

Sunday Evening Service

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Date: 16 February 2025

Preacher: Rev David Macleod

[0 : 0 0] You may have noticed that David's voice was nearly giving in this morning.! My own's not much better, so that's why there's three of us in the pulpit this evening. If I fail, David will take over. If he fails, we can call on Roddy John.

But we are going to share out the load this evening, so I'll be doing the first part, just introducing the singings, and then David will take over when it comes to the reading and the sermon part.

So we just pray for David as he leads us this evening, as his voice will hold out, and also as we go into the fellowship too. So we're going to begin our worship, and I just want to think of the words of, we're not going to sing these words, but the words of Psalm 126. We're going to sing in Psalm 100, but the words of 126 remind us that as we come this evening, we come just thankful to the Lord's goodness to us. The psalmist says, When Sion's bondage God turned back, as men that dreamed were we, then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongue with melody.

As we reflect on this weekend, as we reflect on new members coming in, as we reflect on being under God's word, we thank God who is the one who is able to turn his people back to himself, to bring his people home, as it were.

And we pray that this evening, as the word of God goes out, the call to come will be heard, and that there will be much rejoicing in our midst again this evening. And so we're going to begin by singing in Psalm 100, the Scottish Psalter, the first version.

[1 : 3 9] You find it on page 362. We'll sing the whole of this psalm, Psalm 100, the first version. Again, the psalm just reflects the theme of coming to the Lord with praise.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, and say with mouth his praise forth tell, Come ye before him and rejoice. We'll stand to sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

Amen. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, and say with mouth his praise forth tell, Come ye before him and rejoice.

Come ye before him and rejoice. Show that the Lord is God indeed.

With the giant he in the spring, We are his hope he doth us see, And for his sheep he doth us take.

[3 : 1 9] O enter then his gates with praise, Approach with joy his course and doom, Praise God and bless his name always, All of his mercy be upon him and glory his name always, All of his mercy be upon him and glory his name always, For why the Lord our God is good, His mercy is forever sure, His mercy is forever sure, His mercy is forever sure,

And shall promise to his mercy endure. Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer.

Let us pray. Let us pray. Lord our gracious God, as we gather in your name this evening, we thank you for these words of praise that we have sung, That we are reminded of how we enter into your presence, How we come before you in all our different needs and in all our different circumstances, Yet able to come, Because you have prepared a way for us, That you are the one who has invited us into your very presence, Indeed who calls us to come.

And we pray that we would have the joy of this psalm even in our hearts this evening, That we would be able to sing to the Lord with that cheerful voice, The one who has heard us, The one who knows us, That we would come to know that you are the Lord indeed, That you are God over all, That without you, Lord, we are nothing, That you are the one who has made us, Created us, Formed us, The one who has kept us, The one who has prepared a way for us, In all your providence towards us as a people, Lord.

So often there are times of joy, but also times of sorrow, And yet, O Lord, we can look to you as the one who has plans and purposes in them all. And so we do come leaning upon you.

[5 : 57] We come in our own weaknesses, our own frailties. And yet, Lord, we thank you that the joy of the Lord is our strength. And we pray to know you with us this evening.

We thank you for every way that you have reminded us that you are God in these days. That as we have come into this communion season, We have come praying to know your blessing. And we thank you that as we come to the close of this season, That we can look back in these days and truly rejoice and give thanks that you are one who has answered prayer.

That you have given us so many reasons to rejoice. You have given it in individual situations and homes and families. You have given it to us as a congregation.

You have given it to us even as a community, a wider community even than our own town here. For we thank you that in every way, Lord, that we have been encouraged. That we have been built up and even challenged and convicted by your word.

For your word is truth and your word is powerful. And, oh Lord, in every way that we have been reminded of that. From the outset of our services, Lord, even to this evening hour, We thank you for your word that shall always endure.

[7 : 12] That your truth is what stands firm and endures from age to age. And we thank you that that truth is what we so need this evening. What we all need is a people.

And we pray that through the ministry of your word and by your power of your spirit, That you would meet us in all our needs. We thank you for all who are here this evening.

We thank you for every home and family represented here. We pray that we would just know your peace, your presence over us again here tonight.

That we would know what it is to be still. And to know that you are indeed God. And we just ask that, Lord, for all of us here, from the youngest to the oldest together.

That your voice which we have heard and which we continue to hear would resonate in our hearts. That it would be a word that leaves us, doesn't leave us unchanged as we go from here this evening.

[8 : 11] For we thank you that as we gather in this place tonight, when we know a place of peace, When we know the stillness of your word ministering to us. We know that power.

But we know too, as we look to our week ahead, that there will be the many challenges that come our way. That as we go home this evening, as we go into the week ahead, with all that it might entail to us.

Many of the plans that we have made, Lord, they may come to fruition. We may go about our daily ways, whether it's school or work or whatever we are doing. We can do all these things, Lord, thinking that we have plans in place and we know what is ahead of us.

But we know too, Lord, that there are so often reminders that circumstances change. That things change in our lives or the lives around us, in our communities, even in our nation and the world.

There are so many things that come that we do not see. And we, at times, Lord, we do not even understand. And we know that for individuals in this week ahead, there will be maybe many challenges that we have to face up to.

[9 : 16] News that will come as a shock to us, whether it's personal or something around us. And we know that things can leave us, Lord, in that state of looking to try to understand and many questions being asked.

And we just pray for your wisdom and for your help, for your grace to be with us. We think that even looking back over this last week, as we have prayed so often over these days for the family in Braga.

We continue to remember them this evening, Lord, and especially in these days ahead with the funeral to take place on Tuesday. We see a community, O Lord, that has been so impacted by that tragedy.

But we especially remember the family, Lord, and we just commit them to you. That they would know, Lord, that you are near. That they would know that, as a people, there are many praying for them.

And that they would know the power of your grace and your help towards them. And we just pray, Lord, that as we see so much happening in our world, that may it leave us with questions.

[10 : 23] That we would come to the one who has the answers for us. Even the ones that are difficult to understand and believe at times. Even the words that we read so often in Scripture, that all things work together for good.

For those who believe. We can see, Lord, how difficult these words are at times. And yet they remind us that you are a Lord and God who is able to bring good out of all things.

And so we do pray, Lord, for your goodness and mercy to be with us. We pray, Lord, for us all together this evening. Thankful for the ministry we've enjoyed over this weekend.

Thankful for David and Roddy John who have been with us. Thankful for their preaching to us. And for the fellowship we've enjoyed. And for all that we've heard. We pray, Lord, that these words that have ministered powerfully to us.

Would be ministering to us even in the days, weeks, months and even years ahead. That we'd be able to reflect on what we have heard. And to remember the words that spoke to us. It may be that in many years time we are able to testify that God was good to us.

[11 : 32] Even in these days. And so we pray, Lord, that you will open hearts. And ears this evening to hear what you have to say to us. Bless us together and bless the ministry of your word far and wide.

Even as we think of our town just now as this communion weekend. We pray for all the congregations of your people gathered together. And we pray for the communions to come as well in different parts of our island.

That we would see and hear great and wondrous things that the Lord is doing. And that we would rejoice and say this is the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes.

So may, Lord, you fill us with that hope that you are to your people. That you would fill us with that prayerful spirit. To know you leading us as our Lord, as our shepherd.

Hear our prayers. Continue with us. Pardoning all our sin is all we ask. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing again to God's praise.

[12 : 32] This time we're singing in Psalm 103. And let's sing Psalm's version. Psalm 103. We're going to sing from verse 1 down to verse 11.

Praise God, my soul, with all my heart. Let me exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits. His praise, my soul, in song proclaim. The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

Your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness. We'll sing from verse 1 to 11. And then at that point, David will lead us in the rest of the service.

Jesus says. He satisfies you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

Your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness. Unkind to end his tenderness.

[14 : 08] He satisfies your deep desires. From his unending stores all good. So not just like the eagle's strength.

Your youthful name of his renewed. The Lord is known for righteousness. And justice to them, God and once.

Till Moses he may know his ways. His mighty deeds to Israel's sons. His mighty deeds to Israel's sons.

The Lord is merciful and kind. To anger slow and full of praise. He will not constantly reprove.

All in his anger hide his grace. He does not punish our misdeeds.

[15 : 24] For give our sins. For give our sins their just reward. Our greatest love must hide at heaven.

To watch all those who fear the Lord. To watch all those who fear the Lord.

To watch all those who fear the Lord. If I could ask you now please to turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 12.

Page 983 of the Bible that I have here. Matthew chapter 12.

And we will read this section from verse 22 to verse 32. Verse 32. Then a demon oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus.

[16 : 46] And he healed him so that the man spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed and said, Can this be the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.

Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste. And no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself.

How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, Then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods? Unless he first binds the strong man, then indeed he may plunder his house. Whoever is not with me is against me.

And whoever does not gather with me scatters. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people. But the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

[18 : 04] And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Either in this age or in the age to come.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. We'll sing again now from the Scottish altar, The traditional version of Psalm 119 on page number 407.

Psalm 119. And we will sing from verses 89 down to the end of verse 94.

Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139.

Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139. Psalm 139.

[19 : 11] Psalm 139. when, as my troubles did abound, thy precepts I will ne'er forget, thy quickening to me brought.

Lord, I am thine, O save thou me, thy precepts I have sought. These verses we stand to sing to God's praise. The Lord, I am thine, O save thou me, thy best, and as my mortgins, on all thy servants be.

Unless in thy most perfect law my soul delights have found, I should have perished yet when, as my troubles did abound, thy precepts I will ne'er forget, they quickening to me brought.

Lord, I am thine, O save thou me, thy precepts I have sought.

If you could turn back with me, please, to Matthew chapter 12.

[21 : 38] And as we go there, let's again unite our hearts in prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you that your word is truth. Your word is reliable. Your word is enduring. We thank you that your word is life-giving.

We thank you that eternal life is found only in turning to your word and looking to the Lord Jesus.

We thank you that that eternal life is promised to all who will come in response to the call of Christ, to all who will call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

[22 : 36] We thank you that you are the Savior. We thank you for all that we have remembered today that he did on our behalf to make it possible for us to be saved.

We praise you for the fact, Lord Jesus, that the work of salvation is done. It is finished. And we pray that you would enable us to see that, each one of us, and enable us to come with empty hands, with humble hearts, asking for the grace that we can never work to earn, but you have promised that you will freely give to all who ask.

So be at work, Lord, amongst us, we pray. We pray especially for anyone here who does not yet know Jesus in that personal, saving way.

We pray for any who may be here who have heard the message of the gospel many times, who have heard time after time the call of Jesus to come, and who have hesitated, and who have reflected, and who have made up excuses, and who have sometimes been so busy and distracted that they have said, well, maybe another day, maybe another week.

You have promised, Lord, that you will not always strive with us. The Spirit will not always strive with man. And we see that even in the passage that's before us this evening.

[24 : 17] We pray that you would strive, Holy Spirit, with each one of us here, and that tonight, there may be some who even for the first time respond by asking Christ to be their Savior and their Lord.

So help us, Lord, we pray, in preaching, in listening, in responding, that you would speak into our lives, and that you would give us the faith to respond in a way that brings salvation, rest, peace, to our souls, and glory to your name.

Hear our prayers. Continue with us, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. It's good to see quite a number of young people here this evening, and I'm conscious with the young people that this is the time of year where exams loom large.

I've got teenage girls in my house back in Harris, and they've just finished their prelims, and now there's the prospect of other exams coming, and so there's studying that's done, and there is preparations that are made because there are questions that are set, and students, in each of the subjects that they study, they have to think carefully about how they answer these questions that are set because the way they answer the questions determines how they will be judged by examiners, and sometimes it can even determine the direction that life takes.

So questions are important, and how we answer questions are important. And with Matthew chapter 12 open, I want to zoom in on a question that is at the heart of this chapter, a question that all the people were asking about Jesus.

[26 : 32] and it's a question that was being asked all these years ago, and yet this is a question that not just them, but every one of us will have to answer.

And the way that we answer this question will impact not just how we live in this world, although it will impact how we live in this world, but how we answer this question will have an impact that will determine where we spend eternity, whether it's heaven or hell, with Jesus or apart from him.

The question is found in verse 23. We hear the people asking, can this, as they look at Jesus, say, listen to what he's saying, as they see these signs and miracles, they ask the question, can this be the son of David?

Or if we were to put it into modern day language, they're asking the question, who is Jesus? Can this be the saviour?

Can this be the son of God? Three points in the time that we have this evening. The first point is the blind man.

[28 : 02] We're introduced here to a blind man. And we learn in this passage that the blind man sees Jesus. It's the first point. The blind man sees Jesus.

The second thing, the second point that we come to is we once more encounter these religious leaders in this passage and we can observe that the seeing men or the so-called seeing men, they're blind to Jesus.

So the blind man sees Jesus, but the so-called theologically educated seeing men, they're blind to Jesus. They can't see Jesus. And the final point that we come to is it's not the most concise heading I've got here, but it's dealing with the teaching that Jesus expounds here and it's to say that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to refuse to believe in Jesus.

So that's the structure. That's where we're going in the time that we have. So we begin with this blind man who sees Jesus. Look at verse 22.

Then a demon oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus and Jesus healed him so that the man spoke and saw.

[29 : 29] So what Matthew does here is he shares with us a very short testimony. He tells us about a man who was both blind and mute.

He couldn't see and he couldn't speak. But Matthew tells us not just about the symptoms the struggles that this man had.

He tells us also the reason behind the struggles. He tells us in verse 22 that he was demon oppressed. That's what was going on in this man's life.

He was under attack. One of Satan's agents had this man under a dark oppression and so he's suffering.

Who is the man? Well we don't know much about the man. We're not told his name. We're not told anything much about him.

[30 : 30] But maybe that's a purposeful thing. because as we look in at this man spiritually speaking we're looking into the mirror and we're seeing a reflection of ourselves.

Spiritually speaking we are this man. Psalm 51 verse 6 we sang from Psalm 51 this morning and that psalm makes it clear to us that we are each one of us born with a condition called sin.

And sin makes us blind. We can't see God. We can't see our need of God. That's what sin does.

We can see everything else. Our eyes are distracted and drawn to lots of shiny things in this world. Our eyes focus in on ourselves but sin is like scales that cluster around our eyes and we can't see God and our need of him.

And sin makes us mute. It's sin that causes us not to want to speak to God. It's sin that causes us to be speaking to everybody else whether it's in conversation or these days it's in message form and yet never praying, never speaking to God.

[32 : 14] So spiritually speaking, as we look in on this man, we are with this man. So what happened next? Well, what we see here is that this man was brought to Jesus and Jesus healed him.

We're not given the details. We're not given much in terms of the details of how that healing happened. We're just told that Jesus healed this man.

man. And the good news is that what Jesus did for this man in the passage, he can do for us by his power and by his grace.

You know the hymn that is often sung, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see the testimony in song form of this man.

[33 : 31] Jesus made this blind man see and Jesus can still make spiritually blind people see. Jesus can still take us from that state of darkness into light.

He can take us from death into life. So come to him says Matthew repeatedly.

We've been in this all weekend. There's that recurring call, the gospel call. It's come to Jesus. It's great that you're coming to church but it's possible to come to church and never come to Jesus.

It's possible to come to Sunday school, Sunday after Sunday and come to YF and go to fellowships and never come to Jesus.

So come to him, says Matthew. Jesus can take our sin away. He can break the hold that Satan has in us. He can make our hearts well.

[34 : 48] He can heal our hearts. So come to him, says Matthew, as he tells us about this account here because notice that's what happened here.

In verse 22, we can see that the demon oppressed man, he was brought to Jesus. He himself couldn't see Jesus.

And he couldn't see his need of Jesus, but he had friends who could see that he needed Jesus. And this man, he couldn't speak to Jesus, but his friends could speak to Jesus on his behalf.

And so they brought him. I don't know how he felt. Maybe he was reluctant. Maybe there's people here tonight. You've been brought to church.

You wouldn't have chosen to come, maybe. You'd maybe be rather watching the football. But you've been brought to church by parents who know that you need Jesus.

[36 : 12] And you know, that's our calling, not just as parents, but if we are Christians, we are to bring people to Jesus. We're to tell people about Jesus, but then before we speak to people about Jesus, we first have to speak to Jesus about them.

We have to pray for them. We have to tell Jesus about the friends that we love, that we have concern for, and ask him to heal their hearts, to open their eyes, to unblock their ears, to loosen their tongues that they would come to Jesus.

So, just before we move on, maybe I could just pause to ask those who are Christians here tonight, a very practical question.

Who are you praying for? for? I want you to think about that for a moment. And in your minds, in your hearts, in the silence, bring the names.

What friends, what family members, what colleagues are you praying for? hear the names, as you think through in your minds.

[37 : 49] We should all be praying for two or three or four or five or ten people. Who are you burdened for? Who do you want to bring to Jesus?

Jesus, Jesus, let's ensure that we are specific, that we are personal, that we are praying day by day for these people and asking the Lord to give us opportunities to tell them about Jesus.

The blind man sees Jesus, that's the first point. The second point is the seeing men or the so called seeing men. They're blind to Jesus.

We saw something of this on Friday night. We see it again in verse 23 and following. We see first of all in verse 23 we overhear all the people.

All the people were amazed. They've just witnessed! This healing! And the people are amazed and they said, can this be the son of David?

[39 : 05] So the people were the crowds. The people were the ordinary people. They're just like us. They knew a bit of the Bible, but the people, the crowds, they didn't have a theological education.

And yet they know enough of the Old Testament to be starting to get excited about Jesus. Jesus. And so they say, can this be the son of David?

The son of David was a title that was reserved for the Messiah. So they're asking, could this Jesus be the Messiah?

Could he be the promised one of God? Could he be the Savior? Could he be the one that we've been pointed forward to, that we're looking for? Could this be the Savior?

Isaiah chapter 35 verse 6 made clear that the Messiah would open the eyes of the blind, that he would open the ears of the deaf, that he would loosen the tongue of the mute, that he would heal those who were crippled.

[40 : 23] And this is exactly what Jesus had been doing. So they joined the dots. In their minds, they say, this must be the Messiah.

There's that tangible excitement that is moving through these crowds. But then the so-called seeing men, then the theological heavyweights come in, the Pharisees, and they step in.

Verse 24. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, it is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons. Now, stop for a moment and think about this.

These men who say that, they are the most qualified people to be able to see the Messiah.

These are the theology professors. These are the Old Testament experts. And yet, here is the son of David.

[41 : 39] Here is the Messiah. Here is the son of God. And he's looking them in the eye. And they can't see him. Or they won't see him.

They're willfully blind. They don't want to see Jesus. And there's a warning here that we must take note of.

And the application is straightforward. You know, it is possible for us to know the Bible and to attend church week by week.

and to be members of the Sunday school and the YF. It's possible for us to be active in the life of the church.

It's possible to be a minister or a bishop or an archbishop and be lost. Actually be an enemy of Christ.

[42 : 43] Like the Pharisees were. your salvation and mine is not dependent upon how much we know about Jesus.

Our salvation is dependent on knowing Jesus personally. Trusting him as our saviour.

following him as our lord and king. Having a relationship, a living relationship with him where we walk with him and we talk with him.

We spend time day by day in his presence. The Pharisees, as we see them here, they were resisting Jesus.

They were rebels against Jesus. They had no relationship with Jesus. So what about you and what about me?

[44 : 00] Do we know Jesus? Are we in relationship with him? have we come to him?

We've heard the call repeatedly even over these days. Come to me, those who are weary, those who are burdened, those who are sinners. Ask for forgiveness.

Ask for cleansing. Receive rest. Call upon my name. have we done it? Have we come to him?

The seeing men are blind to Jesus. The blind man sees Jesus. And the final thing this evening is the whole teaching that Jesus presses home at this point that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

This term, this teaching, this sin that so troubles us. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. What is it?

[45 : 22] It's refusing to believe in Jesus. There are some places that we would just rather not go because they unsettle us.

I lived for a few years over in Skye when my dad was a minister and we lived in a place called Kensel Eyre. There was a wee burn in the back of our house just up on the man's croft of Glebe.

And apparently over the years, over the decades, even over centuries, there was books written and stories told that people saw ghostly things.

They saw disturbing things around this burn. And I used to walk the dog out the back of this croft.

And I have to say, I never saw any ghostly things. but when I was walking the dog after dark, I tended to avoid the burn because it just unsettled me.

[46 : 38] And this next passage, the verses, if you've got them open between 25 and 32, it's an area that many people tend to avoid because it's unsettling.

Jesus talks in these verses about an unforgivable sin. And he calls that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Don't want to think about this for just a few moments, but just before we consider what Jesus says specifically about this sin, let's just recap and remind ourselves of what has just happened because the context is always important for us to understand the teaching.

So what has just happened? Jesus goes on, he teaches this about the unforgivable sin, but what has he just encountered? What has he just faced? What has just happened here?

Well, he's just clashed with the Pharisees. The Pharisees just watch Jesus heal this blind and mute man.

[47 : 54] They had seen the supernatural power of God the Holy Spirit working with and working through God the Son.

They'd witnessed a miracle. They'd seen God at action. And how do they respond? Well, they respond in verse 24 by calling the Holy Spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit they call they attribute that work to Beelzebul the devil.

So we have here the most crass sinful case of mistaken identity. They point the finger at Jesus and talk about the devil.

And so Jesus just using very basic reason he shows how flawed their thinking was. Verse 25 Knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste no sithier house divided against itself will stand.

If Satan casts out Satan he's divided against himself how then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul by whom do your sons cast them out?

[49 : 19] Therefore they will be your judges. But if it's by the spirit of God that I cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come upon you. How can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds!

So Jesus he just shows in a very few words how flawed and irrational their reasoning was.

J.C. Ryle says it quicker than I can he says this was an absurd charge. Our Lord shows that it was unreasonable to suppose that the devil would help to pull down his own kingdom and Satan cast out Satan but there is nothing says Ryle too absurd and unreasonable for men to say when they are thoroughly set against Christ.

And that was the position that the Pharisees held. They were thoroughly set against Christ and even though their reasoning as they attacked Jesus even though it was illogical and unreasonable they held it because they were against Christ.

And Jesus underlines that and he shows them that they were against him. In verse 13 Jesus says to them and he's saying to us because this is a word for us tonight Jesus says whoever is not with me is against me and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

[51 : 28] It's very black and white isn't it? Jesus says clearly that there is no middle ground when it comes to him.

We had an illustration of that even this morning. There are those at the table there are those who are not at the table.

There's no in between state. There's those who are at the table with the Lord and there are those who are saying I'm not sitting there.

That's not for me. No neutral, no neutral place, no area that we can go in the church where there's, there's no, there's neutrality.

With him, without him, for him, against him. That's what Jesus is saying. Eric Alexander, the Reverend Eric Alexander, said, imagine Jesus coming to each of us personally, moving through the church, saying, for me, or against me.

[52 : 51] Can we visualize that even now? Jesus taking time to move amongst us, going from pew to pew, person to person, saying, for me, or against me.

Give me an answer. How would you answer? And this is a question that's an answer that will have eternal significance.

We will all answer it. And then Jesus goes on to say, therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people.

But the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven.

But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Either in this age or in the age to come.

[54 : 10] So as we conclude, what does this mean? What is the unforgivable sin?

Well, it's to do what the Pharisees were doing. It's to decide in our wills not to believe in Jesus.

even when the Spirit of God is striving with us and giving us every reason to believe. I mean, think back into Matthew's Gospel record as we see what was going on in the context that Jesus was speaking into.

Matthew tells us in these chapters that Jesus, when he preached, he preached with otherworldly authority. And these men, they heard it.

And Jesus healed supernaturally. There was no natural explanation for the healings that he performed. He performed miracle after miracle as he went from place to place.

[55 : 27] He reached out to these Pharisees day after day. But they refused to believe in him.

They resist him. They speak against him. And they speak against the Holy Spirit who was resting upon him.

Think back to Matthew 3 at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. We see the Holy Spirit coming to rest upon Jesus. And so as Jesus preaches, as Jesus reaches out, as Jesus heals, the Spirit strives with these people.

He is with Jesus. And yet, no matter what Jesus says, or what Jesus does, these Pharisees in particular, they will not repent of their sin.

and that's what it means, I believe, to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. And if that's how we live in this age, Jesus says that in the age to come, there will be no forgiveness.

[56 : 56] There will be no healing of our souls, there will be no heaven. There will be only hell. The commentator Warren Weerspey says, is there an unpardonable sin today?

Then he answers, yes. The final rejection of Jesus Christ. Jesus made it clear, says Weerspey, that all sins can be forgiven.

Adultery, murder, blasphemy, and other sins can all be forgiven. They are not unpardonable. But God cannot forgive the rejection of his son.

It is the spirit who bears witness to Christ and who convicts the lost sinner. sin. So as we finish, we can think back, each one of us, into our lives and we can perhaps, you know, have sins that are brought back to our memories that haunt us, that are so vast and so dark in our memories and our minds that we wonder, can they be forgiven?

And the truth is, every one of them can be forgiven. We often sing the lines from the hymn, the vilest offender who truly believes, that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

[58 : 56] The unpardonable sin, the unpardonable sin is to resist the Holy Spirit as he strives with us.

And it's to sit in these chairs and to go week after week and month after month and communion season after communion season refusing to believe and refusing to profess faith in Christ.

! So how can we avoid committing the unforgivable sin?

Because I'm quite sure it's a danger for some, even in the room here this evening. How can we go out from this place tonight knowing that we are avoiding committing the unforgivable sin?

There's only one way and it's by coming to Jesus today. It's by believing in Jesus today.

[60 : 26] Psalm 95 today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

2 Corinthians 6, behold now is the day of salvation. Let's pray.

our heavenly father, we pray that today, that now, would be the day of salvation for someone, perhaps many here this evening.

We thank you, father, for sending your son into this world. We thank you for the gospel accounts that we have that record for us the words and the works of Jesus.

We thank you that in some ways we are more privileged than the Pharisees ever were as we have the word of God open before us, as we hear the voice of Jesus calling out to us week by week in the gospel.

[61 : 47] We ask that none of us here tonight would find that we cross over into the territory of the unforgivable sin. we pray that none of us would resist and resist and resist and resist until we can no longer see or hear anything of the gospel.

Holy Spirit, we pray that you would continue to strive with each one of us. and we pray that none of us tonight would walk out the door still resisting and turning away from Jesus.

us. But as we hear his voice, we pray that we would come and that we would find rest for our souls. Life that is eternal, that is salvation.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll sing to conclude from Psalm 67. The Scottish shelter, I think, is where we are singing from the traditional version on page 300.

Lord, bless and pity us, shine on us with thy face, that the earth thy way and nations all may know thy saving grace. We'll sing the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

[63 : 32] thy Let people praise thee, Lord.

Let people all thee praise. Oh, let the nations be glad in songs their voices raise.

Thou justly people shall honor relations all.

Let people praise thee, Lord. Praise thee, both great and small.

The earth, our God shall bless thee, send. God shall us best, which shall end here, and to earth at most end.

[65 : 11] Amen. Close in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your saving grace, and we pray that each one of us would receive it. Work in us, we pray, and help us.

And as we go from here now, we pray that we would part with your blessing. We pray for the time of fellowship that we look forward to just now. We pray for the food and the drink that has been prepared for us.

And we thank you for it, Lord. We pray that you would bless it to our bodies as you bless your word as food for our souls. And now we pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit, would be with us all now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.