

The Stone the Builders Rejected

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[0 : 00] We're going to turn now to Acts chapter 4 and we're going to read together verses from 11 down to verse 13.

Acts chapter 4 and verse 11, page 1099 and verse 11. And this Jesus, said Peter, is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given amongst men by which we must be saved. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated common men, they were astonished.

And they recognized that they had been with Jesus, but seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.

In the first few days, after Jesus had been killed and his body had been buried, there seemed to be, I guess, an eerie calm throughout Jerusalem and beyond.

[1 : 22] For the bewildered disciples, it was a deathly calm. They could not figure out how the events that they had witnessed over the last three years could all add up and could culminate in his death and in his burial.

That was until they made this startling discovery that Jesus was alive. Not only was the grave empty, but on several occasions, Jesus met with them, on each occasion adding strength to their newfound confidence.

Not only that, but they had witnessed him, 40 days later, him ascending, being literally lifted up to heaven, towards heaven. But not before giving them the promise that in a few days' time, the Holy Spirit would come upon them and that they would find a new power with which to preach the message of the gospel.

So what they thought, the disciples, was the end of the road, initially, as they watched Jesus being taken down from the cross, dead and buried, turned out to be only the beginning.

Their mourning turned into joy. The opposite is true in respect of the Jewish leaders. For them, they believed that they had finally got rid of him when they nailed him to a cross, or when the Romans nailed him to a cross, they believed that finally this menace had been done away with.

[2 : 56] It's difficult for us to understand the hatred that the Pharisees and the scribes harbored towards Jesus. While he was teaching, there was a determination to get rid of him.

The more they heard, the more they determined to get rid of him. And when he was crucified, they rejoiced with all their might. Indeed, Jesus promised that this would happen.

He said that the world would rejoice and the disciples would be in mourning. And that's exactly what happened. I wonder if they really believed that by crucifying Jesus, they would finally destroy this movement that they sought to stop.

If they did, their belief was short-lived. No sooner had they done the deal with Pilate to secure his grave with a sealed stone that the grave was discovered to be empty three days later.

And the stone was mysteriously rolled away. Shortly after that, the whole community was rocked by one single sermon preached by Peter in the middle of Jerusalem.

[4 : 02] One of Jesus' followers, an ignorant, an unlearned, an unschooled, an uneducated fisherman with no formal education whatsoever. But then, as if that wasn't bad enough, a crippled man who had sat every day and who everybody knew to sit every day at the temple gates begging for assistance, begging for money.

He was found to be on his feet, not only standing, not only quivering on his feet, but leaping and jumping and praising God with a newfound energy and a newfound life.

This man could not walk beforehand. Everybody knew him, and they were astonished by what had taken place in him. For years, they would pass him by, and some of them, some kind person, would

throw in some money, and now here was the same man walking and leaping and praising God. For the Jewish leaders, this was their worst nightmare. Once again, they intervened in chapter 4. They intervened. They arrested the apostles, and they put them in custody. There seemed to be no limit to the effect that this gospel was having on the crowds of people. Indeed, thousands of people. There were now 5,000 people.

[5 : 23] That's what we're told here in chapter 4, verse 4. The number of men who came to about 5,000 people had come to believe in this Jesus. This was now a major movement among the people, which was capturing the hearts of everybody.

And the more that turned to him, the less there would be observing the Jewish tradition and listening to the Jewish leaders. See, Christianity is a movement among people.

It's a popular movement among people, ordinary people. And you can't stop the movement. Many people have tried to stop the movement. The Romans tried to stop the movement.

They couldn't stop it. And now the established Old Testament church at this time, they can't stop it. And there's always a danger when the religious leaders or when any leadership is out of touch with the people.

They want to rule by legislation. And they think they can control people by legislation. But when there's a movement of God's spirit, there's a sense in which things get out of control.

[6 : 29] Can you imagine 5,000 people all milling around, desperate to hear the gospel, desperate to hear more and more. The more they hear, the more they want to hear. And they want to have more because they found something new, a message that they had never heard before.

I often hear people speaking about revival and praying and wishing and hoping for what we call a movement of God's spirit in revival. Well, of course we all do.

I do as well. It would be marvelous. But I don't think we know what we're praying for when we pray for a revival to take place. I don't think we realize what mayhem it would be. I don't think we realize how out of control it would be.

And for some people that would be quite upsetting. It would be quite disconcerting. If you read about revivals in the past, very often there are times and occasions when you don't know what's going to happen.

In five minutes' time, anything could happen because it is a movement of you can't control God's spirit. When God's spirit takes hold of 5,000 people, you can't control, you can't pretend to all of a sudden say, write to these 5,000 people, you're going to do what I say.

[7 : 35] You can't do that when God's spirit begins to work. And that's because he works in a mysterious, powerful way amongst people. And things just happen.

There's a risk and a danger. And you simply don't know what he's going to do. Well, we do pray for revival. We do pray for a movement of God's spirit. But be very careful when you pray for that. Be very careful that you don't actually know what you're praying for, nor do I. Well, this was a major crisis for the scribes and for the Pharisees and for the Sadducees, rather, and for the priests and the captain of the temple.

This was a major crisis for them. Arguably, a greater crisis than when Jesus was still around. Something had to be done to stop this movement.

Before, there had only been one man. In some ways, it was worse than when Jesus was still around. Because beforehand, you had one man teaching the people, going from village to village and doing miracles.

[8 : 39] Now, you've got 12 men. And they're preaching exactly the same, with the same and even greater effect. The greatest crowd that was around Jesus was the 5,000 who he fed.

And now here were 5,000 other ones. And not only do they happen to have gathered together to hear the apostles, but they've all professed faith in Jesus.

They now profess, every one of them, to a man, that they are followers of Jesus. We love Jesus. We're going to follow him. He is our Lord from now on. This is not just an interested crowd the way there was with Jesus.

A crowd that would turn the tables around and say, The next day, we do not want this man to reign over us. This was a crowd, all of which had now nailed their colors to the mast. They had heard the message of the apostles.

They had repented from their sinfulness. They were now Christians. They were now followers of Jesus. Something had to be, they couldn't cope. The priests and the Sadducees, they couldn't cope

with this.

[9 : 38] Something had to be done. And they used all the power and all the authority they had to stop this movement. And the main complaint, of course, that they had was the message that the disciples were proclaiming to them.

You could say, I suppose, that there were three elements to that message. And you'll find the message in chapter 3, what Peter was saying. You can read it later on. There were three elements to it. First of all, that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Only a matter of weeks beforehand, they were claiming that Jesus had risen from the dead. Now, of course, the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection in any case. So for them, this was particularly offensive.

But you see, if this is true, then it turns everything that they stand for, the scribes, the people, the leaders, the priests, the temple, everything that they stand for is turned on its head.

Because all they can do is read back into the Old Testament. All they can teach is what the Old Testament taught. And we'll go into this in a few moments' time. How, in actual fact, Jesus coming and rising from the dead actually was what the Old Testament looked forward to.

[10 : 52] But here is the inescapable proof in Jesus rising from the dead. And no one, not one single one of the Sadducees or the temple rulers could say to them.

And they could have, if it wasn't true that Jesus rose from the dead, they could have said, hold on a moment. Just stop. Stop where you are at the moment. And come over here to the tomb where we laid his body.

We will show you that what you're saying is a load of nonsense. And all the 5,000 people who have come to believe, we're going to prove to you that this is a load of nonsense. So come with us and let us show you Jesus' body. They could easily have done that.

They could have arranged for the, it was only a matter of a few weeks. And they could have rolled the stone away and they could have taken everybody in and they could have seen the body of Jesus still there. The problem was that the body of Jesus wasn't there.

The grave was empty. The tomb was empty. There were the disciples. And they knew that something mysterious, something extraordinary had taken place.

[11 : 52] And there wasn't a word they could say in denial of what the disciples were saying. Jesus has risen from the dead. The second thing was this. That because Jesus had risen from the dead, then his promise about other people, those who believed in him rising from the dead, also would come to pass.

I am the resurrection and the life. Now this was a promise that not one of the Sadducees, or one of the priests, or anyone else, this was a promise that none of them could ever prove.

Oh yes, they could go back to the Old Testament in believing that the Old Testament believed and looked forward to a resurrection. But here is a man who actually proved the resurrection.

And he says, he promises, that those who believe in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

But most dramatic of all, these men were proclaiming God's forgiveness in an instant, without any of them having to do anything to earn their own salvation.

Now the Jewish religion was all about keeping God's law to make sure that you earned your place in God's kingdom.

[13 : 08] But here were these apostles, when they're saying that your place in God's kingdom is not about you keeping the law. It is about faith in Jesus Christ and following him.

It is because he has given his life on the cross at Calvary for your sin that you can have now at this moment in time complete forgiveness.

And God will give you a new beginning and a new start. Now for these people, this was revolutionary because all their days they had grown up with the Old Testament in their hands and they had grown up to believe that by keeping God's law that this was the way of keeping their place in God's kingdom.

And that meant that if they slipped up they would lose their place or they would be in danger of losing their place. But now this message of Jesus Christ was that God was prepared to forgive them because Jesus had paid the price for our sin.

The gospel is still the same this evening. This was Jerusalem. Here is Stornoway 2010, 2000 years later and the message is just as revolutionary and just as marvelous tonight as it was then.

[14 : 23] And it has just as great we believe and effect may not be 5000 people in one go but one by one young person, old person as we come to discover this message for ourselves we come into a personal relationship with the same Jesus Christ.

Now for the Sadducees, for the priests, for the captain of the temple this just wasn't good enough at all because these men were leading something that was revolutionary and they wanted to know by what authority and by what power that they were doing that this that's how our verses begin.

Verse 7 when they had set them in the midst they inquired by what power or by what name do you do this? And then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit he said to them rulers of the people and elders if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man by what means this man has been healed that it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified whom God has raised from the dead by him this man is standing before you well you see in many ways this passage is all about confidence and authority the Sadducees and the Sanhedrin this is the group of the Jewish rulers they emphasized their own authority and this was really a bit of a there was well first of all let me explain this that all of the men that you're looking at here the priests and the captain of the temple they were all related to one another by family this was all one dynasty for example

Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas and that meant there was intermarrying between them all so they were as thick basically they were as thick as thieves and they had a huge amount of influence and power and authority and the problem is once you get used to that kind of authority then anything that rises up to threaten it you're not going to like it and they didn't like it because this was human pride the question was not whether the man had been healed or not the question was not whether Jesus actually was they couldn't face the possibility that Jesus actually was who he says he was and who the disciples were now saying he was they couldn't that was that was intolerable as far as they were concerned because they had put him to death how embarrassing is that and yet here is this man who was sitting at the temple gate and they all knew who he was and here he is now walking and leaping and praising God that was undeniable and yet they still pressed on determined to stamp out except that they could never do it but you know why because they were up against a different authority a different kind of confidence they were used to pushing their way around and telling people what to do they were used to the high places and the important places in the marketplace they were used to a sense of respect amongst the people and now the people had risen up it's not as if they had risen up against them but they had risen to follow someone else and someone else wasn't them they didn't even get a look and the crowds had now departed they were leaving them they were going to follow this

Jesus who they now believed to be alive and this was their last ditch attempt at grabbing back the authority you know what they found they found that whereas in the past the apostles an ordinary group of unschooled fishermen would have buckled they would have been cowed so easily by the weight of the knowledge of these captain of the people and the priests and the Sadducees now they stood up to them with an authority that took their breath away they couldn't believe how confident these men were and how confident Peter was who is Peter hasn't got a university education he hasn't studied the law like we have we can trip out anything that we want of Moses and the prophets and yet Peter stood there and he said I will tell you I will give you an answer they weren't used to it they couldn't cope with it anyone rising up against them and answering back to this group because they had no authority when it came to it the authority they had they had just given themselves

[18 : 55] God hadn't given it to them they had acquired it for themselves and now they saw that their whole world was crumbling around them in the face of a bunch of unschooled uneducated men who were prepared to stand up for what they believed and what a difference isn't it you can't help noticing this is the same Peter by the way who just a few weeks ago warming himself in front of the fire a maid comes to him and says you're one of Jesus' disciples and Peter says no I'm not I don't know who this man is because he panicked and he got so scared that he denied his Lord and now just a matter of a few days afterwards here is the same man and he's prepared to stand up and not only proclaim his own attachment to Jesus even if it means being put to death he doesn't he's no longer scared he's quite prepared to stand and to be counted for Jesus now because he's filled with the Holy Spirit and because he's learned from his first error and he's never going to make that mistake again he's never going to go through that shame of denial once again he's never going to have to face those awful piercing eyes of Jesus those sorrowful eyes of Jesus looking at him in

loving disappointment and now he's prepared to stand and he's saying and this is what he says he first of all says this are you being serious are you really for real that's the first

I mean that's a kind of encapsulation of what he says he says rulers of the people are we really being you're actually accusing us of healing a man who you know to have been a cripple for years can you tell me what the crime is we've actually done something good you can't say doesn't matter what you dream up you cannot say that we have done something wrong and of course they couldn't the charge was ridiculous it was preposterous it was absurd and yet here they were having to give an answer for what they had done instead of asking how in the world did you manage to do this with a real sense of humble inquiry we really want to know how you did this instead who do you think you are you think you've got the authority to come in here and to raise a man who was a cripple can you imagine that now they thought they were being reasonable it's not reason at all that's reason turned on its head and that's the problem with unbelief unbelief

I put it to you tonight unbelief is reason turned on its head there's something stubborn about unbelief there's something that just stands and will not believe when even when it's obvious that we should believe and that God wants us to believe and that was the case with those people the Sanhedrin as they questioned but it's not only that Peter goes further and he drives home the message so clearly and so powerfully that he leaves them without anything he leaves them speechless this is the next step let me go further he says you he says you you claim to know the Old Testament that's what you're scholars you've studied the Old Testament for years you claim that you were acting in the interest of your Bible when you took Jesus and you handed him over to be crucified you've examined him and you've decided he was not fit to live you tried him you called him a blasphemer because he called himself

God and you thought you were in a position of authority to hand Jesus over to death and now now you're asking us by what authority we are doing this this is to Peter it must have been deja vu they were going through exactly the same or something so similar to what Jesus himself went through trumped up charges where pride was on the line here we go again you've not been satisfied with killing Jesus you can't cope with the possibility that you might have been wrong so Peter is adamant this is a man that you know about he's been sitting here for years and it's your daily duty the temple is your business and you've every day gone into the temple doing your work doing your duty and so you knew the man you can't mistake him this is the man who you know is hopelessly crippled is now jumping up and down and leaping and praising God now let me tell you something says Peter I have nothing to hide but you do I fearlessly tell you that this man has been healed in Jesus name yes the same name that Jesus that you took and you handed over to be crucified and you thought you were obeying God and guarding his cause but God thought differently and raised him from the dead but it was even worse than that because what had happened was that even although even whilst handing Jesus over to be crucified they were actually fulfilling the very Old Testament that they claimed to be experts in and that's why Jesus that's why Peter quotes the Old Testament passage he says this Jesus is the stone verse 11 this Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you the builders which has become the corner stone now what does he mean by that well he's talking about a psalm which everyone knew at that time particularly the Jewish ruling leaders it was a psalm that the Jewish people would sing at the time of Passover in fact we know it very well it's a psalm that we sing at the time particularly at the time of communion but we sing it at other times as well we've just sung part of it

[25 : 09] Psalm 118 it's a fascinating psalm and sometime I think we'll look at it on a Wednesday we already looked at it in the Gaelic some weeks ago but it is a fascinating psalm and particularly how it works in with the time of Passover now in this passage towards the end of the psalm bear with me on this in this passage there are no more joyful words in the whole of scripture than the words that you find in this and they're all about the joy of salvation of being right with God for example there's this passage in verse 19 O set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness then I will enter into them and I the Lord will bless this is the gate of God by it the just shall enter and thee will I praise for thou me hurts and has my safety been there are no more joyful words in the whole of the Bible than these words and then it goes on this is the day God made and it

I'll joy triumphantly save now I pray thee Lord I pray send now prosperity what a note of uplift and joy now stuck in the middle of this is this verse right in the middle and you would think what's this doing in the middle of this verse just without any introduction without any explanation here it is that stone is made head corner stone which builders did despise this is the doing of the Lord and

wondrous in our eyes now what is the explanation to this verse the stone that the builders rejected this is this stone has become the head of the corner the corner stone what does this mean and what does that have to do with my salvation and my rejoicing in the Lord where did the psalmist get that from well I my only explanation is that the psalmist got that mysteriously from God himself that somehow or other he was led to write those words right stuck in the middle of this hymn of praise to God in which he's exulting in God and his salvation he God leads him to say these words the stone has that you builders rejected is has become the corner stone now what is it all about well in a building in those days you didn't use bricks or concrete slabs like you use nowadays there's no expert well there is expertise but it's a different kind of expertise to the kind of building that you would have in those days because buildings like the old buildings that we see in Stornoway some places they were built of stone now apparently and I know very little about this but apparently the expertise that you require for a building of that is very different to the kind of building with slabs or bricks because you first of all apparently they tell me you have to be a stonemason and a stonemason has a particular kind of skill that begins in the quarry and apparently the first step you do is to go and inspect the stones to see what kind of stones they are and you have a particular eye now correct me afterwards if I'm wrong but I'm told this that you would have a particular eye for a stone and this would have been the way in which the builders of Solomon's temple for example would have built the temple they would have gone to the quarry and they would have seen they would have chosen particular stones and those stones that they believed were good stones suitable stones with the eye for a stone then they would have chosen but other stones they would have thrown out now don't ask me why they threw out some and why they chose others that was their expertise but the first thing

I guess it's like if I can talk to the young people I guess it's like when a scout from a football team goes out to look at football players this is what used to happen in my day anyway although I never had any chance of being scouted for any football team but they would go around schools and they would go around football clubs and universities scouts from the big teams like Rangers and Celtic and Dundee and Aberdeen and all these things they would go around they were making their business to go around they were experts and they could spot a good footballer within five minutes and once they spotted you of course most of the guys aspiring football stars they would get rejected they wouldn't get a look in but they went every so often and these guys they knew exactly how to spot a good football player and they would choose somebody and that gave them a chance to maybe play for one of the first teams or whatever it's the same thing expert an expert and an expert stonemason was the person who went to the quarry and he chose a stone he had an eye for a stone that could be used in it now here was a stone that was thrown out and yet at the end of the day this very stone that was rejected as unsuitable was actually became the most important stone in the building

I guess it's a bit like a football scout going out rejecting a guy because he doesn't think he's very good and that same guy actually aspiring one day to be the best player in the world it's not likely to happen but it could happen couldn't it well here's the same thing these builders you builders said Peter you you are the ones who claim to be the experts in stone building and you've gone to the quarry and you've looked at this man Jesus Christ and you've weighed him up and down and you've said nah he's not the messiah when everything about him declared and made it clear to you it couldn't have been made more clear and if you had read your old testament properly instead of being so concerned with your own pride and keeping your own traditions then this would never have happened you would have recognized him but instead of that you've rejected him and you did so by handing him over to the

[31 : 36] Roman authorities and they crucified him at Calvary but that was not the end of the story because even if you rejected him God what counts is what God thinks of him because God raised him up again on the third day and by that resurrection he proved to the whole world that he truly was their their saviour the only saviour that there is salvation and that means says Peter that there is salvation only in one place no it's not a place it's not a religion it's not a system it's not a denomination it's not a creed it's not me working my way or doing the right things or observing the right processes going through the right feasts attending the right festivals you'll get religion all over the world every one of them claiming to have the truth every one of them more elaborate than the other one a world full of religion and today we know more about religion than we ever did before and the variety of religious belief that there is all over the world and here is Peter and he's saying look forget it there is only one and it's not a place it's a name the name the person of Jesus

Christ is the only way to be right with God and to be forgiven by God the name the name of Jesus what does the name of Jesus mean it means the person of Jesus religion says I can work my own way to God by my own works and my own efforts but the gospel says you can't the gospel says the only way you can be right with God is what Jesus has done for you as the God man in giving himself as the sacrifice for your sin it's the only way I'm not saying we cannot be respectful of other beliefs I'm not saying we can't learn about other beliefs I'm not saying we can't work with people who have other beliefs of course we live like Daniel did and like Paul did we live in a multicultural multi-faith world I have no problem with that no problem whatsoever but I would have a problem if somebody forced me to say you have to believe that your religion is exactly the same as everyone else

I'm sorry I would have to say with all due respect I am not ever going to say that because the Bible tells me there is no other name given under heaven amongst men whereby I must be saved I don't care whether it's intolerant or exclusive or whatever people want to say about it the Christian faith by its very character and nature is exclusive Jesus said himself you don't have to go past Jesus to say himself I am the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me it doesn't get more exclusive than that but tonight I am so thankful that there is only one way and there's nothing complicated about it if there were many ways to God I would be spending my time I would be spending my life asking well which one is the best which one is going to give me a guarantee that my sins are forgiven and how do I know that by taking one of those many roads to God that I hear about how do I know it's actually going to get me to God you see if you ask a religious person you'll say oh well I hope I hope that one day God might accept me but I can say that I know that now God has already accepted me not because of what I try to do for God but because of what he has already done for me in sending Jesus Christ into the world and that's why tonight I can stand as I keep on saying rejoicing loving the Lord because of what he has done for me and what he has he's changed my life he's taken away my sins he's put a new song in my mouth he's taken me from the fearful pit and from the mighty clay he has completely washed all my sins away and that was what these 5,000 people discovered that's what was so revolutionary about the gospel they were held as slaves to the Jewish system by these scribes and the captain of the temple the Sadducees and their message was this you've got to do what we say you've got to keep keep doing what we say and keep observing the law to stay within and if you if you fall out of it if you slip up in any way you're lost and Peter's message was no no no no

Jesus Christ is the way and I can prove it because the tomb is empty we have met with the living Jesus and I can prove that today Peter said that Jesus is the name the way the person that God has sent into the world to secure our salvation in Jesus Christ Christ and the same is true tonight the message has not changed one little bit everything is exactly as it was then what's here in front of us is the most relevant message it's the same as it was for all of those people there is no other name my greatest joy tonight and what I have to share with you tonight is just simply this that if you really are seeking to be right with God if you really are longing to know how to be right with God Jesus is the answer Jesus is the way come to him come to him personally read about him if you've never read before discover him find out about him but do so by asking that

[37 : 30] God will bring you to see that he really is the way and the truth and the life by coming to understand that you come to experience what you've never experienced before perhaps slowly perhaps suddenly perhaps quickly who knows God is a different way of dealing with everyone some people suddenly are struck by the gospel and a change suddenly comes into the life other people have a growing awareness of what God is doing and growing awareness of Jesus but no one no one came to know God outside of Jesus Christ Jesus is the only way and so that means that tonight the answer is a straightforward one it's a simple one God simply says to us this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased listen to him listen to him and believe in him and they were so then in closing and I see the time has gone they were confronted with the evidence of the man who had been healed they were at a loss all of those learned scholarly gentlemen these academics they were at a loss to understand what had happened but they couldn't deny that what they saw in front of them was a man who for sure had been healed they admitted themselves that the nature of this healing it could not be denied and all of a sudden they came to realize that they had been wrong and yet nobody nobody nobody not one of them admitted not one of them said what they all should have said which is this I have been wrong and you have the truth why was that even when they were confronted by such clear evidence even when they saw the confidence and the boldness of the apostles and even when they could come back to the empty tomb and then they could see

themselves that Jesus truly had risen from the dead why was it that not one of them admitted and that was because simply this they were too scared of what they would lose they would lose their reputation and their place and their standing amongst their fellow Jewish leaders and that was a very important thing once you got this far once you climb the ladder of success once you were invited to the right parties and the right dinners amongst the Jewish leaders that was you you had earned your place amongst them and for you to step out of line and to believe in Jesus Christ that was that you would lose the whole thing and so instead of admitting and confessing that

Jesus truly was the Messiah they clearly just chose to go along with the crowd their friends and their pals in order not to lose face now I'm going to ask you a question is the reason tonight that you have not come to faith in Jesus Christ because you have studied the Bible and because you have come to the conclusion that this is not the truth or more likely I put it to you tonight the reason that you haven't come to Jesus is because of what you will lose by coming to him isn't that right you've got your place you've got your reputation you've got your friends what are they going to think of you what are they going to say they're going to talk about you aren't you they're going to laugh at you they're going to mock you they're going to sideline you they're going to push you out you might even lose some of them or not if not all of them maybe you're saying to me tonight well surely you can be a secret disciple well you can I know there are secret disciples maybe some of you tonight are secret disciple maybe nobody knows that you are a disciple of Jesus that you've come to follow him well I'm sure there were in the

Bible too there was Nicodemus who came to Jesus by night and then there was Joseph of Arimathea but the day came when those secret disciples had to declare their faith openly and that day will have to come for you as well and I hope it does come and I hope it's today now is the time to accept Christ and accept him openly no matter what the consequences or what the cost let's pray our father in heaven we pray that you'll bless your word to us this evening and give us understanding and give us the faith to embrace Jesus by his word and by his promise in Jesus name amen again thank you so thank you I want to start with it you can discuss what to do this is a preposition and be guided composing for MANI about or anything I can expect and I write out a point that we see if