

What Shall I Do With Jesus?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 May 2024

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] We're going to begin worship now. We're singing tonight, firstly, from Psalm 135. Psalm 135, that's in the St. Psalms, and the page number there is 176.

We're singing to a tune, Stuttgart, verses 13 to 15. Lord, your name endures forever, your renown is ever great.

For the Lord sustains his servants, and his folk will vindicate. But the idols of the nations, made of silver and of gold, are by human hands created with a hammer or a mould.

Mouths they have, but speak they cannot. Eyes they have, but cannot see. Ears they have, but hear they cannot. In their mouths no breath can be. Verses which, of course, set out the great contrast between idolatry and the worship of the living God, and our privilege in knowing that God, and ascribing worship and glory and praise, to him. So we'll sing these verses from verse, sorry, verse 13 to the end of the psalm.

Lord, your name endures forever. If you can stand, please do stand. Lord, your name endures forever. Your renown is ever great.

[1 : 24] For the Lord sustains his servants, and his folk will vindicate.

But the idols of the nations, made of silver and of gold, are by human hands created with a hammer or a mould.

For the Lord sustains his servants, and his folk will be.

For the Lord sustains his servants, and his folk will be like them, For the Lord sustains them, and the same. Praise the Lord, O house of Israel, He runs has exalted his name.

Praise the Lord, O house of Levi, You fear him, praise the Lord Praise the Lord who dwells in Zion In Jerusalem, praise the Lord Now let's unite our hearts in prayer. We're going to call upon the Lord in prayer.

[3 : 23] Amen.

How important it is for us to draw near to God, seeking that God will draw near to us. O Lord, we pray tonight that that will be our experience, that we will know of the Lord in this place, that we will know ourselves brought by your Spirit to come to trust in you and place our trust in you once again, if we have done that already.

We ask that you would bless us, Lord, through your Word. Lord, we pray that your Holy Spirit will be active in our experience, to enlighten our mind, to give us a further extended knowledge of you, and to give us in our hearts a renewed desire and commitment to you and to your ways, and to walk in your ways.

We thank you, Lord, for all that we enjoy as a congregation by way of our privileges in the Gospel. We thank you for all that you enable us to engage in from week to week, from day to day, from Lord's day to Lord's day.

Lord, we know that you have blessed us in providing us with these things. We pray that we may never treat them lightly, that we may always ask ourselves if our contribution to your cause is in accordance with what you have given to us and continues to give to us.

[5 :13] We pray tonight that your Word will challenge us and comfort us, instruct us, and lead us. Lord, we ask that your counsel through your Word may truly lighten our path, and lighten our path even through life itself.

We ask you, Lord, that you would come to each one of us and speak to each one of us. For as we appear before you as a congregation, so we appear before you individually, with our own personal needs, our own personal thoughts, our own minds as we think of, our relationship to you and to the world in which we live, and to the things of eternity.

And Lord, we ask that you would come to each of us and speak to us, and draw us, we pray, to yourself. We ask tonight that your blessing will be with all your people elsewhere in the world, not only throughout our own community, for we know that there are many other congregations meeting tonight as we do.

We pray that same blessing for them that we pray for ourselves. We ask that your cause will come to flourish, that we will see an increase in those who acknowledge you as their God, and who have turned away from the idols of this world, and have come to place their trust and confidence in the Lord God.

And we thank you, Lord, for the freedom that is ours still as a community, and to come to hear the gospel, and to come to gather as we do this evening under the sound of the gospel.

[6 :48] We bless you for our heritage, for the way that you have over many years, many generations, come to show yourself as a God who is worthy to be praised and trusted in.

And we thank you for all that you have deposited in our possession now in our generation that came to us through previous generations of our ancestors too.

And we ask, Lord, that we may hold these things faithfully, that we may come and find what you have deposited in our possession in the gospel will be prized by us, commended by us, used by us, that we will treasure it in our hearts and seek to live by it, that we will never bargain it away to any of the ideologies of this world, but give us, we pray, like the Apostle Paul, to be able to say consistently and in an ongoing way that we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is indeed the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.

We pray for the work of your church tonight throughout the whole world. We ask, Lord, that your own people will, in their witness, be blessed and be a blessing to the world.

We know that you describe your people in your word as the light of the world, as a city set on a hill. And help us then, we pray, to fulfill that description day by day.

[8 :20] Lord, we confess we find ourselves so often short of meeting that description, that we find ourselves so often having to bring before you a confession of failure, yet we thank you for your faithfulness, that you will bless your word, that it will not return to your void, that it will accomplish your will as you send it forth.

And we do pray, O Lord, that your kingdom will advance during these days. We know that there is so much, Lord, in our own society, throughout our nation, throughout the nations of the world, of opposition to you, to your will, to your word, and to all that you provide for us in the wisdom of your truth in the gospel.

And we pray, O Lord, your forgiveness, that as a nation and as a people, we have turned away so much from your ways. We have chosen for ourselves the ideologies and the idolatry of this world.

We have come to place our trust, O Lord, in empty, broken cisterns, which cannot give us satisfaction, which can never prove to be adequate to us as we face eternity, and as we face even the difficulties and the challenges of life in this world itself.

And to that end, we pray tonight for those who rule over us, those in authority, those who have places of influence in our land. Bless our government, we pray. Bless all those who belong to them in Westminster, in Edinburgh.

[9 : 52] We ask, Lord, that you would bless all the nations of the United Kingdom. We ask that we may come once again under the power of your truth.

We pray that you would direct those who lead us into the ways of your truth. We ask that you would deliver them from counsel that would lead them further astray and further away from those things of the gospel.

We pray that they may come, O Lord, to take up your word, your law, your precepts. And, Lord, we pray that you would impress upon their mind and conscience that you have provided these things for our guidance, not only individually but nationally as well.

And we ask that you would help them to resist all alternative views and ideologies to the gospel. We pray that you would grant your blessing to all those who do fear you and serve you, who are in places of authority and position in our land.

We ask, gracious one, that you would keep them, that you would use them as a means of blessing to their fellow human beings in whatever sphere of life they serve you.

[11 : 02] Bless, then, we pray tonight, those who are in special need. We pray that you would bless those who mourn the passing of loved ones. Lord, we know of families in recent days who have lost loved ones, some of them very suddenly.

We pray that you would bless those who remain to mourn their passing. Be near to them. Comfort them. Grant them your strengthening. And we pray that you would bless also those who, in times past, have lost loved ones and still fondly remember and still find it so difficult to adjust to life without them.

Be pleased, we pray, to be near to them too. Bless those who have illness to contend with, those in hospital, those receiving various treatments, those recovering from such, those who have gone through surgery, those who look forward to such in days to come.

We ask for those with mental health issues that you'd be pleased, Lord, to bless them. You are the God of our minds, of our bodies, of our souls.

And we commend this to you as well and give you thanks for the facilities that are available to us. And we pray that you would bless those tonight who don't have the advantages that many of us have in physical ability and mental health.

[12 : 17] And we ask that your gracious way, you would deal with them in a way that would reveal yourself to them and show to them that you are the great physician, that you are the great carer and shepherd of all who come to trust in you.

And so we pray your blessing now upon all that we anticipate in this week by way of meetings of various kinds and worship services. We commit all of this to you as well. And we ask now that you would bless us, that you would guide us into your word and hear our praises and our prayers for Jesus' sake.

Amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise. We're singing now in Psalm 101. Psalm 101. Again, it's St. Psalms on page 132.

Tune this time is Moravia. And we're singing verses 1 to 6. I'll praise your love and justice, Lord. I'll praise you cheerfully.

I'll strive to lead a blameless life. When will you come to me? Within my home, the life I lead will show a blameless heart. My eyes will view no worthless thing.

[13 : 27] From sin I will depart. Psalm 101, verses 1 to 6. I'll praise your love and justice. I'll praise you cheerfully.

I'll praise you cheerfully. I'll praise you cheerfully. I'll praise you cheerfully. I'll praise you cheerfully. When will you come to me?

To see your love and justice. Only is Indeed. This time is Bundwe, I'll praise you, God. That's all I'll praise you, God. To see your God's effort. With us look for you, God. If you are Vâ, Jesus Christ. Hope you are disregarding you, God. I'll praise you, God. I'll praise you diez years now in Psalm 101. Amen Hodmoth sing you to commence U.

I'll praise you, God. So the Lord Christ. We'll prepare you for the Lord. I will you know, worthless thing, from sin I will defy.

I think what it less he will do, it shall not be to me.

[14 : 59] All wicked people I am high, from evil and sin free.

I will to silence everyone who slugged me secretly.

I will not tolerate the pride who acts so heartily.

My heart is not on the faithful ones, but living well with me.

Whoever is the blimless one will serve me constantly.

[16 : 15] Amen. Let's now turn to the Word of God to read a portion from Matthew's Gospel. The Gospel of Matthew and chapter 27.

And we're reading the first 26 verses of this chapter. Matthew 27, verses 1 to 26. Matthew 28, verses 1 to 26.

They said, What is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed and went and hanged himself.

But the chief priest, taking the pieces of silver, said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money. So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers.

Therefore that field has been called the field of blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price has been set, by some of the sons of Israel.

[17 : 51] And they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me. Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, Are you the king of the Jews?

Jesus said, You have said so. But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?

But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the feast, the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted.

And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?

For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.

[19 : 02] Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, Which of the two do you want me to release for you?

And they said, Barabbas. Pilate said to them, What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ? They all said, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why?

What evil has he done? But they shouted all the more, Let him be crucified. So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, I am innocent of this man's blood.

See to it yourselves. And all the people answered, His blood be on us and on our children. Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Amen. May God bless to us, reading that portion again of his word. Before we turn to this passage, let's sing again, this time Psalm 142, 145, sorry, second version of the Psalm.

[20 : 20] That's from the Scottish Psalter on page 445 of the Psalm books. Page 445, verses 17 to 21.

June this time is Duke Street. The Lord is just in his ways all, and holy in his works each one. He is near to all that on him call, who call in truth on him alone.

God will the just desire fulfill of such as do him fear and dread. Their cry regard, and here he will, and save them in the time of need.

The Lord preserves all more and lest that bear to him a loving heart. But workers all of wickedness destroy will he, and clean subvert. Therefore, my mouth and lips I'll frame to speak the praises of the Lord, to magnify his holy name.

Forever let all flesh accord. These verses, the Lord is just in his ways all. The Lord is just in his ways all, and holy in his works each one.

[21 : 41] He's here to know all that on him call, with God and truth on him alone.

God will the just desire fulfill, all such as do him fear and dread.

The Lord is just in his ways all, and holy in his ways all, and holy in his ways all, and holy in his ways all.

God will the just desire to speak the praises of the Lord and will, and holy in his ways all, and holy in his ways all, and holy in his ways all, and holy in his ways all.

The Word of God Let's turn now to the passage we read together in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 27.

[23 : 48] Tonight we're focusing our minds on the question that Pilate asked in verse 22. Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ or called the Christ?

Especially that question in itself and looking at it in terms of how it addresses us tonight too with our responsibilities in relation to Jesus himself.

As you know, we've begun a series of studies on Thursday evenings called Life's Big Questions. And we're thankful for Calla and Roddy as they lead those discussions.

And I encourage you to attend or to bring anyone to these discussions, Life's Big Questions. There was a leaflet out last week about it. And surely Pilate's question here is one of those big questions in life.

We had one last week where Calla Murdo led us in a question related to the studies, the discussion sessions, Life's Big Questions.

[24 : 58] And what is the right question? What is the wrong question? And tonight we're looking at this question. I thought last week I would just try and fit in with that program and look at this particular study tonight.

And so here is the question that Pilate asked, what then shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ? Now the context is that Pilate is really in something of a dilemma.

He's not a good man. You don't feel much sympathy for him. But he's in something of a dilemma because he knows, you see what you read in verse 18 there, He knew it was out of envy that they had delivered Jesus up to be tried.

And so Pilate himself knew that Jesus was innocent, that he was not worthy of death, that he was innocent of the charges laid against him. And as he was sitting on the judgment seat, verse 19, something else happened that must have truly troubled Pilate.

And it was while he was sitting there that his wife sent word. She sent a message to him. She was obviously concerned that he would do the right thing. She sent a message saying, have nothing to do with that righteous man.

[26:18] In other words, again, presenting to Pilate her opinion, just as it coincided with his, that this was indeed a righteous man, a man who didn't deserve to die.

And she said, don't have anything to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream. See, the Lord gets to Pilate's conscience through a dream of his wife that he's now coming to hear about.

The Lord does things like that. And this is the message she sent to Pilate. Don't have anything to do with this just man. Don't treat him unjustly. Just leave that alone.

Because I have suffered much because of him in a dream. But of course, the dilemma for Pilate is the crowd are baying for blood. The crowd want Jesus to be crucified.

The crowd want him to be taken out and put to death. And so Pilate is forced between that on the one hand and what his wife had said and what his own conscience is saying on the other hand.

[27:22] And so he's in a corner. He's in a dilemma. He has to take a decision. But which decision will it be? And you can see from the way that the narrative proceeds that he is reluctant to deliver Christ.

He knows Barabbas is a notorious criminal. He's offered him to the crowd. He's offered him to them, hoping that they would take him and let him be free to release Jesus.

But that's not how it is. They demand Jesus and let Barabbas go. That's the corner that this man is in, that the governor is in.

What is he going to do? Well, I'm not going to deal with that tonight as a history lesson. Because tonight we're here not to learn something of a history lesson involving Pontius Pilate and the circumstances of his day.

That's the background, certainly, to the question. But we want to use the question as something that addresses each one of us today. Because it's a question that comes across from the pages of the Bible and from the course of history to each and every single individual, you might say, under the gospel or indeed in the wider sense.

[28:38] What will I then do with this Jesus? This one who is called the Christ, the Anointed One. What am I going to do with him? We're taking it as a question addressed to us by God through the Scriptures.

And it's especially tonight for you who have not yet accepted him as your Savior. Who have not yet come to receive him as he's offered in the gospel.

Who have not yet come to give yourself to him to be your master, your king, your Savior. And I want especially to focus on that situation.

Because that question surely is very, very relevant to yourselves. Jesus stands before us in the gospel and in the message of the gospel as it's preached.

And here is the question that arises every time that gospel comes across to us, every time we read our Bibles. What am I going to do with him? Because for sure, you can't actually leave that question unanswered.

[29:49] You need to do something with him. You need to actually receive him or else not receive him. And these are the only two alternatives. What are you going to do with this Jesus who's called the Christ?

Because there's no neutrality really, is there? No neutrality. No space in between receiving him and not receiving or rejecting him.

It's either the one or the other. And here is God in his kindness. And I hope I can present this as lovingly, as concernedly as I can, as I ought to do as a preacher of the gospel.

We're not in any way in the pulpit as we preach the gospel intending to be harsh. Maybe it comes across that way sometimes. I apologize for that if it is.

Our concern is to be loving and tactful and patient but honest. Because tonight here's the question for you to answer and for me to answer.

[30 : 56] What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ? Christ. So let's do it in two ways. First of all, facing up to the question. Facing up to the question as it addresses us.

Now I'm sure that nobody here tonight is really going to say outrightly, I'm going to reject him. I want nothing to do with him. I'm sure there's nobody in this building tonight would actually say that categorically of themselves.

That that would be their desire. Otherwise, why would you be here? But then what is the case? What are you going to do with him if it's a case of not outrightly rejecting him, not like the hostile world out there, just wanting nothing to do with him?

Let's take one possibility. You're going to delay your decision for the time being. It's a very common response. I know it from my own experience.

To delay a decision on the part, on my part or your part, to this very serious and important question. What am I going to do with Jesus? I'll delay it for the moment.

[32 : 07] I won't actually pass it off altogether, but I won't actually answer it just now. I'll just put it off. I'll delay the decision from the time being. It's not that I'm rejecting him, you might say, like that hostile world out there, but I'm delaying a decision with regard to him, with regard to the question.

You intend to come back to that question. You intend to come back to it sometime in the future. You intend to come back to it when the time seems more appropriate, when it seems right for you then to answer the question one way or the other, positively you might say especially.

But now it's not the right time for you, you see. You might be here, you might be listening online, watching online and saying, well, this is really going to complicate my life.

If I make a decision in favor of Jesus just now, to accept him, to live by faith and trust in him, to follow him, to commend him, to serve him, think of the way that that's going to actually add a layer of complexity to my life, to my family life, to my life in terms of my work colleagues, to my life in the world.

Think of the complexity when my life is so busy. Can I not just leave it for a while until it slows down a wee bit, until it gets a wee bit less hectic, until all the children have grown up perhaps and have left home and I have more time to address such questions as these?

[33 : 28] Well, you know, for one thing, that is a very common response on our part as human beings. But for one thing, whether you're willing to accept it and admit it or not, but that is a decision.

To say, I'm delaying the decision for the time being is actually making a decision now that this is not going to be positively accepted by you. This man is not going to be taken and made your Savior by receiving him into your heart.

Because delay is a decision. It's a decision to put it off for the time being. It equals a refusal meantime to bow your knee to him, to accept him.

And you know, delay is not going to make Jesus go away. This man, Pilate, as late in the chapter as we read, he took water, took a basin and washed his hands before the crowd saying, I am innocent of this man's blood as if that was actually going to make Jesus go away from his conscience.

You can leave here tonight and still say, no, I'm not yet in the position of accepting Jesus. I'm going to delay that. But that delay is a decision, as I've said. And not only that, but he's not going to go away.

[34 : 48] Jesus is not going to go away from your soul, from your mind, from your conscience. He's just going to confront you still as your life goes on. And he's going to keep asking you this question, what are you going to do with me?

Where are you going to place me? What relationship are you going to have with me? And in any case, what if during your time of delay you actually die?

It's not impossible, is it? You might say tonight, well, I'm in very good health, but people in very good health sometimes die suddenly, unexpectedly. Is there any reason at all that you or I can think of tonight why you should not die suddenly?

Is there any reason why you should, or I should say to myself, I am bound to see tomorrow. I am actually bound to see another week in my life? It's surely not the case that I am going to die the stage I'm at in life.

You can say that, you young people as well. I'm saying it to you as somebody who was young once myself and who didn't think at that time very seriously about God or about religion.

[36 : 08] I could have died. There was a time I very nearly died. I nearly had an accident, getting run over by a car. And I've often thought of from that moment, which is still etched on my memory, it came so close that the car just ran off, almost ran over my toes.

I was going out to the village shop to pick up some shopping. My mother had sent me out, went out in a bus. And as I stepped out from the bus and went out from behind the bus, I went to run across the road, which you'd never do behind the bus.

And just as I took that step, a car shot past me. And I've often thought, ever since that day, when that is still such a vivid memory in my mind, what if I had been killed in that moment?

What if you don't see tomorrow? What if it's in the Lord's purpose that you too would die before your delay time is over? What then?

Where will that leave you? Or leave me? It doesn't matter what we do with Jesus in terms of not accepting Him. He's not going to go away.

[37 : 22] And you know, people so often say of the gospel and of Jesus and of the way sometimes the truth of God is presented to them, maybe in the witness of God's people, and they just put that completely away and say, oh, that's just a lot of nonsense, a lot of old-fashioned stuff.

And still, very often gnawing at the back of their mind, there's the idea, well, maybe there's something in this after all. Because you see, God does not go away. God has made us for Himself.

God has given us minds and souls that are themselves programmed to think about eternity. And maybe we often pass it off and refuse to accept that that's the case.

But deep down, you know it is. And I know it is. What then shall I do with Jesus who's called Christ? You face up to the question.

You might be saying, I'll delay the decision for the time being. But that is a decision. And it's a decision that places you in peril because you don't know what tomorrow will bring.

[38 : 30] The other option is that you do the right thing. That you do the right thing and accept Him. That you yield to His claim, to His call as the Savior to come and place your trust in Him, to come and receive Him.

That you come and accept His authority and His right to be your Lord and to be your King and to be your Savior. You do the right thing when you repent of your sin, when you come to the Lord and confess your sin.

And you ask Him to receive you and to forgive you and to cleanse you and to make you right and to make you upright. And to accept you in His sight. You ask His forgiveness.

You trust in Him. You give yourself to Him. You entrust yourself to Him. You love Him. That's the right thing to do. And surely it's the only thing to do when we think of ourselves as people made for eternity.

People who will one day come, as we'll see in a moment, to face Jesus and face His judgment of our lives. And maybe you're here tonight and you are a Christian or listening online or watching online and you've come to know the Lord in the past, but your life through this wretched COVID or everything that happened afterwards has come to stray away from obedience to Christ and you're not walking in His ways and you're just living from one day to the next with this really in-between sort of condition and this what you know is not acceptable to yourself.

[40 : 07] You're backslidden. Your heart is cold. What are you going to do with this Jesus? Well, surely you'll be like the prodigal son and you'll say, as he said to himself, Look at how much I'm missing.

Look at what's in my father's house that I've turned away from that I'm currently not enjoying as I should. I will arise and I'll go back to my father. Don't let the devil persuade you that somehow or other God is going to be so annoyed with you if you've gone astray from His ways, if you've fallen into sad times spiritually, if you've lapsed, if your heart is cold, if you're not the way you should be and were before with Jesus, with His people.

Don't listen to the lie that comes to you that says, Oh, you should be afraid of going back. You know, He's not going to accept you. He's going to scold you. He's going to give you a tough time. I'll go to chapter 15 of Luke.

How did the father receive his wayward son that came back to him out of his lostness? He threw his arms around him.

He kissed him on the neck. He received him gladly. And that's a picture of Jesus. That's what Jesus was describing. This man receives sinners and eats with them.

[41 : 33] And tonight, maybe you've been for some time, maybe for some considerable time, away from the Lord meaningfully. What are you going to do with this Jesus?

What does He mean to you? If He is yours, will you not go back to Him? Will you not, as it were, claim Him all over again as your own Savior and give yourself back to Him to be gladly ruled by Him.

That's what God's own purpose is for you. Or you might say God's preference for you, that you would do that. Don't stay away from Him.

Don't let the gap widen. Don't let your heart grow colder. Just pick yourself up. Go to Him and say, Lord, I have sinned.

Receive me back. Restore me. Just as David said in Psalm 51, restore to me, Lord, the joy of your salvation. If you have lost that joy, go back to Him and ask for it to be restored, because He can and will do that.

[42 : 44] So that you'll come again to experience that wonderful comfort and joy and assurance of Him being your Savior and being in His presence.

Facing up to the question. Secondly, let's reverse the question. Let's reverse the question, instead of it being, what shall I do with Jesus who is called to Christ?

Let's turn it around and say, what will Jesus who is called to Christ do with me? Because as you know from the Bible very well, there is a final judgment awaiting every single one of us at the Lord's return.

And that final judgment is a certainty. That's why the question is important that we turn it this way. What shall the Lord, what will the Lord do with me when that moment comes, when that day comes, when I stand before Him and appear before His judgment seat?

What will Jesus do with me as it stands tonight between yourself and the Lord? What is your answer to that question? If the judgment had been yesterday, what would He have done with you?

[43:54] Where would you be tonight in eternity? 2 Corinthians 5, verse 10 reminds us there are no exceptions to appearing before Jesus in the judgment.

where Paul is saying there that we in all things seek to please Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that we may receive the things done in this body, whether good or evil.

You see, there's no exceptions. It's a universal judgment. Every single individual who ever lived, difficult for us though it is to conceive of that, but we believe the Bible to be true, that God is telling us the truth.

However difficult, our understanding is wrestling with the idea of every single human being who ever lived, the billions of people who've lived since the creation began. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

God will do it. There are no exceptions. And the judge will be Jesus.

[44:58] Here's Paul again preaching in Acts chapter 17. In this place called Athens, so full of idolatry that Paul himself was somewhat taken aback.

But there he is preaching to the Athenians, to these pagans at the time, and demonstrating that this altar to the unknown God that they had erected was in fact something that should remind them of the true and living God.

And you remember there in Acts 17, verses 30 to 31, how he actually put it to them. Let me just find these verses, 30 to 31. The times of ignorance God overlooked.

That's in previous times before Jesus had come and arrived in the world. But now he commands all people everywhere to repent. In other words, to turn from sin and turn to God.

He commands all people everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed.

[46:05] Who is he? And of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. The Jesus, the risen Jesus.

How has God given proof that there's such a thing coming as a universal judgment? He has given proof of it in the resurrection of Jesus. And the only way you can actually deny that is to say the Bible is nonsense which you're not going to do.

He has given proof of this. A lot of people will tell you in the world there's no proof whatsoever of a coming judgment. There's no proof whatsoever of a resurrection from the dead that Jesus is actually alive.

All that sort of stuff they'll tell us is nonsense. But you believe your Bible. You believe this to be the Word of God. You believe this to be factually correct. You believe that God doesn't tell lies.

That God doesn't mislead. And so you believe tonight that Jesus rose from the dead. That God raised him from the dead. That people met him.

[47:08] That could prove they had met with him. And if you believe as you do that he rose from the dead or was raised from the dead then you believe in a coming judgment because God has connected these two indissolubly together.

He has given proof of it. This coming judgment. And think of it the person who will sit on that judgment seat is this Jesus.

You know what a dreadful surprise that is going to be for so many people. Just imagine somebody going through this life ridiculed in the idea of Jesus being a savior.

Ridiculing the idea of the gospel being somewhat worthy of your acceptance. Speaking ill of Jesus using his name blasphemously. Deliberately just taking these liberties as you could say with the name of Jesus with the idea of Jesus.

And then on the day of judgment as we're all gathered to face the judgment seat so many people who have thought like that and acted like that will suddenly find that the judge shockingly to them is this Jesus.

[48:25] Not somebody else. Not somebody other than the one they've ridiculed. The one they've refused to acknowledge. The one they've rejected.

And then you think of meeting with Jesus and so that's what this question really in its reversal is saying to us tonight.

Project yourself forward. Think of yourself standing before his judgment seat. What will this Jesus do with me? Will you hear these words that he says in Matthew chapter 25 just a couple of chapters before this where Jesus is talking of the final judgment and in verse 34 where you find him saying to those on his right hand when he comes he will divide all people separating them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

He will put his sheep on his right hand the goats on the left. The king will then say to those on his right come you blessed of my father receive inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Will you hear that? Or will it be something else? Then he will say to those on his left depart from me you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

[49:59] And isn't it strange isn't it foolish indeed to hear people saying well I believe in the love of God I believe that God receives people in his love that he's provided in his love the person of Jesus or the teaching of Jesus or something along those lines but I don't believe in hell and I don't believe that God would put anybody to hell that he would cast anybody away to a lost eternity.

Ask Jesus. what did Jesus think? What did Jesus say? Then shall he say to those on his left hand depart from me you cursed into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

I would be very untrue to God tonight and to my calling as a minister if I gave the least suggestion that you shouldn't take that at face value. there is a state called hell just as there is a state called heaven and the difference between them hinges on this what you have done with this Jesus and what he ultimately will do with you and with me when we stand in his presence.

There's a certainty of final judgment but it's not just a certainty of final judgment it's the righteousness or the justice of that final judgment. Now all judgment even in this world ought to have justice as a stamp upon it.

It's not always that way. There are corrupt judges just as there have been done through history and there are some people that you might think have escaped justice. They've committed a great crime maybe they've murdered thousands of people but somehow or other they've died or taken their own life before they were faced with a court to actually deal with accusations against them and people might say well surely they've escaped justice it's not fair.

[52:07] Well they haven't escaped justice they've escaped human justice but the great court the great assize has still to sit has still to meet and we must all appear before that judgment seat.

And you see the judge is the righteous judge. Just as we saw there with Paul's preaching in Athens he has appointed this man by whom he will judge the world he's given indication of it that he's raised him from the dead that he will judge the world in righteousness.

And Paul in 2 Corinthians 4 as he sees his own departure imminent his departure from this world he's about to die his life is coming to an end but he says the judge the righteous judge will give me that crown of righteousness on that day of judgment he's going to give me what he has promised to his people but he's the righteous judge.

And it's important that we realize that the judgment and the righteousness of that judgment is something that affects everyone who is judged. Every individual saved sinner will be able to say with thankfulness my salvation is righteous my salvation is just.

There will be no going back on it. God is not going to say at the judgment seat when I meet him actually there's something yet that you have to do yourself just to clinch this just to make sure that your salvation is secure for eternity.

[53:48] He'll never say that. Why? Because everything that's been required has already been done by Jesus himself. And that's why the salvation of the Lord's people is the salvation that is just.

God is right in bestowing forgiveness on all who trust in Jesus because it's for Jesus' sake. It's because he has done everything for them already and you need not fear that that's going to change because it never will.

But it's just on the other side of the issue as well. We're dealing with very solemn things and when God tells the unsaved those who have not accepted Christ depart from me you cursed difficult though it is to say it's the right thing for God to do.

God's not going to give away his righteousness out of some sort of supposed sympathy with those who have refused to accept his salvation.

So what's your choice? What's my choice? friends we're faced tonight as we always are indeed with matters of eternal significance.

[55:21] What shall I do with this Jesus? What will this Jesus do with me when I meet him? These are the two great questions we've brought together.

Life's big questions and they don't get bigger than that. Surely tonight you're going to say as you see in Luke chapter 19 with regard to Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus climbed up to a sycamore tree so he would have a vantage point to see Jesus who was passing in that way. So he climbed up, he ran ahead of the procession of the crowd, he climbed up into this tree as you know the story very well I'm sure, so that he could actually see Jesus because he was small.

He couldn't see above other people. And as Jesus reached that specific tree, he looked up and he looked into Zacchaeus' eyes and he said, Zacchaeus, make haste, hurry up and come down for today I must stay at your house.

Well, there's many sermons packed into that but the reply of Zacchaeus is significant, isn't it? Or at least what's said about him. He made haste and he came down.

[56:42] He didn't say, let me just think about that Lord, let me just think about it for, maybe I'll come back to it tomorrow. Let me just delay for the moment, just give me this opportunity to think it through more fully.

No, he made haste. He instantly came down and he went with Jesus and took Jesus into his home and into his heart.

heart. And that's tonight what everyone here surely is going to do. If you haven't done it already, now is the moment because I know he's speaking to you.

I know he's addressing you with this question. I know it's on your mind. I know you know you have to answer it. But don't wait until you're out that door before you're answering it. what then must I do with this Jesus who is called to Christ? You know the answer. Do it.

[57 : 43] Receive him. Love him. Let's pray. Eternal God, we give thanks for the wonderful offer of the gospel.

Lord, we haven't earned the salvation you offer to us in it. we have not earned the right to be in any way received by you sympathetically. We have sinned against you.

We are deserving of nothing more than that you should cast us away from you. But you sent your Son into this world. And Father, tonight we give thanks for him and for your love displayed in him and for his power and his grace.

And we ask that for each of us tonight our concern will be amply fulfilled in our response to this question. What then must I do with Jesus who is called to Christ?

All by your grace help us to welcome you and to live for you. For your name's sake. Amen. We're going to conclude now by singing in Psalm 11.

[58 : 55] Psalm number 11 and that's on page 13. singing verses 4 to 7. The tune is rocking him. The Lord is in his holy place.

The Lord is on his heavenly throne. His eyes observe the human race and in his sight each one is known. The Lord examines all the just. The righteous one he proves and tests.

But all those who love wickedness and violence his soul detests. Upon the wicked he will rain his fiery coals and sulfur hot. A scorching wind will beat on them.

Such punishment will be their lot. For God the Lord is righteous still. In righteousness he takes delight. And they alone will see his face.

Who are in heart and life upright. These four verses in conclusion. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[59 : 55] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. The wickedness and my ownness is so detest.

Upon the wind he will rain, his mighty colds and silver calls.

A scorching wind will be the man, such punishment will be their own.

For God the Lord is righteous still, in righteousness he takes delight.

[62 : 05] And they alone will sing his face, through high in heart and life of pride.

After the benediction tonight, I'll go to the door to my left here. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and evermore. Amen.

Amen.