

3. Life investment with Jesus

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[0 : 01] Well, we're going to turn now to our readings from Scripture this morning from Matthew's Gospel. If you have your Bibles you'd like to turn there, please do. The particular part that we're looking at this morning is printed on our service sheets.

We've been several weeks in this chapter 10 of Matthew's Gospel where Jesus is teaching his disciples what it's going to mean to be ambassadors for his kingdom in a hostile world. And we're going to begin reading at Matthew chapter 10 verse 16 and I'll read through to the end of the chapter. Behold, says the Lord Jesus, I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. So be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues.

And you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. Whenever they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say.

[1 : 06] For what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it's not you who speak, but the spirit of your father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child.

And children will rise against parents and have them put to death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

When they persecute you in one time, flee to the next. But truly I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.

It's enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his master. If they've called the master of the house Beelzebul, the devil, how much more will they malign those of his household? So have no fear of them. For nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light.

[2 : 13] And what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father. Even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear not, therefore. You are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven.

But whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Do not think I have come to bring peace to the earth.

I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set or to separate a man from his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

[3 : 25] And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

Whoever loves son and daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Whoever receives you receives me.

And whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.

And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple. Truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

[4 : 34] Amen. And may God bless to us this, his word. Do be seated.

And if you turn with me in your Bibles to the passage we read together there in Matthew chapter 10, or perhaps have it open before you in the service sheets, that will be a great help. It's a passage all about what it means to make life investment with Jesus.

Christian life and witness and indeed church life and witness often seems very hard, doesn't it? And that's not because we perceive things wrongly.

It's because it is very hard. And if it seems that being a disciple of Jesus means that life is much tougher often than being a rejecter of Jesus, well that is because, very often, that is exactly the way it really is for now, in this world.

Now if you're new to church you may think that's not a very great sales pitch for following Jesus. But actually it is Jesus' own sales pitch. We've seen that, haven't we, in the last two weeks in Matthew chapter 10.

[5 : 53] That Jesus' briefing for mission, the king's own teaching himself of his own ambassadors, about what their mission is going to be like and what to expect through it all, it is full of realism.

He's teaching his apostles, first of all, of course. His teaching is directly to them. But of course it is recorded here for us also. And his teaching is all about expecting hardship and hostility and even persecution.

You saw that as we read it. And that is a pattern to expect always, says the Lord Jesus Christ.

Always. Whether at school or at college or in your workplace or even sometimes in your family.

Verse 16. You will be like sheep among wolves. Couldn't be starker than that. And so Jesus says you must have wisdom as well as transparency and honesty in your words.

You need savvy or you will never survive even a month, let alone a lifetime, as a follower of Jesus.

You are to be wise as serpents, he says, as well as innocent as doves.

[7 : 09] Wise to the fact that there will always be opposition to real gospel mission. And we saw, remember last week, that it comes from several places. First of all, says Jesus in verse 17, it comes from the religious establishment.

Because dead churches hate real spiritual life. And even ossifying once alive Christians hate and are scornful of real missionary zeal.

And verse 18, it comes from society. Sometimes, Jesus says, even here in state, sponsored persecution. And then verse 21, perhaps worst of all, do you see, it comes sometimes even from family.

And that is very hard. And therefore, there is often very good reason for Christian people to feel afraid. Fear of slander that makes us want to be silent.

Fear of violence even, in many places, that drives you to want to compromise. Even fear of what I call divine distance, a sense that perhaps God has abandoned us.

[8 : 24] And that's why Jesus says three times, do not fear. Verse 26, do not fear. God is true. Proclaim him. Don't be silent. Don't be silent. Verse 28, God is great.

He says, fear him. Don't fear men. And verse 31, he assures us, God is near. And you're precious. He loves you.

And he cares for you. Do not fear, but don't expect an easy life. Because this is discipleship.

Because the gospel of Jesus Christ always divides.

There are those who hear his words and see his works and proclaim, this is marvelous. Chapter 9, verse 33. They marveled. Never was anything like this seen in Israel. But the very next verse, some said he cast out demons by the prince of demons.

You see, Jesus' gospel is about division. Confidentification. Sharp divides. Sharp choices. Always. Always. So not only is there always confrontation with those enemies within, the fears that we have, but always also, Jesus says, there will be confrontation without, with many conflicts.

[9 : 48] And always there will be a cost to be counted following Jesus. And we must have an eye to the realities of the investments that Jesus is calling us to be committed to.

And with Jesus, it is all up front. There's no selling by commission. There's no hiding away the hidden charges in the small print. No mis-selling. You may have read that there's new rules to come in for financial advisors in the new year, banning all items of commission.

Because, you see, the financial advisor sells you a pension. And it's only when you retire that you realize that most of your pension fund has been eaten up by charges that have gone into the pension of the financial advisor.

And so that's going to be changed and a good thing, too. All the charges must be there up front so people can assess the cost. But, you see, it's always been that way with Jesus Christ. You trust yourself to him with your eyes open right at the very beginning to the true costs that are involved. Jesus says, verse 34, do you see? It's not peace with him, but a sword. Not peace now. Cheap peace, pretend peace, cozy peace.

[11:04] I suppose that was the expectation of the Israelites of his day. They wanted a Messiah who was the Prince of Peace. But, you see, real peace is so much greater than their expectation.

They wanted the Romans out. They wanted their kingdom back. They wanted peace now in our time. And just like today, you see, many people misunderstand the Bible's message.

They think it's merely one about peace on earth now, a sort of utopia, delivering the brotherhood of man. But, friends, we all know that is utter fantasy.

It totally underestimates the depths of the real problems in our world. Ask anybody who's involved in any kind of peace process around the world. The Middle East today, for example.

Just ask them. They will tell you how desperately hard it is. It's nearly impossible to bring peace even to one small region of the world. How much less to this whole globe?

[12:03] There will be peace only if the root problem of this world is sorted out. And that problem is not primarily man's enmity to his fellow man, but man's enmity with God.

And that is the peace. And that is the only lasting peace that Jesus Christ came to bring. And it is nothing less than a massive undertaking.

And the reality is that it only comes through destruction, through conquering all the intractable enemies of God and of his people, all the enemies of peace.

Jesus came, he said in his own words, to destroy the works of the evil one who wants to destroy peace. And the reality is we all know that real peace can only happen when the enemies of peace are totally overcome.

Either their minds are subdued and overcome to the folly of war and violence, or if not, when their bodies are overcome by force. That is the reality about peace.

[13:08] That is why we have soldiers all over the world fighting today. And if pretend priest processes don't bring peace to even small areas of the world, how can that possibly happen to a whole planet?

But Jesus, he said, came to bring peace by the blood of his cross, true cosmic peace through defeating all the enemies of God.

And he has done that, says the Apostle Paul. He disarmed the rulers and the authorities, and he put them to open shame by triumphing over them in his cross.

He has defeated enemy command, if you like. But the only way for those who are formerly under the command of the enemies of peace, the only way for them to come into the victor's peace, is to lay down their arms and lay down their hostility to the victorious king.

And that's what rebels against God find so very hard to do, even though he offers peace. So many refuse that peace.

[14:17] They want to go on making war with God and with his Christ. And the Bible tells us that will be so until the very, very end, until the last battle is over, until the patience and the gracious invitation of God to peace at last reaches its end.

And he comes at last to judge the world in justice. The amazing grace of God means that he is slow to come, because he desires to extend his peace in these days of mercy.

And that's what this age of mission is, as he gathers in people from all around the world, who bow the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ. But that means, you see, that this gracious age of mission and invitation will inevitably be an age of warfare.

The gracious king and lord of all the earth is offering his peace. He is sending his emissaries all around the world to offer peace and full amnesty. But as so often, offers of peace are met with sniper fire from those who would rather die than surrender.

And that, friends, is the truth about Christian mission that Jesus is teaching here. And he teaches us, therefore, plainly of the costs of being part of that mission in the now, in the time right up until the day that he comes again.

[15:46] It's a time, he says, verse 34, not of peace, but a sword of division that is caused precisely by his offer of peace to human beings.

And that means that for the king's ambassadors, his emissaries of peace carrying his gospel, sometimes it will be very, very hard indeed. But we need to know, says Jesus. And to teach us, he picks up some examples that he's already alluded to to show just how painfully divisive this gospel message will be inevitably in the experience of his followers. And it may be painful for us to hear these things today, but hear them we must. We must come to terms with it, or else we will never be able to be his true followers. And Jesus says his mission costs everything.

Everything, that is, that is purely invested in the here and now of this world. In order that we may realize an investment that will in fact prove to be the only investment worth holding in the end. [16:58] On the day when all stock is liquidated, when everything is valued against the gold standard of the king of heaven himself. I once read a famous investor, I think it was Warren Buffett, saying that the biggest hindrance to successful investment was separating yourself emotionally from bad investments, especially ones you've held for a long time, in order to shift into good ones.

Or even from good ones into better and the best ones. investments. And it's precisely that kind of investment language that Jesus uses as he talks about something far, far more important than mere life investment.

As he talks about matters of life and eternity. So first of all, he says that investing wholeheartedly in the mission of the kingdom of heaven means a painful separation from loved ones.

Look at verses 35 to 37. I've come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

He's saying that the ties of natural affection may be sorely tested even to the point of dreadful sadness and grief in the present age. But Jesus must come first.

[18:20] That's the painful reality of these verses. The piercing sword of division will pierce families and divide them.

Because the gospel divides even the deep bonds of blood. That's a simple fact, isn't it? Not in every family, but in many families.

I have come, said Jesus, literally to separate father from son, mother from daughter, in-law from in-law. not of course, not of course that Jesus purposes to poison family relationships.

Of course not. He's simply saying that some accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and others rebel and reject that authority.

And that's simply what we all know to be true and it's very, very painful indeed. It's painful for some of us here this morning. It's a terrible thing, isn't it? verse 36, to say that a man's enemies will be those of his own household.

[19:25] Terrible. But many can testify very sadly that that is true. A child who's converted to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ finds her parents furious and threatening to send them away from their school and their time, even to boarding school to get away from the influence of Christians and the Christian union.

That's true of people here this morning. Or the anger of a child whose faith compels them to give up a lucrative career and to go into Christian ministry or mission.

Or a spouse who perhaps is forced in the end to choose between Jesus Christ and discipleship with him and their marriage. And their partner turns against their faith.

Or a child who grows up and rebels against the faith and the discipleship of their parents, their brothers and sisters. And again, that is the pain experienced by some sitting here this morning. And friends, for most of us there's nothing, nothing in our lives that's going to be more painful or hard to bear than this. And that's why we have to hear Jesus' words in verse 37.

[20:45] Do you see? whoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

That may be the hardest thing some of us ever have to hear in this life, don't you think? I tremble as I repeat these words of Jesus. But it's very clear, isn't it?

It's Jesus or it's our family in the ultimate sense. It can't be both. It can't be both because we can only worship one God, not two.

We can only be owned, we can only be in service to, we can only get our identity from one God, not another. And if we love and cherish even the deepest earthly bonds more than our spiritual bond with our Lord Jesus Christ, it's not sharing affection, it's idolatry.

Just as having a mistress isn't sharing affection with her and your wife, it's hating her, isn't it? Now, a few of us, perhaps, are forced to make that choice in the dramatic, ultimate sense, but in many, many subtle ways all the time, it's so easy for us to be seduced in those ways.

[22 : 12] The human heart, said John Calvin, is a perpetual factory of idols. And it's so easy to make, for example, a marriage relationship an idol. Jesus told a parable about that, and the man who said, oh, I've married a wife and I can't come, kept him out of the kingdom.

Of course, either Jesus or anybody else is advocating abuse or neglect of your spouse for the sake of Christ and his kingdom, not at all. That's to misunderstand, not what he's saying. But today there is a great danger, isn't there, of self-indulgence, people idolizing that relationship, talking it all up so much.

And in many ways, that can lead people away from their love to the Lord Jesus Christ. It can be the same, can't it, with idolatry of our families and our children, certainly in our culture today.

Of course, the Bible teaches us we have a duty to raise and to care for and to nurture our children. But it is so easy, isn't it, for children to become real objects of worship, for our children to become our salvation and our Lord, as it were.

We achieve our desires and our dreams through their education, through their achievement, their career, whatever it is, and it's very easy, subtly, for that to come in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[23 : 36] Sometimes it can be the other way around. It may well be like this for some of you students in an idolatry of family expectation. The parents expect so much of you and you want to serve them and naturally you want to please them.

But when it comes in tension with the call of the Lord Jesus Christ upon your life, it can be hard. But Jesus says, if my ambassadors are to be seen in this world, if my gospel is to advance, then the world must see that kind of commitment to me, that loves the Lord Jesus Christ more than all these things, and even all these people, even the dearest ones of all.

Remember Abraham. God had promised him that through Isaac, his only son, not through Ishmael, through Isaac, the promise of blessing, would be perpetuated.

And yet, Isaac was the very one that God called to lay upon the altar for the sake of love and loyalty to him. And that's what Jesus is asking here.

In fact, it's only when we can love and trust him so as to do that, because we love Jesus more than all things, that we are really released actually to love our nearest and dearest truly.

[25 : 05] Because only then is it true, costly, Christ-like love coming out of our hearts. And everything else you see that doesn't flow from love to Christ is not real love.

It's self-love. Or in other words, it's lust, which is what the Bible uses as a word for loving the things, the appetites of this world more than his.

My kingdom mission, says Jesus, will test the closest ties of our earthly affections, even in painful separation sometimes from loved ones.

And second, he says, in verse 38 and 39, it will mean costly separation from the world. Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it. The natural ambitions of the present age, even the very best of them, must be crucified, says Jesus.

[26 : 09] Because you cannot be invested fully in this life and in the world to come. Look at verse 38. If you don't take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy.

That means you are not a real follower at all. In verse 39, he just clarifies what that means. It means the opposite of finding life in this world, grasping at self-fulfillment in this world.

Jesus says, no, it's the one who rejects that path totally for Jesus' sake who will find life, who will find true fulfillment and true satisfaction.

He's not just talking here about rejecting the bad things of the world. He's not talking about, oh, keep away from sex, drugs and rock and roll. That's not what he's meaning. He's meaning the very best things in this world.

Good things. The pursuit of learning or culture or industry or arts or sciences or humanities, whatever else, the world is full of wonderful and good things.

[27 : 14] Now, don't misunderstand him. He's not speaking about a call to asceticism. He's not saying we are to reject these good things for their own sake. Absolutely not. Verse 39. He says very clearly, for my sake.

He's simply saying that some of our natural ambitions and our desires must go the same way for some of the natural ties of family, that Jesus must come first there also.

You see, the cross of Jesus for so many people today is just a romantic thing. It's just a harmless thing. It's a pendant you wear around your neck. But no, Jesus, when he talks about the cross, is being radical and stark.

Taking up the cross really means that. It means that many good and acceptable things must be left to wither and die if we are truly to put Jesus Christ first in our lives.

See, the reality today is that there is so much so-called Christianity with no cross. Or we follow Jesus until his cross gets in the way and spoils things.

[28 : 29] You're following Jesus and then you get the offer of a promoted job. It may be a good thing. It may be an excellent thing. It may totally scupper all of your involvement in serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the evangelism that you're doing or whatever it might be.

Or you might have the opportunity to move to a new and better house and there's nothing wrong with that. But maybe it takes you away from the church that you are vitally serving.

It puts you in a place where there's no similar prospect of doing anything like that. Or you may be the happy Christian until a family crisis occurs.

Something that I mentioned. A child rebels or you're faced with an illness or whatever it is. And it's a challenge when the cross is in your path. And Jesus says, in that situation do you pick it up?

It's often true, isn't it, that we do pray like Jesus. We pray fervently, Lord, let this cup pass from me. Please bring healing to me or to my loved one.

[29 : 41] Please, please take away this cause of grief. Or please don't take away our beloved church building. We can pray that prayer, can't we?

But can we so easily pray the next line? Yet not by will, but thine. I don't find these things any easier than you do.

But Jesus gives this word to us. It is the real challenge of his mission. And it's there for you young folk and you teenagers at the beginning of your lives of adult service to Christ.

It's just as true for your parents and your grandparents, old and young. And it's a particular challenge, isn't it, to us as a fellowship at this time? It's a great challenge.

But Jesus says, this is the power of my mission. I want to know Christ, said his apostle Paul, and the power of his resurrection.

[30 : 44] And we say, yes, so do we. But Paul says, that means sharing now in his sufferings and becoming like him in his death, that by any means I might attain to the resurrection from the dead.

You see, that kind of costly separation from the world, that detachment from the ties of this age, that is the way to resurrection power at work in this present age through Christ's people.

As it is also the way to resurrection glory with Christ at the last. Verse 39, whoever loses his life for my sake now will find it on that day.

That brings us to Jesus' final point here, which we mustn't miss, not ever. The life of the mission of the kingdom is not just about painful and costly separation.

It is also about, and it is totally overshadowed by, a privileged union with the Lord Jesus himself. Look at verses 40 to 42.

[31 : 56] Jesus is saying that investing your life totally and completely with him brings not only extraordinary privilege now, but also wonderful rewards forever. Jesus is realistic about the cost, in terms of costly separation from loved ones and even from our ambitions now.

He is just as open and just as encouraging about the enormous privilege that we have of being his disciples. All of this is not for nothing. He's not calling us to asceticism.

He's calling us to do things for his sake, for the sake of a wonderful relationship with him. And that is what changes everything.

That transforms absolutely everything. We have the joy not only of sharing in Jesus' mission now, not only of being so closely united with him in it, that he says our words are taken as his words, our actions are taken as his words.

He is with us in the midst of all of that in an incredibly special and particular way. I remember years ago when I was reading the autobiography of Chris Patton when he had just finished being the governor, the last governor of Hong Kong.

[33 : 15] And there was a paragraph in it when John Major was briefing him about all the discussions he would have with the Chinese. And John Major, who was prime minister then, said to

the leaders of the Chinese government, when you speak to him, Chris Patton, you will speak to me. And when he speaks to you, I am speaking to you. And just so, Jesus says here in verse 40, it is for us. Whoever receives you, he says, receives Jesus and his Father.

And so verse 41, anyone receiving one who speaks in Jesus' name, a prophet, is rewarded as one speaking for him. Anyone receiving a righteous person, a believer in Jesus who loves the Lord's words, is rewarded as if he is receiving Jesus himself.

Verse 42, anyone dealing with even the least of Jesus' disciples, these little ones, who feel they're so unimportant as we so often do. No, says Jesus, because we are disciples, even doing the tiniest thing by giving a cup of cold water, which was the least courtesy in the Middle East, deserving no recognition at all.

Even this tiniest thing God honors, because it's being done directly as if to him. It's like receiving him.

[34 : 42] Isn't that a wonderful encouragement to us? That everything that we do, however feebly for our Lord Jesus Christ, is received as though it was Jesus himself doing it.

All our talk for him, all our proclaiming his message of grace, any little kindness in his name, and all that we seek to do for his people, to help them in their ministry and in their mission for him and his personal glory.

He will not miss it, not one thing. It will be, says Jesus, rewarded. Not in the sense of giving wages as though we've earned it, but reward.

Because his grace out rewards us and out gives us every single time. That's what brings us to the final thing.

Not only do we have the privilege of giving to him now and representing him now, but we have wonderful promise of reward from him forever, says Jesus. Three times in these verses, he emphasizes he will receive a reward.

[35 : 54] Twice there in verse 41. And then again, verse 42, the last verse. He will by no means lose his reward. Remember, says Jesus, this is not just investing for the long term, this is investing for eternity.

That's the whole focus of this chapter. Remember verse 15, when Jesus said, a day of judgment is coming. That's the day that matters. Verses 32 and 33, he says, on that day, the only thing that matters is that the Lord Jesus Christ will acknowledge you before his Father.

That will be an open and public verdict, but it will simply confirm what has already been made clear before human beings now. In other words, our identification with Jesus now will be unveiled on that great day as being one and the same as our reward from him then.

Sometimes as Christians we have great trouble with this talk of reward. We say, well, how can there be rewards in heaven if we're saved by grace? How can there be greater and lesser things if we're all saved from our sins by grace?

Surely just being there is the reward. Well, yes, but also no. Because the New Testament does teach a great deal, doesn't it, about rewards.

[37 : 22] Our problem is we tend to think about rewards in an arbitrary sense. We say to our kids, we'd even say to our grown-up kids, behave well and you'll get a special present at the end of term, whatever it is.

Do well in your exams and you'll get a special gift at Christmas. That's not rewards, that's wages or bribery even. It does work sometimes.

Or we might say, practice your piano or your musical instrument. And you'll get that new bike that you've been desperate to have for Christmas. But that's not the way Jesus is speaking about rewards.

In the Bible, as C.S. Lewis so helpfully puts it, the reward is the thing itself in its fulfillment. It's not like saying, play the piano and practice every day and you'll get a new bike for Christmas.

It's saying, play the piano and practice every day and one day you will be able to play marvelous pieces of music and thrill and delight so many people. Live so much in separation from this world now.

[38 : 36] Live so much identifying your life with the Lord Jesus Christ now. And on that great day of his appearing, you will realize, you will realize that being thus united with him forever is the great reward of rewards that nothing on this earth could ever begin to match.

It's like saying, love and cherish your fiancée now. And then your wedding and your married life all afterwards will be full of rewards. Go on loving your spouse with costly separation, forsaking all others till death do you part.

And your marriage will be wonderfully rewarding, enriched, joyful, glorious, forever. That's the reward. It's the thing itself and its fulfillment.

And so it is with Jesus Christ. And that's the wonderful encouragement at the end of this chapter. Straight, honest, hard talking from Jesus about mission that claims everything and, yes, costs everything.

In the end, in the end, what's seen to the world and often even to our worldly minds, what's seen to be nothing but cost will be revealed to be the very pearl of great price, the only thing that's ever worth having.

[40 : 01] That is life with Jesus, united in his true kingdom mission. It's a totally contrarian approach to investing in this life.

But in the end, it will be proved abundantly true. I recall one speaking to a fund manager in the city of London.

He was a Christian man. And he explained to me that his whole approach to investing was what he called contrarian investing. He went against what everybody else in the investment crowd thought. So he wouldn't buy the in-stocks, the dot-com things and all of these things that were the flavor of the month. But in the end, when it came to the day of the awards, well, he showed me the host of awards and trophies that he had for being the best investment manager in the city.

Was that luck? No. It was because he understood true value investment. It wasn't that he was buying up and holding something of very little value, which somehow miraculously gained and became very popular.

[41 : 13] No. It was because right at the very start, he could see the value that no one else could see. Something of enormous value, even now, but it was hidden, it was despised, it was forgotten.

But he knew and was certain that one day, everything would be revealed and all would see the true value of what he was holding.

But of course, on that day, it would be too late for others to join, although of course they would try. And friends, so it is with Jesus in his offer of the gospel.

It's very simple. There's no soft sell. There's no sale pitch. Far from it. Read these verses. But it offers value, which is infinite and lasting.

It's hidden to the world. It is scorned. It is rejected and despised. It will cost you everything you have for you to invest in it.

[42 : 17] But for those who do, there is joy. Now, in the privilege of knowing him and loving him and serving him.

And there is certainty. You will by no means ever lose your eternal reward. Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it, says he, who is the king of earth and heaven.

Amen. Let us pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father, give us, we pray, eyes to see the great and lasting eternal value which comes only through the gospel of your Son.

May every one of us here this morning bow the knee and know him as Savior and Lord, that we might look to that great day of his coming not with fear, but with eager expectation and joy.

We ask this for his name's sake. Amen.