

The Central Importance of Rendering our Riches to Jesus

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[0 : 00] So, we're going to turn now to God's Word, so please do open your Bibles if you have one there. If you don't have a Bible, there are some outside. Feel free to get up and grab one now, there's no problem with that.

And we're going to read this morning from Luke chapter 12. Josh is going to be preaching for us later on in the service. And today we're reading from Luke 12, beginning at verse 13, which is on page 871 of the Blue Church Bibles here, if you have one of those.

So, please do turn that up just now, Luke chapter 12. I'm reading from verse 13 through to 53. Now, Jesus is speaking here to his disciples and to the crowds round about, and we pick up in verse 13, where someone in the crowd said to him, that's Jesus, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.

But he said to him, man, who made you a judge or arbitrator over you? And he said to them, take care and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

And he told them a parable, saying, the land of a rich man produced plentifully. And he thought to himself, what shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops? And he said, I'll do this.

[1 : 23] I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones. And there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

Relax, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, fool, this night your soul is required of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God. And he said to his disciples, therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on.

For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens. They neither sow nor reap. They have neither store house nor barn.

And yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life?

[2 : 25] If then you are not able to do a small thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today and tomorrow, is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you? Oh, you of little faith.

And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things. And your father knows that you need them.

Instead, seek his kingdom. And these things will be added to you. Fear not, little flock. For it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old. With a treasure in the heavens that does not fail. Where no thief approaches.

[3 : 28] And no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning.

And be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast. So that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.

Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table. And he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch or in the third and finds them awake, blessed are those servants.

But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Peter said, Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all? And the Lord said, The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him.

[5 : 00] And at an hour he does not know. And will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful. And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will will receive a severe beating.

But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating.

Everyone to whom much was given of whom much will be required.

And from him to whom they have entrusted much, they will demand the more. I came to cast fire on the earth and would that it were already kindled.

I have a baptism to be baptized with and how great is my distress until it is accomplished. Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you.

But rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided father against son and son against father.

[6 : 10] Mother against daughter and daughter against mother. Mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law. And daughter-in-law against mother-in-law. Amen.

And thanks be to God for the reading of his word. Well, do open your Bibles once again to Luke chapter 12.

And at the start of this new year, I have two recommendations for New Year's resolutions for us. Here they are. Let's spend some time each week considering the ravens and considering the lilies. They probably aren't top of anyone's list so far. But there are two things that will enable us, verse 31, to seek God's kingdom. And in turn be prepared for Jesus' return.

Two things that will free us to be, verse 21, rich toward God. And that's really what this passage is all about.

[7 : 20] Rendering our riches to Jesus. Having our treasure in his kingdom. Now, remember, we are on the way with Jesus to and through Jerusalem. To and through the cross to be taken up in glory.

And as Jesus is making this journey, he's teaching all who would follow him what is most important in following him to glory. And we've seen already, back in September, the central importance of a real relationship with Jesus and a right response to Jesus.

And today's passage is all about rendering our riches to Jesus. Money takes up so much of our bandwidth. So many of the column inches of our news.

Whether it's a cost of living crisis or a new government for their maiden budget that messes up all of our financial plans. Or just the everyday realities of salaries and properties and material things and making ends meet.

And so in the question of what are the absolute necessities in life, we cannot escape that our riches have to be reckoned with. Considered.

[8 : 31] Seen in their true light. And Jesus is not anti-money. Not at all. In fact, he's very concerned indeed with money.

And with his people investing money wisely. In an investment that, verse 33, pays out what can be stored in money bags that do not grow old. That neither thief nor moth can harm.

And so the first thing Jesus gives us in this passage, verses 13 to 21, is a proper view of possessions. A proper view of possessions.

Following Jesus means spending our resources on that which will last. It means being rich towards God. Verse 13.

Someone asks Jesus to help him get a share of his inheritance. It's interesting how often an inheritance can cause strife in a family. I wonder how often it's worth it.

[9 : 31] We don't know the circumstances of the request. This man could well be within his rights to seek a division of this inheritance. But not knowing the circumstances actually adds greater potency to what Jesus says.

He isn't interested in this dispute. He isn't here to be a judge and arbitrator on these trivial matters. You see, this man pipes up after Jesus has just been talking back in verses 8 to 12 about eternity. And being acknowledged before the angels of heaven. About being dragged before the authorities on account of Jesus. But here's this man fussing about his money. What he feels he's owed. So Jesus says, verse 15. Take care. Be on guard against all covetousness. The word also means greed. Consuming ambition.

You see, whether this man is on the right side of the dispute, it doesn't really matter. Indeed, sometimes pushing our right to something can actually be a snare of greed.

[10:37] Of covetousness. We can hide a whole raft of poisonous desires underneath seeking justice. Well, of course, I'm really only pursuing this case against my brother because I truly love the truth so much. I'm such a warrior for justice that I just cannot tolerate wrong being done.

No, no. It's got nothing to do with the five million quid. I'd get out of it. We can even begin to fool ourselves with such things and begin to believe the spin that we've concocted. Notice what Jesus says.

Take care. Be on your guard. Be careful and be watchful about covetousness. Because verse 15, one's life doesn't consist of the abundance of his possessions.

The sense of that word abundance is not to have plenty. It's to have more than enough. The abundance Jesus is talking about is excess. Jesus isn't against us having things.

There are things we need. Jesus' point is that whilst having enough possessions for a life is a necessity, yet, yet, one's life, your life, my life, doesn't consist, isn't measured by our excess, by our abundance.

[11:54] Our life is never about things. How much of what we own, what we have and treasure here and now will matter in eternity?

How much of it will matter before the angels of heaven? But Jesus knows, doesn't he? That the desire for riches is a terrible snare. Whilst Jesus is speaking so very plainly about ultimate things, the angels of heaven, here was this man pursuing riches.

We're marketed to death, aren't we? We are sold time and time again that we need something else, something new. It's a very powerful sway to the human heart. And it doesn't take long for us to then have these things dictating our life's decisions.

Newer and better cars, houses, wardrobes, gadgets, whatever it is that we collect and enjoy. It's not long before these things can grab hold of all that we do.

There is an old prayer of the church, taken from Augustine's words, that begins, Almighty God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.

[13:12] It's true. The things we look to to bring fulfillment and joy in this life, they quickly are shown to be lacking if we put too much stock in them. So that we need to have more of it or a better version of it or the purer thing and on and on and on.

Restlessly pursuing more. And restlessness happens because one's life doesn't consist in having an abundance and having excess. That's why Jesus tells this parable.

Verse 16, there was a man who had done very well for himself. He had plenty. And there's no indication that his were ill-gotten gains. But then verse 17, he's faced with a problem.

What will he do with his excess? I've more than I can store. And so verse 18, he decides to demolish his barns to build bigger ones. And verse 19, he says to himself, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

Relax, eat, drink, be merry. But notice the issue here. He is conscious of his soul. He isn't an atheist.

[14:20] He has some spiritual understanding. But what has happened in the midst of storing up all of his vast wealth is that he's saying, soul, you're fine for years and years.

We have plenty to enjoy. And that is the problem with abundance, with excess. It becomes something that must then be used, enjoyed, stored, taken care of, preserved. And it becomes something that can cause us or allow us to hold God and eternity at bay for years and years and years.

It allows us to put off dealing with God and his claims upon us. Tomorrow, that's when I'll deal with eternity. Next week, next year, after I have my affairs all sorted out, that's the time to turn to my soul concerns.

But God says no. Verse 20, that is the way of the fool. This rich man didn't have years. That very night, his soul was demanded of him.

And so this man's folly was manifold. He's mistaken about time, how much of it he has. He hasn't learned to number his days. And we cannot take any day for granted.

[15:31] Who knows what tomorrow will bring? Who knows what tonight will bring? That very night, God required his soul from him. But his folly was also that he was mistaken about his task.

Verse 19, what does he set about doing with his riches? Relax. Enjoy. That's what his plans are. Eat, drink, be merry.

Instead of, verse 21, being rich towards God. Jesus is the best investment analyst around.

And he isn't into diversifying a portfolio and hedging your bets. No, Jesus tells us to funnel our resources into an investment that will truly multiply and last.

Be generous. Be rich towards God. Towards his people. Towards his kingdom. Invest in that which will last and last forever. Isn't that what we want for our riches?

[16:31] A sure thing. A guaranteed investment. Something that will never fade away. Whereas if we invest our lives, our riches in this world, storing it up, storing the best of it, indulging in it here and now, wanting more and more of it, then we're investing in something that one day will be dust.

A day when our souls will be required of us will come. And when that happens, what becomes of our stuff? We don't have control over our length of days.

We don't have control over what will ultimately happen to all that we have stored up. And so this man is proven to be foolish. His treasure was a trap for him. He focuses on the good things he's laid up and not on his soul.

Friends, we need to be on guard. Be careful. These are Jesus' words. Because it's a very powerful and potent lure to us, treasure and riches, to be focused on wealth in this world, our success here and now.

We can preoccupy ourselves with all manner of pursuits towards having better things in this life to secure our life in this world. We can easily make life all about the here and now and so try to push the concerns of our soul to tomorrow, perennially tomorrow.

[17:57] We mustn't think that we're too godly, too wise not to fall prey to that. Jesus says, be careful and be on guard, a double caution. Caution.

And he says, verse 21, focus instead on being rich towards God. That's the soundest investment that we can make because it's investing in that which is eternal, not just a passing and dying world.

Now, I think we push Jesus, what Jesus says, too far if we take it that every single penny we have then is a prisoner to gospel work alone so that any money spent for anything else is misspent.

No. Jesus' warning to this man and his parable are all about excess. The pursuit of it, the desire for it, the coveting of it, the storing up of it. And the truth is that money in and of itself is not evil.

It's the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil. Jesus isn't telling us that we aren't to earn and have possessions. Rather, he's saying to us that we are to be very careful about covetousness, about always desiring more and more and longing for excess and abundance in order to make our lives all about that.

[19:12] The surefire exposure of where our hearts really are at with all of this is what we do with the treasure we do have. Are we generous towards God, rich toward him and his church and his people?

Or is all of our wealth all for ourselves? Maybe a little bit tossed into the offering plate? Or there's a small standing order that we set up years ago and have never thought about again?

Following Jesus on the path to glory looks like being rich toward God, cherishing ultimately his kingdom above anything and everything else in this world. And here's the thing, any pound invested into God and his kingdom is a pound that can bear fruit forever.

The dust can't get it. It's investing in what the grave and the dust cannot claim. Listen to David Gooding whose commentary on Luke is truly excellent.

He says, heaven is scarcely a reality to a man who is not prepared to invest hard cash in it and its interests. But by that same token it becomes more of a reality to the man who is.

[20:29] The pursuit of excess, of abundance in this world can be a terrible distraction that muddies us to, that blinds us to and hinders us from taking hold of what is ultimate.

Jesus says, if our focus is on building storehouses, we will miss out on salvation. When death comes knocking, how awful it will be to be shown to have been a fool.

One who says in his heart that there is no God and so my life is for me. Well, secondly, Jesus also gives us a proper view of our purpose in this life.

Verses 22 to 34, a proper view of our purpose in this life. We are made for so much more than just providing for ourselves. Verse 32, fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

That's what we're for. Jesus continued his teaching, teaching about what it means to be rich toward God by speaking directly to his disciples, those who were not rich landowners.

[21 : 42] And he does so because the same snare can play out even with those of us who do not have lots, those who do not have a big excess. Because the reality is that there are needs that are common to all of us in life and with our bodies.

And so he says to his disciples, do not be anxious about your life, about what you will eat, nor your body, what you'll put on. There's a lot of talk about anxiety in our world.

Society has perhaps never dwelt more on how anxious it is and all the things that come with that. And as with any cultural phenomenon playing out around us, we need to be careful about buying into it all.

Jesus has a solution, a tonic to anxiety about our lives and in our lives. The tonic is faith and trust in God.

Now that is not to say that everyone who's gripped by a deep depression or very serious mental illness has no faith, not at all. Jesus is not saying that. And we ought to be very careful in conflating any mention of anxiety with a serious medical diagnosis.

[22 : 57] To say I'm anxious or I'm suffering from anxiety has become common parlance. But as Christians we need to carefully consider what it is to be anxious and what's actually causing it.

Notice what Jesus says. He says, do not be anxious about your life. Just like back in chapter 12 verse 11, do not be anxious about how to defend yourself when under attack for your faith.

And the tonic for anxiety is knowing who God is and resting in that. Notice, Jesus says the answer is to consider, to think.

Verse 24, consider the ravens. Verse 27, consider the lilies. The tonic to anxiety and worry about our lives is to take hold of what is true and what is woven into the fabric of this world by a loving Father.

this isn't to deny that things can be and will be challenging at points but it is to say that in the midst of all of that there is something that we can dwell on that is stabilizing.

[24 : 08] I don't think that it can be a coincidence that a great rise in people expressing all manner of anxieties has come hand in hand with an increasing rejection of the truth of God.

when the ballast goes, when the anchor is forsaken, stability is compromised. But Jesus is telling us we needn't fret over even our most basic everyday needs in life for food and clothing.

Notice verse 23, our life is more than food and our bodies more than clothing. Our purpose is about so much more than simply surviving. We're made for so much more than simply accruing enough food and possessions to keep us going.

If that is our goal, if that is what consumes our energies and desires and concerns and worries, we're living a hollowed out life, existing to exist. No, verse 24, consider the ravens.

They neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn and yet God feeds them. Ravens can't plant crops, they aren't farmers, they can't set themselves up to have provisions for many years, building storehouses and yet God still feeds them.

[25 : 29] The message of the ravens is not that we should abandon any sorts of future planning, that we should forgo our pensions and not ever think about tomorrow's needs, not at all. Whilst the ravens couldn't provide their own food, they still had to work to get it.

It doesn't just land in their nests for them. But the point is that in spite of them not being able to sow and reap and store food, God still feeds them. One preacher puts it like this, every time we see some rude kill with birds picking at the carcass, we ought to sing, great is thy faithfulness.

God has made it that despite ravens not being able to produce their own food, yet they're still fed by the Lord's hand. Consider the ravens.

They eat. They can exist because God feeds them. Verse 24. Of how much more value are you than birds?

We have a heavenly Father we can trust. We've seen already back in chapter 11 that God will not give his children a scorpion. We've seen already in chapter 12 that Jesus has already spoken about

birds to say that even sparrows sold for pennies have God's knowing care.

[26 : 45] And if they do, how much more his precious children? We can take it that when we use what God has given us, gifts and abilities far above the ravens, as we put them to work and work hard as we were created to do, then God will see that as long as we need sustenance in this world, as long as he would keep us here, we will receive what we need.

It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. But by that same token, when our race is run, no amount of anxiety or worry will be able to lengthen our days in this world.

And so if we cannot change that, if we cannot even add an R to our lives, why be anxious about the rest? About our life or food or clothing?

Verse 27, likewise, consider the lilies. They grew, they don't have to toil or spin to make themselves clothes, and yet they are arrayed in great beauty, beauty that would surpass even Solomon.

God poured out great creativity, great beauty upon lilies, upon flowers and grass, even though, verse 28, they are alive only today, today in the field, and tomorrow with their fire lighters.

[28 : 13] Why fret over what we will wear, what we need? Consider the lilies and all of their beauty. They last such little time, and yet even for them, God has arrayed them in beauty.

How much more can we trust God for our needs in this world? Because he's a loving father, verse 30, who knows what we need, and because he has far greater designs for us than simply this life and this world.

You see, verse 31, we're made for his kingdom. Our purpose is beyond this world, for something so much more, so much better. That's what Jesus taught his disciples to pray, your kingdom come.

And so if God's eternal kingdom is what we're made for, we can trust him to give us what we need to take us there. If we can trust him for eternity, we can trust him for our everyday needs too.

Verse 32, it is our father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. And if that's what he has for us, he won't leave us short and taking hold of it. That's the thrust of all of this.

[29 : 23] If we have our hearts set on eternity, then we're freed from worrying about even everyday essentials like what we will eat. When we have eternity in view, we don't need to fret over food and clothes, over qualifications and jobs, over where we'll live and all kinds of concerns that so occupy this world.

Verse 30, for all the nations of the world seek after these things and your father knows that you need them. Seek his kingdom and he'll see to it that we have what we need.

We can trust him. Now, verse 34, where our true treasure lies, that's where our hearts will be.

what we treasure pulls our hearts. If we truly treasure the world to come, then it will be pulling our heart ever more towards it, freeing us from all the cares and concerns around what we need, what we don't have, what we want.

whereas if the lure of treasure upon our hearts is the treasure of this world, it will be pulling our hearts ever more to love and cherish this world, ever more to be given, for all of our focus to be given to this world.

[30 : 43] And that is the route to ever increasing anxiety. Notice verse 33, everything in this world is open to trouble from thieves and moths, stolen away from us so that we end up empty.

Whereas Jesus says, fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And if he's going to give you an eternal kingdom, we can trust him for everything else.

And so we can, verse 33, pour out our possessions. We can pour them out in love and mercy upon those who haven't yet tasted of the kingdom because those are the truly needy.

If we've been listening to what Jesus has just said, the chief concern isn't the needs of this world but of the world to come. And so we can pour our possessions out, our lives out, our resources out in things that will see his kingdom extend.

And so when we are generous and warm-hearted and open-handed for God's kingdom, we will never feel it's a loss to have given things away. because the reality in God's kingdom is that when we truly treasure the world to come, when that's what's pulling at our hearts, then we will learn that it is a delight to give instead of to take.

[31 : 58] More blessed to give than to receive. That, that is having a money bag that will never grow old with a treasure in the heavens that cannot be touched by moth, moth and thief.

Well, with this focus on the world to come, Jesus goes on to show us verses 35 to 48 a proper view of our preparation for the life to come. A proper view of our preparation for the life to come.

Jesus' return will ultimately expose where our riches have truly belonged. And there are two main concerns here. Are we prepared for Jesus? And are we prioritizing the Lord's people?

So, first, verses 35 to 40, are we prepared for Jesus? We've been told where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. And so, Jesus says, verse 35, stay dressed for action.

Keep your lamps burning. Verse 36, be like men watching, waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast. It might be a long wait, the second or third watch.

[33 : 08] He could be returning home in the early hours of the morning, but nonetheless, be ready and prepared. Why? So that when he returns, we're ready to open the door and welcome his return.

Back in chapter 11, verse 9, Jesus has told us, assured us, that if we seek and knock, the door will be opened to us.

He's promised that our Father in Heaven longs for us to come to him, even at midnight with our prayers and concerns. And he assures us that he hears and will answer, that he won't give us scorpions or serpents.

He assures us that we can knock and expect to be lovingly heard. And if that's the case for us, isn't it fitting that when, verse 36, our master comes and knocks, that we're ready and waiting for him?

In fact, Jesus is telling us that he'll be so delighted to find his people prepared for him that, verse 37, he will dress himself for service and then serve his people at the table.

[34 : 15] Listen to Ralph Davis here. This completely upsets the proper order of things. What UK citizen dining out some evening would expect to hear a somewhat elderly waiter say, hello, my name's Elizabeth and I'll be taking care of you this evening?

It's too outlandish to contemplate. But Jesus is trying to be outlandish in verse 37. He wants us to sense how delighted he is when his servants are fully focused on his coming.

That he, the glorious king, will serve us. Our future is to reign with Jesus for eternity, practicing and enforcing love and justice as responsible executives of his kingdom.

But can we really expect to do that forever if our concern for these things has been so very far from us in this life, in the training ground?

Verse 39, don't be caught out. Don't be found out to be out of the house so that a thief can steal everything from us. Verse 40, we must be ready for Jesus coming at an hour we do not expect.

[35 : 28] Let us not be distracted by the wealth and worries of this world so that we're asleep at our post, asleep when the thief comes. No, blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.

Truly I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table and he will come and serve them. Well, secondly, verses 41 to 48, are we prioritizing the Lord's people?

Peter asks, who exactly are you talking about Jesus? Do you mean us? Surely not. Is this about all people in general? Well, Jesus' answer is that there is no get out here.

Who is the faithful and wise manager, the faithful and wise steward? Jesus doesn't let anyone off the hook. Yes, ministers of the gospel are known as stewards of God's mysteries, managers of the household of faith.

Paul certainly says that. And of course, such a task is to be carried out faithfully properly. Verse 42, giving the portion of food at the proper time, continually preaching the riches of divine grace.

[36 : 45] But it's not just ministers of the gospel. Peter says, as each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace.

And so we're all stewards and we're to be good ones. Verse 43, blessed is the servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes, serving one another as good stewards of God's very grace.

Christians have received richly from Christ. Christ. And so with our plenty in terms of material things, but also our plenty in terms of receiving the gospel.

If we stirred that well and pour it out upon others generously, then verse 44, we will reign truly with Jesus. He'll put us over all of his possessions, his kingdom, with him.

But if we're found to have a fake faith, a lip service only kind of religion that doesn't actually do what Jesus says, a faith that isn't actually obedient, which has no faith at all, then there's going to be a great exposure.

[37 : 59] Verse 45, if we think, oh, the master isn't coming anytime soon, no need to worry about that, so that we're consumed with the food and drink of this world, concerned more with taking from the Lord's people rather than giving to them, harming them, beating them instead of helping them,

then verse 46, Jesus' return will be a great shock.

It'll be terrifying. He'll bring terror cutting to pieces those who have harmed, not helped his people, those who have been greedy for this world, not generous toward God.

They will be put with the unfaithful, the unbelievers. Verse 47, there will be beatings for those who knew what was to come, what they should be doing, but don't do it.

Those who don't serve and love the Lord's people, but instead take from them. And you see, Peter's question, are you talking about us? Well, look how Jesus finishes his answer.

The more you know, the more is expected. Verse 48, and so if we're here today, we've heard Jesus' words. We've been given much. And so he's speaking to all of us.

[39 : 17] There won't just be a light beating, for we've heard, we've been warned. But, listen again to what Jesus says to those who hear, to those who take hold of what Jesus says, to those who are ready, to those who do prioritize the Lord's people.

Verse 44, more and more and more will be given. And so this stark choice leads onto the final few verses where we're given a proper view of Jesus' polarity.

Verses 49 to 53, a proper view of Jesus' polarity. Jesus has come to bring division. He will separate and expose. Jesus says, verse 49, I came to cast fire on the earth.

Verse 50, I face a baptism, a death that divides the world. And verse 51, I came not to bring peace, but division. And notice, such division is pressing.

Verse 49, would that the fire were kindled already. Jesus desires the drawing out of believers, the division of those who will hear and heed him from those who will be shown to hate him.

[40 : 34] There's an urgency about that. There's a day coming when that division will be made clean to all. Yet despite Jesus' desire that it be kindled, he's also gracious and patient, wanting all things about him to be made clear before the final reckoning, to give everyone the opportunity to respond in repentance and faith.

Now, Jesus isn't contradicting himself by saying he hasn't come to bring peace but division. We've just been saying over the Christmas period that his arrival was a message of peace. However, to take hold of that peace means being woken up from complacency.

It requires repentance and faith. And that very demand from Jesus to repent and believe, to take him seriously, well, that is always going to provoke a reaction. It will divide, verse 52, it will divide houses and families.

It can be so very hard when our treasure is no longer this world but the world to come. It can be costly when that means that relationships here in this world are fractured and torn apart. It can be costly when dear friends, even family, have to be let go of because they would hinder us from taking hold of the treasure that will not rot or spoil or feed because they wish us to remain fools. But we cannot afford to not listen to Jesus. Decision must be made for Christ or against him, for God or for the devil, for salvation or judgment, for heaven or hell, for God's kingdom or this world.

[42 : 13] And the final fire still isn't kindled fully because God is patient, not wishing that any should perish but that all should reach repentance.

And so Jesus is saying to us, don't be a fool. Do not put off the concerns of souls and of eternity with the preoccupation of accumulating in this world.

He says to us, consider the birds consider the lilies. How much more valuable are we than them? And so fear not, little flock.

It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. And so we're given great freedom to seek his kingdom knowing that these things will be added to us.

Let's pray. Almighty God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.

[43 : 24] And so lead us by your spirit that in this life we may live to your glory and in the life to come enjoy you forever.

And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.