

Delight in a Departing King

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[0 : 00] But Josh is preaching this evening and we are back in Luke's Gospel. Perhaps you'd turn with me now. We're going to read there together. If you don't have a Bible, there's some of the church red Bibles scattered about either side of the church, at the front, at the back.

Somebody will grab one for you gladly if you stick your hand up or just go and grab one yourself and you'll be able to follow as we read. We're going to read in Luke's Gospel, chapter 9, and we're picking up from verse 27, leading into the section that goes to verse 50.

I'll pick it up at verse 27 of Luke, chapter 9. Jesus said, I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

Now, about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered and his clothing became dazzling white.

And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, his exodus, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

[1 : 15] Now, Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep. But when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, Master, it's good that we are here.

Let's make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah, not knowing what he said. As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them.

And they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud saying, this is my son, my chosen one. Listen to him.

And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

On the next day, when they come down from the mountain, behold, a great crowd met him. And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he's my only child.

[2 : 23] And behold, a spirit seizes him. And he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth and shatters him and will hardly leave him.

And I beg your disciples to cast it out, but they could not. Jesus answered, O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you?

Bring your son here. While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

And all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, Let these words sink into your ears.

The son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men. But they didn't understand this saying and it was concealed from them. So they might not perceive it.

[3 : 34] They were afraid to ask him about this saying. An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side.

And he said to them, Whoever receives this child in my name receives me. And whoever receives me receives him who sent me.

For he who is least among you is the one who is great. John answered, Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name.

And we tried to stop him because he doesn't follow with us. But Jesus said to him, Do not stop him. For the one who is not against you is for you.

Amen. And may God bless to us his word. Well, do open your Bibles once again to Luke chapter 9.

[4 : 45] Delicious vomit. That's how one writer describes the seeming absurdity around the implications of Jesus' words back in 922.

A suffering Messiah or delicious vomit. Both a contradiction in terms. But we knew that the Bible tells us that God has made foolish the wisdom of this world.

the workings of the world to come, the workings of Jesus' kingdom do not conform to how our world understands things. We saw last week that Luke 9 is making plain that Jesus' ministry and the disciples' ministry is bringing the reality of the world to come to bear on this world.

Jesus coming into the world was the breaking in of the world to come. The glorious dawning of God's promised salvation. It was the promise of glorious, full, final, and abundant salvation and victory.

And all of those descriptors seem a million miles away from a suffering and dying servant. And yet, that is precisely what Jesus reveals to be true.

[6 : 06] In the person of Jesus, the strands of Old Testament prophecy all come together so that the great and victorious rescuer, the long-promised king who brings relief and full salvation, does so as a suffering servant.

And what's more, Jesus' impending suffering was not an obstacle to what he was to achieve. It wasn't just an unfortunate tag-on to his victory. No.

The suffering and death of Jesus was the very means of his glorious kingdom being established to one day be spread throughout this whole world.

And that just seems so unlikely, so backwards, so jarring. It certainly did to many in the first century, including Jesus' own disciples. But it was new misstep, new mistake, and new mix-up.

The path to Jesus' glorious kingdom is the path of a cross for Jesus first and then for his followers. We saw that last week in the first half of this chapter.

[7 : 13] We saw that the apostles' ministry was confronting people far and wide with the reality and summons of the world to come. We saw the world to come previewed, pictured in the feeding miracle.

Jesus and his kingdom are all satisfying. The kingdom that defeats death and takes away all sadness and suffering. But, said Jesus, when you realize that Jesus is indeed the Christ, then you need to realize what kind of Christ he is.

And he said so very clearly, verse 22, that he was to be rejected and killed. And that that is the path for his followers too.

And whilst this message seems to jar for the disciples and the crowds, whilst it seems to jar in this world, Luke now gives us a different perspective entirely as he shows us firstly this evening, divine confirmation upon the Son of Man in verses 28 to 36.

Divine confirmation upon the Son of Man. Heaven itself testifies that the eternal plan of God for his glorious kingdom is achieved through Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection and ascension.

[8 : 26] Where Jesus' revelation of what he must do causes confusion or even consternation from this world, it's met with a reassuring confirmation from the world to come.

In simple terms, the transfiguration is a flashing light from heaven to give added clarity that what Jesus said about his impending death is true. But it is an event laden with significance, confirming very clearly who Jesus is and also what he must do.

And so we see firstly a revelation of Jesus' divine glory. Verse 28, it's Peter, James, and John who go up the mountain here with Jesus. We've seen this subset of the disciples before back in 851.

There they witness Jesus raising a little girl from the dead. They've already glimpsed that Jesus offers hope beyond the grave, but now they're going to glimpse something else.

Remember, Jesus said in verse 27, some of you will not taste death until you see the kingdom of God.

[9 : 36] And here three disciples get a glimpse of the kingdom of God. But we need to be clear at this point that the kingdom of God was present wherever Jesus was.

His arrival from the very beginning onto the world stage was the inauguration of his kingdom, the beginning of the world to come, the beginning of the kingdom of God breaking into this world.

But what Jesus was speaking about here to his disciples in verse 27 is clearly him talking about the consummation of that kingdom. The day when, verse 26, he'll return in his and his father's glory.

Jesus was saying that some of his disciples would see something of the glorious consummated kingdom. And that is indeed what they saw on the mountain.

They were given another and an even more obvious confrontation with the world to come. Notice how Luke makes this clear. Verse 29, we see that the appearance of Jesus' face was altered. [10:38] Notice who else is on the mountain here with Jesus? Moses is. Back in Exodus chapter 34, Moses was up a mountain and his face was altered.

The skin on his face shone. That could be what Luke is telling us about here. But I wonder if it's more than that. because in Exodus 33, Moses asks to see God's glory. And God places Moses in the cleft of the rock as God passes by. And he then only lets Moses see his back. He couldn't see God's face. It would have been unbearable for Moses to see God's glory in his face.

And I wonder if Luke is wanting to show us that the disciples actually glimpsed something even more than Moses was allowed to. Do you see verse 32? They get to see the glory of Jesus. And Luke's details here certainly want to make clear that Jesus is divine. He's God. He has a divine glory. One writer says that we see Jesus' identity gleaming through all the way along in his mighty works and words.

[11:49] But here, here it comes bursting through. Luke wants us to be clear that the transfiguration confirms that Jesus is truly the divine son of God.

Notice the other details in this event, the clouds that overshadow the mountain, verse 35. Again, back in Exodus, Moses in chapter 24 goes up the mountain and the cloud covered it as the glory of God dwelt on the mountain.

Another hint that what we have here on this mountain is the presence of God himself. And I think Luke also has in mind Daniel chapter 7. It certainly seems like that.

The title he uses for Jesus in verse 22 and verse 26, the Son of Man is taken directly from Daniel 7. And in Daniel 7, the Son of Man descends on clouds and he's given dominion over all the kingdoms.

And isn't that what the disciples are getting a taste of? The victory of God's kingdom over all every other kingdom. But also, it isn't just that Jesus' face that is altered, verse 29, his clothing is dazzling white.

[13:02] Jesus' clothing is so very rarely mentioned that it's worth taking note. And again, in Daniel chapter 7, it speaks of white clothing. Clothing that belongs to the ancient of days.

Clothing that belongs to God himself. Peter, James, and John were receiving confirmation from heaven in their sight of the truth that Jesus was divine and will rule the whole cosmos alongside the Father.

Well, why is that important? It's important because it makes clear that Jesus is who he says he is. That his kingdom will overthrow all darkness, will conquer every last vestige of Satan's hold on this world.

It's important because it is proof that Jesus was indeed talking about and inaugurating the arrival of another world. There really is another world and it was breaking into this one, demanding to rule it. Now, I notice in verse 33, Peter's strange timing. Do you see that as Moses and Elijah were parting? Peter says, let's put up some tents, some tabernacles.

[14:23] Let's camp out here in this blissful experience. He wants to prolong the experience, understandable perhaps, but that is not Jesus' plan. It's worth us just reflecting here that we can sometimes get caught up in things like Peter.

This was to serve as a confirmation, a reassurance for the disciples. It wasn't an experience to last forever. It couldn't. It couldn't be. And I think the truth is that sometimes we can long for a previous Christian experience that brought us a heightened sense of joy in the Christian life, perhaps as a new or young Christian, perhaps a certain bond with a minister or a love for a certain conference that really proved to establish and encourage us that seemed like a high point.

Listen to Rolf Davis on this. He says, nothing wrong with that desire, but does it occur to us that perhaps God provided that excitement in order to carry us through the hurdles and temptations our nascent faith faced, that perhaps that was meant to be a temporary provision?

Could it be that sometimes we take what God intends as momentary, along-the-way encouragement, and try to make it a permanent arrangement, preferring a certain experience, perhaps, to Jesus himself?

Worth pondering. But here, Peter wasn't grasping why this experience couldn't be prolonged, because the transfiguration wasn't just about confirming Jesus' divinity, it was also to confirm his

departure.

[16:03] Notice the timing of Peter's tent proposal. It was as the men were parting. They were parting for a reason. Luke's account of the transfiguration is the only one that tells us what Jesus, Moses, and Elijah were actually talking about.

Do you see that, verse 31? They're speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish. It could also be translated as exodus that he was about to fulfill.

The shadows of exodus in this passage are not only pointers to Jesus' identity, but also his mission. Often, when Jesus speaks of his impending death with the disciples and the crowds, it's met with confusion or disbelief or even defiance.

But here, here we have two key figures, Moses and Elijah, figures who now belong to the world to come, talking with Jesus.

And there's no protestation from them because they recognize, as they always did, that the whole of the law and prophets are fulfilled in Jesus. They recognize that their ministries were only valid because they were both anticipating Jesus' incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension, but also participating in them in advance.

[17:23] Jesus' impending death from earth's perspective seemed to be a contradiction in terms, but from an eternal perspective, it has always been the plan, long before Elijah or even the exodus.

And as Jesus was gearing up for what was ahead, I wonder if talking with Moses and Elijah like this proved a brief moment of reassurance to him amidst the doubt and defiance of the crowds.

Speculative, I guess. But notice at what point there was a remarkable display of Jesus' glory. Notice at what point the clouds appear.

It's as his departure, his exodus, his death and subsequent resurrection and ascension are spoken of, that his glory shines out for the disciples to see. Jesus' impending suffering and death is the apex of his glory, the source of it.

His glory shines here as a fortiest because he is going to suffer. And there's further confirmation, verse 35, the clouds appear and the voice of God from heaven speaks, speaking just like at Jesus' baptism.

[18:36] At Jesus' baptism, he was signaling that he would take on our sin and that pleased his father. And now, he was signaling that he would die for our sin.

And once again, that pleased the father. Verse 35, the voice from heaven that echoes words from Psalm 2 about my son, the promised Savior King.

and my chosen one from Isaiah, the suffering servant. But also echoes words from Deuteronomy about the prophet who would be like God and is to be listened to.

The voice is saying to the disciples, listen to what he says, listen to him about his exodus, his death that is to come. Listen to Christ about who the Christ really is.

Now, the original exodus was a real experience of salvation for God's people and a shadow of the greater exodus of Jesus. And the exodus was not just a rescue from slavery, but also the journey to the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey, a land of abundance, a bit like what we saw with Jesus' kingdom last week in the feeding of the 5,000.

[19:56] moment. This was always the plan that Jesus would enact a greater exodus, a greater rescue by means of his death. And that is his glory.

The disciples witnessed this and later we find they never forgot it. They learned what it was confirming. Peter in his second letter talks about being an eyewitness of Jesus' majesty.

glory. These disciples saw and indeed heard Jesus' majestic glory and so they could bear witness to the certainty of both his power and his coming.

Here was heaven's confirmation of Jesus' divine glory and his departure, his exodus. Peter witnessed it and so was able to proclaim with complete certainty to the Christian church that Jesus is coming back.

coming back to make this whole earth his glorious kingdom. Peter could say this because he had already tasted of it.

[21:06] but back to here in Luke and the reality is that Peter and the others needed to listen to Jesus and learn that the path to that kingdom is a path of suffering and death for the Messiah and for his messengers for the Christ and for the church.

and so Christ descends the mountain to walk that path and to teach his disciples about it. And as Jesus goes down the mountain we see secondly the dire corruption of man verses 37 to 43 the dire

corruption of man.

The terrible predicament of mankind reinforces the desperate need for Christ to go to the cross. Without Jesus mankind is so very far from the peak of the mountain so very far from enlightenment and progress and glory quite the opposite.

We're at the foot of the mountain covered in chaos and darkness unless unless the light of the Savior descends to rescue us. The scene here moves from the majesty of the mountain to the misery of mankind and yet it is striking that Jesus displays his glory and majesty in Booth.

Do you see how this ends? This miracle verse 43 all marveled at his majesty. His majesty wasn't just for the chosen three and the world to come.

[22 : 40] It isn't reserved for the intimate relations between the father and the son. No, Jesus majesty shines forth in his redeeming work from mankind. And so look at the sharp contrast that there is between the dazzling whiteness, the glory of the mountain, and then verse 39.

A father bringing his boy who's gripped by a demon, an evil spirit, crying out and convulsing. Here's a picture of the terrible darkness and rain of Satan.

Satan shatters lives. The effects of sin and Satan are so dehumanizing. That's what we see here. Now Luke's version of this miracle leaves out much of the dialogue that Matthew and Mark contain. But Luke does have some details here which are unique to his account. Luke is the only gospel writer to draw attention to the fact that this is the father's only son.

And also that Jesus gave him back to his father. father. Now I think Luke wants his readers to understand something of the turmoil and terror that this father experienced.

[23 : 52] I think we need to feel something of that distress to really get Luke's message here. No parent ever wants to contemplate something calamitous happening to one of their children.

A life-altering, debilitating affliction which seems to diminish their very humanity or some sort of terrible illness or disease or defect that shows itself perhaps very early on in their little life, perhaps putting their life in imminent danger.

Few things are quite so gut wrenching and horrid. Few things leave us with so few words to say to people that we love as seeing them face the torment of their precious little child ravaged.

And when it's their only child, when it means possibly ripping away their only claims of parenthood with it, it is awful. And surely Luke places this incident right here, right after the high point of the mountain, right after the clear confirmation that he must go to the cross.

Surely Luke has this incident right here to reveal to us something of God the Father's immense concern for and love for his people. His people who are called his son, his firstborn, but also then his heartbreak and pain because of the predicament his people have gotten themselves into.

[25 : 22] This little boy is a picture of the Father's concern for his people. That certainly seems to be Jesus' verdict. Verse 41 as he quotes Deuteronomy 32.

O faithless and twisted generation. These are words that came from Moses' lips as a rebuke for abandoning God and going after idols.

And that's indeed what the Son of Man has found on earth. He's faced rejection, he's seen the wondrous law of promise twisted and bent out of shape by a corrupt religious establishment.

Indeed, the land of Israel, the promised land that God had given to his people as the climax of his exodus rescue, it was now so marked by unbelief, by darkness, that demons run amok.

And so this miracle is a living demonstration in small of the significance of what Jesus has come to do. But we don't like to think that this verdict speaks to our world and to our time, do we?

[26 : 30] We like to think that we are now so very enlightened, part of a society that has sought and enacted sweeping progress. But are idols any less prevalent today?

Is money not a great idol in our world that captures and captivates people in pursuit of more of it, often wreaking all kinds of relational havoc, ruining health?

Is sex not an idol today in all of its guises and supposed reinventions and perversions? Doesn't an unhealthy desire for and pursuit of it sue darkness and discontent and despair?

Or power, influence, esteem? Isn't that an idol today? To chase after autonomy, to wield influence, to have place? If we step back and look at our world, what do we see?

Is it shining forth with the glory of a heavenly kingdom? Or is it more like verse 39, where darkness runs amok and people's lives are shattered left and right by unbelief and by guessing what their idols offer, disaster and captivity?

[27 : 44] This same predicament is alive and kicking today. And so today, God the Father's anguish and love is still present. Isn't the greatest need in our world to have someone who can come along and verse 42 rebuke evil and darkness and bring healing and wholeness to a humanity that's crushed by sin?

Someone who can return us to a relationship with the Father of love. Here in this miracle, we see that Jesus can heal our rotten hearts and bring forgiveness and cleansing and release from the clutches of sin and Satan.

Look again at verse 42. the demon tries to dominate this boy, but Jesus says no. He rebukes the demon, he heals the boy, and then gives him back to his father.

That is a simple and wonderful picture of what Jesus' departure, his exodus, accomplishes and offers to any and all of us who recognize our mess, just like this father did for his child.

When we cry out to Jesus for help, when we repent and turn to him in faith, then we too can marvel at the majesty of his redeeming work, verse 43, as everyone did.

[29 : 08] Because Jesus didn't just come down from the glory of the mountain to rescue this one boy, he stepped down from the glory of heaven to seek and save his lost sheep.

But notice, amidst the marveling at Jesus' majesty, notice that he's so quick to impress something upon his disciples. And so we see, thirdly, the distinctive character of Christ's messengers in verses 43 to 50.

The distinctive character of Christ's messengers. Jesus' people must listen to him about what he's saying about the cross and must be shaped by it.

Jesus' people need to know what is the source of his ultimate majesty, what will establish and display it to the whole world, to the cosmos. Look at this, verse 43, they're all marveling at Jesus, and Jesus is pulling his disciples in and he's saying to them, listen to me, listen to me, let this sink into your ears, your hearts, your heads.

Just as the voice from heaven declared, listen to me. Amidst all of this marveling, listen. The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.

[30 : 24] You see what he is saying? All this glory, all this majesty, in the midst of it all, do not lose sight of what is to happen, what must happen. Do not lose sight of how the eternal glory of Jesus' kingdom will be established across this whole earth.

It's through suffering and death, death, first for Jesus, and then for his followers. Jesus doesn't want his followers to misunderstand in the midst of another scenario where he displays a glimpse of his kingdom.

Do not misunderstand. The path to this kingdom is the path of suffering and death. Now, the fact that the disciples didn't understand this, and that it is concealed from them, verse 45, wasn't a cause for harsh rebuke from Jesus.

Indeed, the fact that they were afraid to ask him more about what he said is perhaps because they had maybe some inkling towards the implications of it. But the disciples aren't condemned here, despite how utterly jarring the next few verses are.

You see, Jesus has been talking about his impending suffering and death, and what are his disciples up to? Verse 46, they're playing a game of who is Mr. Big? Who's the greatest?

[31 : 44] Perhaps, chapter 9, verse 1, the power and authority that had been given to them over demons and disease, perhaps that's gone to their heads. Or perhaps it was being told that they should expect people to receive them and honor them.

Perhaps it was, chapter 9, verse 10, all the stories they were able to tell of their ministry exploits. Or perhaps the fact that only Peter, James and John were up the mountain caused a bit of a stir.

But notice, Jesus doesn't smack them down. This tune isn't frustration, he isn't given to despair. No, they need to learn the path of God's kingdom.

It can be so often our temptation, can't it, to be frustrated at people for what they're not, for what they know not. And church life will come up against all manner of behavior that reveals spiritual immaturity or pettiness or all kinds of things like that.

And how easy it is to jump to condemnation, to frustration, to moaning about people. But look at Jesus' response. He doesn't see their behavior as damning.

[32 : 53] He sees it as a discipleship opportunity. His response isn't to tell them off, it's to teach them. It's often said that of all the so-called qualifications for elders, for ministers in the church that we find in 1 Timothy, that they're all about character, except the ability to teach.

But in 2 Timothy, Paul expands on teaching to say, preach the words, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

Being able to teach is being able to bring the right word with the right tune at the right time with complete patience and teaching. And doesn't Jesus model that so wonderfully himself for the disciples?

Indeed, Luke is going to show us throughout most of the rest of his gospel, Jesus patiently teaching and training his followers to walk his path after him. That is the life of faith.

It is a life of learning the way of the cross. Or as William still puts it similarly, it is sheep being fattened for sacrifice on the altar of God.

[34 : 06] Sometimes we can act like we expect new Christians, young Christians, all Christians to be fully formed straight away, right now. Jesus is not so optimistic. And so he doesn't slap the ears of his boastful disciples.

He doesn't say, come on dum-dums, quit bragging. He could have said, let me remind you of your recent ministry feelings. Back at the feeding of the 5,000, you were helpless to do what I asked you. You were gormless when that father asked for your help. No, he doesn't do that. Instead, Jesus realizes that they need to be taught with patience. And so he shows them a little child and says, do you see that actually if I had sent even this little child to be my messenger, he should have expected to be received.

The language about receiving in verse 48 is picking up the language from verses 3 and 5 about the disciples being received as they proclaimed the kingdom of God, as they were heralds of the king. And this little section is tied to the sending out of the 12. It mirrors it. That's look structure. And so Jesus is teaching about the manner his messengers needs to learn.

[35 : 20] So receiving, even this little child, with all of his limitations, is receiving me, says Jesus. Because in Jesus' kingdom, the way up is the way down. Jesus turns human wisdom upside down.

So that the one who is least is great. And that in itself stems from the cross, doesn't it? The very thing he's teaching them. The glory of the kingdom, the great messianic victory is not brought about by the fierce roaring of a lion, but by the sacrifice of a lamb.

And so Jesus' message to his disciples here, his message to the Christian church today is that there's no space for competition and superiority in the kingdom of God. God, it's a message we need to hear again and again and again.

There are no nobodies in Jesus' kingdom. There are no disciples who don't matter. But also, the kind of superiority that sits in judgment over people who aren't truly reformed, who don't belong to a pure church, who don't take our own niche little dogmatic boxes, that is a scourge to the Christian church.

The kind of superiority that critiques and criticizes endlessly the lives and service of others is a poison for a church and for one's own soul.

[36 : 42] Because these things forget the bearing that the pattern of the cross has in the life of the church, that ours is the way of weakness, of sacrifice, of giving ourselves up for others.

Now, there is another way that such an attitude can come out, and Luke chooses that in verses 49 and 50. But notice how this little exchange comes about.

Having been patiently taught by Jesus, John seems to be beginning to catch on. John answers Jesus' teaching about the child by bringing another real-life scenario.

Verse 49, Master, we saw someone else casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop them, because he does not follow us.

Notice what ties these two incidents together. Verse 48, whoever receives the child in my name. Verse 49, he was casting out demons in your name.

[37 : 49] And what counts then in estimating people in the Christian church is them being tethered to Jesus. That's what determines the generosity we afford them when it comes to ministry.

As Jesus answers this, there's something of an echo of the Pharisees' behavior present in the disciples. Do you remember that the Pharisees take great exception at Jesus breaking the Sabbath, even when it's to preserve life?

It's so easy to be caught up in our own precise way of doing things that we lose sight of the big picture, so that people experiencing the joy and healing of the year of the Lord's favor is out of bounds because it was on the Sabbath.

Or when the dark claws of evil have been unpicked from someone's life, someone who'd been ensnared so helplessly by the devil. Oh no, that's out of bounds because he's not one of us. Didn't graduate from our seminary. Or perhaps in our circles. It can be to write off a church or a network or Christian brothers who've seen wonderful instances of people being brought to genuine faith.

[39 : 00] They're seeing wonderful fruit and are contending for the gospel at great cost. But they're out of bounds because they're not the best expositor in the world. They applied that verse a little bit too broadly.

Or they haven't totally bought into our approach to training or church government or whatever it is. Jesus says, no, don't stop him. For the one who is not against me is for me.

No, wait. Actually here, verse 50. He says, the one who is not against you is for you. Friends, there's a power of work to do in this world.

This is a world in darkness. And the Christian church have the role of heralding the world, heralding to the world the reality of the world to come.

To confront them with either joy or judgment. And we cannot afford to pick fights with each other. This incident isn't about seeking some sort of wide scale ecumenism where anything goes and anything that's vaguely Christian should be embraced.

[40 : 07] No, no. That's to miss much of what the Bible says. Instead, as Rolf Davis reflects that these verses are to caution against a jealous, narrow provincialism, he says, these two incidents serve as a standing reminder that the fellowship of Jesus has no need of hot shots.

The world doesn't need to know that we're the smartest, that our way of doing things is a purest way, as if that were even possible or even true. Who knew?

The world needs to know that there is a glorious king who set in motion the spread of his glorious kingdom across the face of this whole world. A kingdom that will bring the end of disease and despair, of sadness and suffering.

A kingdom that defeats sin and Satan once and for all. And now is the time to repent. And any church heralding that is not against us.

That's what Jesus is saying. As the Christian church takes on the proclamation of God's kingdom, it must also take on the posture of God's king.

[41 : 18] And so Jesus says to us, let these words sink into your ears. The son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, impress upon us by your spirit something of the majestic glory of Jesus.

Jesus. And as you do so, would you grant us your grace to make it that such an impression would cause us to take joy in walking in his footsteps after him.

Help us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.