelief, God, in an act of judgment, further hardened their hearts so that they could not believe.

Right? This, this is the danger of complacency. This is the danger of persistence in unbelief. God may harden your heart so that you cannot believe.

Now, how is that even fair? You might ask, right? How is that fair? How could God do that to them, to us?

Doesn't God want people to repent and turn to him? Those are good questions to ask. Does God want people to repent and turn to him?

[23 : 46] Yes. Yes, he does. God longs for people to repent and to turn from him. And he promises healing. He promises healing if they do.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

2 Peter 3.9 And he promises, John writes this later on, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, right?

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Yes, God longs for you, for my repentance, the repentance of the nations. God longs for people to be brought in.

Christ has been preaching this message all along, right? He's come to gather in the sheep to his fold. But as for that first question, right? How is that fair?

[24 : 45] I want to talk about what's fair for a minute. The supreme creator of the universe, right?

The one who fashioned and formed the galaxies by his word, who formed mankind by a breath, the one who made Saturn and its 146 moons, right?

that God has also graciously invited us into loving fellowship with him. Can you even believe it?

He's invited us. But what did we do?

We rejected him. We said, no, no, no, no, we want to be gods ourselves, right? We would rather be God. That was the first sin of Adam and Eve. They wanted to be gods.

gods. And we do the same thing. We reject the authority of God. We do that every single day. Living with ourselves on the throne of our own hearts, right? That's the throne that belongs to God alone.

[25 : 49] The throne of my heart is a throne that God ought to have. Now, what does somebody who commits treason against a king deserve? What does somebody who commits treason against the king of kings deserve?

What is just? What is fair? What's just, what's fair, is that those guilty, sinful people, which is all of us, right, apart from Christ, that we deserve an eternal condemnation to do and be what we ourselves have already chosen to do and be.

You don't want to choose me, God says, then so be it. You shall not choose me. Now, let's talk for a second about what's not fair.

That same God, he sent his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin Mary.

He's royalty robed in the flesh he created. And Jesus, despised and rejected by men, was then pierced for our transgressions, for your sin, for my sin.

[27 : 03] He was crushed for our iniquities. He was lifted up on the cross, laying down his life, the life of the creator God.

He laid it down for you and me to have eternal life. We were forgiven a debt we could never pay. Does that sound fair to you?

And yet, that was God's brilliant plan from eternity past. The plan for our redemption, right? And there on the cross, the great collision of divine justice and divine mercy.

Praise God. So if, after all of that, you and I persist and persist and persist in willful unbelief, it is only just, it is only fair, that God further hardens our hearts to a state of unbelief that we have already chosen.

So we return once again to the choice at hand. Will you choose Christ today? Today? Will you choose Christ today?

[28 : 18] Don't wait, friend. The darkness is strong. Its gravity is so powerful. but it can be overcome in Christ. It can be overcome.

Choose Christ today and don't wait. Now before we move on from these verses, there's just one more thing that I think it's important for us to consider and that's this, that God in his infinite sovereign wisdom, he preordained, he preordained that these Jews would harden their hearts against Christ, right?

Leading to his death on the cross for the salvation of the world and at the very same time those Jews willfully chose to reject him.

He preordained it and they chose it. That's what John is saying right here. And this, we've talked about this before in John, this is one more example in John's gospel in which the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of men are both upheld as true.

They are not in tension. They are not in conflict. They are both true. And I want you to hear how Peter, and I think we've quoted this in the past, I want you to hear how Peter upholds both of these truths in his sermon at Pentecost, Acts 2.23.

[29 : 41] He says, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Their culpability, their guilt, it's not removed. They chose it. And at the very same time, it was carried out by the sovereign hand of God. Now that should move us to worship God, right?

Like his infinite wisdom that he's able to superintend over the evil plots of the wicked to bring about his good purposes. And it should also move us to repent and choose Christ today, lest we become like those first century Jews whose guilt for sin remained and God hardens our hearts in judgment. The danger of complacency persists in unbelief and God may harden your heart. Now here's the second danger. The danger of competition.

Misorder your loves choke out your faith. And we'll explain what I'm talking about. I'm just trying to characterize what we see here in the text. Now verse 41, Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.

[31 : 02] He saw his glory and spoke of him. Who's his? It's Christ. He saw Christ's glory and he spoke of Christ. Now in Isaiah 6, we saw that he literally saw the glory of God in his vision.

And some believe that that was actually a pre-incarnate Christ that Isaiah beheld. Now either way, whether it was or it wasn't, through the prophetic word that Isaiah received from the Lord, he foresaw of the glory of Christ.

He foresaw of the future servant of the Lord because he was given that supernatural insight into the future person and work of Christ. And in response, what did Isaiah do?

He devoted his life to living for the glory of God. Even in the midst of a perverse generation that berated him and persecuted him, a generation that rebelled against God's loving and good authority.

And then John writes in an unexpected twist here, nevertheless, verse 42, many even of the authorities believed in him.

[32 : 11] God wait a second. I was asking this, wait a second. So that judicial hardening of the heart that we just talked about, God didn't actually do that to all the Jewish leaders.

And the answer is no, he didn't. And no doubt, there were many common Jews who also believed in Jesus, and we've seen this over the course of our time in John. But, we're about to see that these Jewish leaders, they have a different problem than persistent unbelief leading to God's judicial hardening.

And John tells us this in the next part of the verse. But for fear of the Pharisees, they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

Okay, so I'm still confused. Do they believe or do they not believe? Do they believe, church, or do they not believe? Trick question here. They do believe, right?

John literally says so. Many, even of the authorities believed in him. They believe. But he says they wouldn't confess their belief in public, right? Now, perhaps we should be asking a different question.

[33 : 31] Do they believe unto eternal life, or do they not? We saw this in John 3 when Brother Kent preached. Do they possess saving faith, or do they not?

I was reminded this week of James 2, verse 19. James reminds us, even the demons believe and shudder.

The demons believe in God. the demons believe in Jesus, but they don't receive the glorious benefits of sonship, right? They are not sons of light, yet they believe.

Mere head knowledge, right? Mere head knowledge, mere intellectual assent is not enough. For these Jewish leaders in John 12, their belief appears to be mere intellectual assent, right?

fear of man prevents them from confessing this belief in public. These leaders here, they are the antithesis of the man born blind in John 9, right?

[34 : 41] Do you guys remember him? They had actually cast that man out of the synagogue for his faith in Christ, but here we see that they themselves are not willing for the same thing to happen to them.

But there is something more fundamental than fear of man, and that's what John shows us next. verse 43, John says, for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Now the word glory, it means praise, honor, approval. One commentator translated it as the good opinion, right? The good opinion. Their hearts desire the good opinion of man more than that of God.

So their fear of man, it's a product of something deeper in the heart, and that is wrongly ordered loves in the heart. At the root of their fear of being kicked out of the synagogue is idolatry.

It's a breaching of the first commandment. You shall have no other gods before me. It's a propagation of that first sin in the garden, right, in which man's heart prefers self on the throne to God on the throne.

[35 : 56] Jesus had said to the Jewish crowd that whoever loves his life loses it, right? Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

The love of Jesus, like the love that Mary had demonstrated when she poured out her ointment before him, it must trump all other loves. A genuine saving faith unto life, right, unto eternal life. It is a faith from a heart that belongs wholly to Jesus. In John's analysis, then, these Jewish leaders do not have a belief unto eternal life, right?

They don't possess a saving faith. Now Jesus, he refers to people like this in his parable of the sower, right? These are the seeds sown among thorns.

Jesus says that as for what was sown among thorns, this is Matthew 13 now, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

[37 : 07] This is where I'm pulling that verb choke. See, there is competition in the heart, is there not? Competition between light and darkness, between true faith and counterfeit faith, between love and devotion to Christ and love and devotion to self.

And that competition is dangerous. And that's the warning here, right? If we misorder our loves, the loves in our heart, it will choke out our faith.

Now, is this not the more subtle of the two dangers? At least I think so. See, the first danger is a persistence and unbelief, right? And it's really a call to those outside of Christianity, right?

Come, choose Christ, right? Repent today, don't wait. But the second danger, that's a call to those supposedly within Christianity. Like, this is a call to nominal Christians, the ones who go to church, who know the answers, who profess faith in Christ, at least to the right people.

And all the while, their hearts remain enemy territory, unyielded to Christ, right? unwilling to bear the cost of following Jesus, even though they're offered the free gift of eternal life at the cost of his precious life.

[38 : 31] I believe in Jesus, but I'm not willing to give that up. If they find out I'm a Christian, do you know what I'll have to deal with? See, this passage beckons us, all of us, to assess the state of our hearts, to ask ourselves, is Jesus my first love?

Does God's opinion of me carry more weight than man's opinion of me? It's possible some of you are thinking something else I thought when I read this passage.

Now perhaps these Jewish leaders, they chose not to confess their faith because it was strategic. It was a strategic move, right? They could maintain a position of greater power and influence for the sake of Christ.

That sounds like wisdom, doesn't it? It is. It is wisdom. The problem is it's worldly wisdom. It's worldly wisdom. It's like the clay telling the potter how it ought to be molded.

See, we might think that our plan is better. We might think that our scheme has a greater kingdom impact than God's, but the reality is we would actually be deceiving ourselves and stepping away from true faith, right?

[39 : 47] Stepping towards the darkness, one step closer, one step closer and its pull increases. So what seems like a great kingdom maneuver at first might actually end up leading to the deconstruction of our faith, right?

Because we're actually compromising with the enemy, we're compromising and we're justifying sinful choices. Now, Jesus wants our hearts entirely. Is Jesus your first love?

Jesus wants us to submit wholly to the Father's will. What he says is good, what he says is right and true. And Jesus wants us to value God's good opinion of us more highly than all others.

Now, it must be acknowledged that that competition that I talked about, the war in the heart, it still rages on in the hearts of believers. Right?

Like, one moment we're treasuring Christ as we pray, right? And the next moment we lose it in anger towards our children, right? One moment we're holding God's opinion of us as paramount as we get berated by a boss, and the next moment we're justifying ourselves to our coworkers.

[41 : 03] So, this competition for the affections of our heart, it will not end until Christ returns to take the church home to be his bride. And I don't want you all going home questioning your salvation, right?

I want to say first, we should expect, Christians, Christians, we should expect to fall short over and over and over again. You already know this because you do, I do, every day.

But, I want us to remember what Jesus said to his sheep in John 10. He said, I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

We have received salvation on the merit of Christ alone, right? By grace alone, and we keep our salvation, or rather, the Father and Son keep and guard our salvation in the same way, by grace alone, amen?

But, there's still this sort of nagging question, how do we know, how do I know whether I'm like the Pharisees, and have a counterfeit faith, or whether I'm a true disciple, and son of light?

[42 : 18] How do we know whether we remain in the darkness, or whether we are sons of light?

And, this could be a whole other sermon, but I want to be brief here, and I want to answer with one word.

The word is fruit. fruit. Does the pattern of your life give evidence to your genuine faith, by the fruit that is being produced?

See, if you are a true son, daughter of light, if you are a true disciple of Jesus, then the Holy Spirit has been given to you, right? He is a deposit guaranteeing your future inheritance.

He lives inside you. He indwells you. Let me tell you something. The place where God's Spirit dwells, they are places of newness. They are places of life.

They are places of change and growth. See, the hearts in which the Holy Spirit resides, they are hearts that increasingly look like Jesus, right?

[43 : 23] They increasingly reflect his heart, his character. They increasingly desire fellowship with the Father. love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, the fruits of the Spirit.

They are hearts that increasingly love and treasure the good opinion of God more than that of men. So I want to ask, are you growing in these ways?

Are you increasing in your likeness to Christ? And if you are, that's evidence that you are a son or a daughter of light.

And if you're still unsure, if you're unsure of the answer to that question, as we bring this thing to a close, I want to beckon you and all of us here to do one thing, one thing, and that's the thing that Isaiah did.

That's the thing that Jesus was calling those first century Jews to do, and that is this, to gaze on the glory of Christ. To gaze on the glory of Christ.

[44 : 35] The darkness is strong, friends, it's strong. It's gravitational pull is difficult to overcome, even impossible, in and of ourselves. And we're endangered by our own complacency, we're endangered by the competition that rages on in our hearts, and those things keep us fixated on the darkness, right?

But if we turn around, we'll find that the blazing light of God's glory, it's far more powerful and alluring than the darkness. Now, we're probably not going to receive a prophetic vision like Isaiah, but we have the enduring word of God, do we not?

We have the scriptures through which we encounter the living God of light, through which we see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

So yes, gaze on the beauty and glory of Christ in his word, and find that as you do, your unbelief and the competing loves in your heart will melt away in the heat of his light.

And I think we'll find that we are drawn, whether afresh or for the first time, to true faith in him and wholehearted devotion to him.

[45 : 57] The glory will be irresistible if we just gaze on it, gaze on him, it will be irresistible. And the promise is that we get to share in that glory, right?

We get to rejoice in the light of that glory forevermore. Children of light that we are in Christ. Please pray with me. Father, you say, in your light do we see light.

In your light do we see light. And God, I ask that we would turn this morning away from the darkness whose pull is so strong.

we would move towards the light, the blazing light that you offer that emanates from you. God, help us to see you like Isaiah did, to see you in your glory, in your beauty, in your wonder.

Isaiah saw you, but we have the cross. He did not have the cross. We see you in your glory, in your beauty, on the cross where the glorious splendor of your love and your grace and your majesty and your wisdom and everything that you are was on display.

[47 : 27] God, let that glorious light stir in our hearts to awaken faith, to move us to wholehearted devotion to you. God, let us be the sons of light that you call us to be.

God, and I pray that that light would beckon the nations towards you as well. For your glory, oh God, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.