

An Open Door, but the Only Door

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[0 : 00] Well, we're going to turn now to our Bibles, and we're back in Luke's Gospel, and Josh is going to be leading us this morning, preaching on Luke chapter 13 and verses 22 of that chapter through to the first paragraph of chapter 14.

Grab a church Bible from the side if you don't have a Bible with you, the red Bibles at the sides, at the front, at the back, and if you pick up one of those, it's page 873, Luke chapter 13 and reading at verse 22.

Jesus went on his way through towns and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, Lord, will those who are saved be few?

And he said to them, strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us, then he will answer to you, I do not know where you come from.

And then you'll begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence and you taught in our streets. But he will say, I tell you, I do not know where you come from.

[1 : 27] Depart from me, all you workers of evil. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. When you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast out.

And people will come from east and west and from north and south and recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first.

And some are first who will be last. At that very hour, some Pharisee came to him and said, get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.

And he said to them, go and tell that fox. Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow. And the third day I finished my course.

Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following. For it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem. Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.

[2 : 41] How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings? And you would not. Behold, your house is forsaken.

And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.

And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. And Jesus responded to the lawyers and the Pharisees saying, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?

Amen. But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. And he said to them, which of you having a son or an ox that had fallen into a well on the Sabbath day will not immediately pull him out?

And they could not reply to these things. Amen. May God bless to us his word. Amen. Well, do you open your Bibles once again to Luke chapter 13.

[4 : 01] A party, a meal, a feast, a banquet. These are the ways that people have celebrated high points, victories, successes throughout the ages.

And it is a feast that will be the climax and culmination of history and this world. That's what we see in Revelation 19.

And indeed, such a feast was prophesied about. Listen to Isaiah prophesying. He says, On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food, full of marrow, of aged wine, well refined.

And he will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces. It will be said on that day, behold, this is our God. We have waited for him that he might save us. This is the Lord. We have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. A feast of rich food and mature wine. A feast that will undo the dreadful effects of not just physical death, but the curse of death with all that that means.

[5 : 20] As the opposite to the abundant life that God has given and promised. And this future feast features prominently in this next teaching block of Luke's gospel.

Remember, ever since chapter 9, verse 51, we have been following Jesus on his journey to and through Jerusalem and the cross to be taken up in glory.

And as he goes along, he teaches what it means to follow him through the cross to his glorious kingdom. And you can see another of Luke's structural markers for us in this journey.

1322. 1322. Jesus went on his way, journeying toward Jerusalem. And so a new section of Luke's message begins here and goes on through to chapter 17, verse 10.

If you turn over the page, you can see that. There at 1711, we see another on the way to Jerusalem. And throughout this block of teaching, then the feast, the banquet is present and prominent in these chapters.

[6 : 26] As, verse 29, people will come from east and west, north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. There is mention of the feast in each of the passages we'll look at over the next four weeks.

And so Luke is putting before us the wondrous hope of the feast of feasts, the great banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Pictures of joy and celebration, of abundance and rejoicing at the last day, at the consummation of the kingdom of God.

But also in this block of teaching, hand in hand with the banquet and the feast, is the grim, dire and solemn reality of those who will miss out on it.

Luke shows us this in each of the four passages in this block. And so as ever, the Bible lays before us two very stark options. There are only two ways.

Life or death. Salvation or judgment. Heaven or hell. Feast or forsakenness. And as is always the case, Jesus is beckoning us to choose life.

[7 : 41] Life which will bring an eternity with Jesus in his Father's house, knowing eternal joy, delight and fullness. Instead of being outside and excluded.

And knowing instead eternal judgment, distress and frustration. Well, with that said, look then firstly at what Luke shows us. In verses 22 to 30, he shows us unexpected exclusion.

Unexpected exclusion. There will be some who find the door to God's kingdom closed to them, despite Jesus seeing to it that it has been wide open.

Jesus' words here are terribly solemn. There is a door, a glorious door, that has been opened that people might enter God's kingdom to taste the feast of eternal joy and celebration.

But, but, as much as a door can be a means of entrance, it can also be a means of exclusion. Verse 23, someone asks, Lord, will those who are saved be few?

[8 : 48] This was apparently a common question to debate amongst rabbis. A bit like discussion I remember from RE at school, where my classmates' rebuttal of the necessity of being saved by faith was to pose the scenario of, what about the Eskimo, who lives miles away from anybody and has never heard the gospel?

What about him? Well, Jesus doesn't do hypothetical theology or ivory tower theology. And at this stage, this question might actually seem quite strange.

Jesus has just been speaking of his kingdom as being like a mustard seed that grows into a great tree to house the birds of the air. He's spoken about his kingdom being like leaven that spreads throughout all the flour.

That's what we see previously in chapter 13. Indeed, already Jesus has been saying, already Jesus has been making clear that his gospel is to go global.

Jesus has already sent out the 72 disciples a way of saying that his mission was going to the whole world. And as he sends them out, what were his words? The harvest is plentiful.

[9 : 53] It's the laborers who are few. Jesus deals with the question, as he often does, and he turns it around. Theology is never simply for the exercise and the sparring of minds.

Jesus says here that there will be a great multitude who will gather in God's kingdom, verse 29.

From east, west, north and south, there will be many. But, his answer, what matters here is verse

24.

Worry about yourself. Strive to enter the narrow gate. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Fret not over the imaginary person over there, but rather face up to the reality for you as an individual.

It's easy to ask those kinds of questions, to sit in judgment over God and how he operates, posing questions about imaginary people without any opportunity to hear the gospel.

When the challenge of the gospel is demanding that you respond as you have opportunity. Before it's too late. Before the door of entrance becomes the door of exclusion.

[11 : 08] Do you see verse 25? The door will shut at some point. And at that point, there may be protest. At that point, there may be knocking and asking and seeking. But look at those chilling words.

The master of the house, God himself, will say, I do not know where you come from. Jesus' message here is to make it a priority that that is not the case for you.

The master of the house, God himself, will say, I do not know where you come from.

The only way is through that door, through faith and trust in Jesus. This man asks, will those who are saved be few? And Jesus' answer, as one preacher puts it, is fewer than one would expect and more than one would imagine.

Well, we see three things about this exclusion. The first, then, is that when it happens, there will be great surprise. Some of those who are excluded will be greatly surprised at the reality.

[12 : 35] It will be unexpected. Do you see that verse 26? Once the master answers, I do not know where you come from, some outside will protest. What do you mean you don't know us? Don't know where we're from?

We've eaten with you. We've drank with you. We've been in your presence. You've been teaching here on our streets. Some on that day will say, what do you mean? We've sat in church Sunday after Sunday.

We've listened to countless sermons. We've tasted at the Lord's table. There will even be some who may say, hey, I've spent many years involved in ministry. What do you mean you don't know me?

And that will be a devastating discovery. Because spending time in Jesus' orbit, but never having passed through the open door, will be devastating.

Never having taken hold of Jesus in real and repentant faith, taking hold of the one who is the very door. To have heard his teaching, but never really heeded it.

[13 : 37] There will be some people who have tossed around many a theological debate, who make great claims of soundness, claims of straightening out other people's theology. But the words will be said to them, I don't know where you've come from.

Because you see, what really counts is not having a trifling interest in Jesus, having spent lots of time pondering him. What matters is not merely the privilege of belonging to a faithful Bible teaching church.

What matters is not merely growing up in church and hearing again and again the scriptures taught. No, what matters chiefly is entering through the door that is Jesus Christ.

Now notice what characterizes those who will be shocked. Verse 27. They'll be workers of evil. Jesus says elsewhere, doesn't he, that those who love him obey his commands.

Real faith actually listens to Jesus and does what he says. What matters is not merely hearing Jesus, but heeding him.

[14 : 44] It's coming to him like the woman in Simon the Pharisee's house back in chapter 7. Coming, pouring out love to Jesus. Love born out of faith. It's like sitting at his feet like Mary in chapter 10.

Longing for Jesus' word to be the thing that actually guides and governs our lives. It's having our treasure in heaven. Seeking his kingdom.

Being rich toward him. Not because these things earn us away through the door. No, no. But because Jesus has stretched out his hand with the gracious offer of salvation.

The offer of his kingdom. And taking hold of it means trusting him. Listening to him. And so it is possible to have great privilege to spend much time in his presence.

To know what it is to regularly hear his voice right here in this gathering. But these privileges, and they are real privileges, they come with responsibility, don't they?

[15 : 47] That we would heed Jesus. That we would take hold of all that they speak of. That we would, verse 24, have it as our absolute priority to enter through the narrow door.

Well, alongside the surprise, there will be great suffering. Instead of entering the banquet of joy and rejoicing, the master of the house will say, verse 27, depart from me.

Painful exclusion. Verse 28, and in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. I had another classmate who quipped once that he'd love to go to hell.

Because it sounds way more fun than heaven. Lighthearted quip or not. Any notion that diminishes the severity of what Jesus speaks of here is folly.

Notice verse 29. Jesus will welcome people from east and west, north and south, to taste and enjoy an eternity reclining at table in God's kingdom.

[16 : 57] But those excluded will face an eternity of weeping. And notice, they will be conscious and aware of what they've missed out on.

Verse 28, they will see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets. Those who, they will see those whose ultimate loyalty and allegiance was to Jesus. Those who responded to his grace and faith and so entered through the door.

They'll see them taking in the kingdom. They'll see all those people in the kingdom of God whilst they themselves are excluded. Jesus is speaking here about an eternal state of suffering.

And he's telling us it will be conscious. Picture what it would be like to have caused a terrible accident. You're in your car and you've been using your phone.

You're distracted. And somehow, things get out of control. And the next thing you know, there are blue lights all around you. And you, you've caused fatalities.

[18 : 01] That would be a torment, a burden, an agony that you carry for the rest of your life. Permanently wondering if perhaps you'd only not glanced at that text message. People have warned you.

You do it all the time. They've warned you. That is only a drop in the ocean of the picture that Jesus paints here. Imagine the turmoil, the torment, the terror of that horror you've caused multiplied infinitely.

With no respite. Where time won't heal it. Where it is ever present, ever conscious. And all you can see is what you've missed out on. With constant and vivid clarity.

And you knew that you've had the gracious offer from Jesus' own mouth again and again. But have refused it. Take them lightly. You've paid them only lip service.

And now it is perpetual. Eternal hell. That's what the language of weeping and gnashing teeth always refers to. The place of fiery dread judgment.

[19 : 06] And it's unrelenting. Because it faces you up in a never-ending way with what you have passed up. Jesus' words here are amongst the most chastening and solemn that I can think of.

Because those who face this perpetual and conscious torment and terror are those who, verse 26, ate and drank in Jesus' presence.

And heard him teach in their streets. Exchanging the joy and celebration of the great feast that he longs for people to come to. The feast of rich food and mature wine.

Exchanging that for bleak and never-ending darkness. Choosing to miss out on the gracious offer of Jesus. To follow him to glory in his kingdom.

That's what Jesus says here. Some will think that they have an in with him. For whatever reason. We ate and drank with him.

[20 : 03] But by refusing to hear and heed him. He will be ignorant of you. Well then, thirdly, in these verses we see that there will be a great swap.

People will come from all over, verse 29. And behold, verse 30. Some who are last will be first. And some who are first will be last. On that day, many who might think that they've hobnobbed with the right people.

Who've rolled in esteemed circles with the significant people in the world. They'll be found to be last. The shock, the surprise will be that those who think they deserve to be in heaven.

Will be found to be missing. Because our place in this world. Our protests at the closed door.

Indeed, the proximity we've had to Jesus.

Are not the things that will matter at the day of the great feast. What will matter is the priority we've given to his call upon us. What will matter is penitent faith. Jesus warns us with such seriousness.

[21 : 10] Because he's full of grace and patience. Not wishing that any should perish. But that all might reach repentance. And so his word comes to us now.

With great seriousness. And it comes to us all. Lest we be presumptuous. He tells us strive to enter through the narrow door. But his word also comes to all and any.

However low in this world. However lacking. However loosed. And his word comes to us. And his word comes to us. With a power to change the future forever.

Because his word can swap the ignominy of this world. For the intimacy of feasting. With God himself. Jesus' words have the power to draw people.

Truly from east and west. North and south. To join the vast multitudes around the father's table. For the great banquet of banquets. These words right now. Are an invitation to enter the door.

[22 : 12] To reach out. With the empty hands of faith. And take hold of Jesus. So that we would enter the great banquet. That we would choose life.

Well secondly then. In verses 31 to 35. Jesus goes on to show us. Unequivocal refusal.

Unequivocal refusal. The message of these verses. Is that blatant and deliberate refusal. Of an enduringly willing savior.

Will lead to the terrible judgment of God. Jesus is clear. The blame for facing the terrible judgment just described. Is firmly at the door of those who face it.

Notice first Jesus' chastening word to Herod. Herod wanted to kill Jesus. Verses 31 and 32. And now Herod.

[23 : 11] Was one who was first in this world. As a king he knew great privilege. In fact more than that. Back in chapter 3. Herod already had the very greatest of the prophets.

John the Baptist. Speaking God's word to him. But he beheaded the prophet. Chapter 9. Herod had heard all that Jesus was doing.

But he was perplexed. As we read that Herod sought to see Jesus. And here we find that he seeks Jesus with murderous intent. Here was an individual. An individual. One who was first in this world. And he's been confronted by the word of God. Warned and called to repent. But he refused. So he'd be last. And he refused with some style didn't he?

Decapitating John. Seeking to kill Jesus. He's doubling down on his refusal to repent. And now remember what the issue was for Herod. It wasn't some ancient and detached from life here today kind of issue.

[24 : 18] Herod's rage against the word of God. Against the workmen of God. Now against the son of God. Was a rage against God's clear teaching about sex. And its rightful place.

Herod refused to let God be God. In the realm of sex. It's so utterly contemporary isn't it? Is there any issue today that causes such foaming rage against God and his word.

As what he calls evil. But this world delights to call good. Is there any issue that sees this world's powers. Move to silence the word of God. More than the whole area of sex. Where God the creator. Spells out what is good sex for his creatures. And what are perversions. That only bring corruption. Destruction. Herod has deliberately and blatantly refused Jesus grace and authority.

And look at the chastening response from Jesus. Verse 32. Go and tell that fox. Behold I'll carry on with my ministry. Herod was a mighty one in this world.

[25 : 24] But in light of his willful considered refusal of Jesus. He's greeted with scorn from Jesus. You fox. Indeed we read later on in Luke's gospel in chapter 23.

About Herod and Jesus finally coming face to face. To Herod's gladness. He longed to see him. To see some sort of sign. But Jesus' response is silence.

Herod would get no sign. Because in truth he'd already had plenty. And he wasn't interested. He wouldn't humble himself to go through the door. The narrow door. He wouldn't respond in repentance and faith.

Deliberately refusing the word of God. And so Jesus' silence. Is in essence. The door being closed. And that is the story for many today.

Those who carry a sense of power in this world. Of greatness and significance. Whether it's political power. Or financial power. Or the power of reputation. Or title. Whatever it is. The sense of place in this world.

[26 : 25] That would cause one to say. I don't need to jump to anyone else's tune. I don't need to go through anyone's hoops. How dare someone tell me how to live my life. My position. My power.

My pounds. They open all the doors in this life. But Jesus is so very clear. There's only one door that counts. And when he is perpetually and purposefully refused.

Then the door will be shut. Potentially here and now in this life. As it did for Herod. No more gracious words of life. And of warning. Silence. But if not now.

Then it will most certainly shut in the life to come. But notice. Even amidst Herod's threats. We see Jesus control.

Verses 32 and 33. The threats and maneuverings of this world's powers. Will never thwart Jesus' ministry and mission. Verse 32. Jesus will continue to bring tastes and glimpses.

[27 : 25] Of his kingdom today. And tomorrow. As he heals and overcomes. The demonic. And then the third day. He will finish his course. I think the mention of the third day here.

Is a little hint about Jesus. Making clear that he will not be stopped. From his ultimate mission. His way. And in his time. His death and resurrection. On the third day.

Would not and could not be interfered with. Indeed. Herod's threat of death. Was only ever going to play into the sovereign plan of God. A plan that was set. That would end with great certainty.

In glory. And a great feast. And so verse 33. Jesus will go on his way as he pleases. For his destination is Jerusalem. That's the journey he's on.

He will die. But it won't be until he's in Jerusalem. And it won't be until the time is right. Because ultimately. Jesus' death was not going to be. Down to the rage and refusal of King Herod.

[28 : 26] It was all to do with a rescue and redemption. Planned out in eternity by the King of Heaven. Now. I think there's a question we need to ask at this point.

Why do we have this little instance of Jesus' control. Spelled out right here. Right in the middle of this event. I take it that we are to see the truth. That God is truly in sovereign control of everything. And we are to see it here. Because it's in the middle of two instances. Of Jesus condemning those. Who persistently refused him. The Bible is so very clear.

God is in control of everything. And it's an important point to grasp. As we deal with those who will and will not. Be at the great banquet. God is in no way powerless.

In calling people to respond to him. He doesn't feebly knock at the door of people's hearts. Begging and pleading for a hearing. Hoping that there might be some. That some might give him the time of day. No, no.

[29 : 26] God is sovereign. That's the consistent message of the scriptures. Nobody will be in heaven. Whom God hasn't chosen by his electing grace. So Luke makes clear that God is in control.

And that control extends over those who will feast in his kingdom. And over those who are excluded from his kingdom. Those who refuse him. But we must be clear. Luke is also showing us.

That none will be excluded. Who haven't freely and clearly chosen to exclude themselves. None will have the door closed to them. Who had wished for the door to be open. Do you see Luke shows us God's control.

And Herod's deliberate refusal. The Bible asserts both. However much we can struggle to get our heads around it. And the key thing to grasp from this is God is never the bad guy.

His grace is inestimably abundant. His patience is incalculably long. So that opportunity is never the issue.

[30 : 30] And so those who refuse him. Will ultimately get. What they have freely chosen. And that's the message that carries through.

To not just an individual. But to all of Israel here. Jesus doesn't just have a chastening word. For Herod. He has a condemning word. In verses 34 and 35. Jesus cries woe.

Over this great city. That was at the heart of Israel. A people who had known. Privileged. Privileged. Unrivaled. Jesus.

Here is addressing the professing church of the day. Those who had known the covenant promises of God. Those who had had prophet after prophet. Mediators. Judges. Saviors. Kings. And yet Israel refused them again and again.

Killed them. And notice the starkness of this. Verse 34. Jesus says. How often would I have gathered your children. Gathered them together as a hen.

[31 : 32] Gathers her brood. How often would I have moved in grace and patience and love to draw you in. How often did I. Again and again in love and forbearance.

Desiring that your children will be gathered under my protective wings. How often would I. How willing was Jesus. And yet. Verse 34.

You were not willing. And so like with Herod. Here Jesus proclaims a word. Of condemnation upon Jerusalem and Israel. Your house is forsaken.

He's quoting from Jeremiah that the temple would be destroyed. And Jesus is making clear that the perpetual rejection of Israel. Was going to be met with the door of entry being closed. Israels perpetual unfaithfulness.

Would prompt an exile to utter darkness. To the place where there's weeping. Gnashing of teeth. Jesus' message all throughout this. Is that if you persistently refuse him.

[32 : 33] If a church. If those who profess to be Christian people. Refuse the privilege that they have at Jesus' hand. And it's great privilege. If they refuse to enter the narrow door of real faith.

Of hearing and heeding his word. Of listening to and responding and love to him. If they deliberately, blatantly and persistently refuse him. Then there is surely nothing left but judgment. Friends, we mustn't ever be complacent about that as a church. Where we refuse his word. Where we treat it as advice. Not as authority.

Where we see it as a conversation partner and not command. Where we see his grace as a nice thought. But not a necessity. Where we hold lightly to the treasures of divine grace.

If that's a trajectory that sets in. If the beckoning word of God from his pulpit is brushed off or banished. Then there will come a point where Jesus says. How often would I have gathered you.

[33 : 41] But you were not willing. And so all that will be left for a church at that point. Is to succumb to what they've been choosing. Not just a present without the gracious presence of Jesus through his word.

But an eternity without the glorious presence of Jesus. And it's never his delight to do so. He is like the hen seeking to gather in its brood.

He weeps as he condemns. He would always warn and beckon with tears in his eyes. To choose life. Not death. To choose salvation. Not judgment. And so notice, as is always the case with Jesus. Even words of grim judgment. Even the most severe of warnings. Come with Jesus. Beckoning people to not choose such disaster. Verse 35.

You will not see me until you say. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And so even amidst the condemnation of the nation of Israel. Jesus is graciously saying.

[34 : 42] That where some do recognize. And turn and say. Blessed is the salvation of God. And they will see him. So that even Jesus' words of condemnation.

Can be to us today. Words of compassion. Words of salvation. That beckon us through the narrow door. Of faith and trust in Christ.

Christ. Well finally. And briefly. We have an illustration once again. Of what Jesus has been saying. Chapter 14 verses 1 to 6. Where we see unseemly acquaintance.

Unseemly acquaintance. It is very possible. To spend time in Jesus' presence. Witnessing his ministry. And yet miss out entirely. On what he has wonderfully done.

And promised to do. Whilst at the same time. Thinking that you are in the right. And he is in the wrong. These verses are an illustration. Of what we have read. In chapter 13 verse 26.

[35 : 41] Those who have eaten. And drank in Jesus' presence. But who will be disowned. And denied. There will be some. Many indeed. Who have had an acquaintance with Jesus.

But it is an unseemly one. Look at these verses. Where we see only a picture. Of increased hardness of heart. By the professing church of Jesus day.

Verse 1. One Sabbath. Jesus was dining at the house. Of a ruler of the Pharisees. And they were watching him. Carefully. Things have ramped up.

From the previous meals. With the Pharisees. From chapter 7 and 11. The watching. Has turned into. Careful watching. And that phrase. Is in the Bible. Is synonymous.

With setting a ploy. A trap. Like those who write. To get Daniel. For praying. And having allegiance. Above all to God. And not government. And so here. Verse 2. There's a man. Who had dropsy.

[36 : 37] In modern parlance. That would be. Dima. A condition. Where the body. Amasses excess fluid. That can ultimately kill you. Now given the fact. That the Pharisees.

Were watching closely. And given that this man. Verse 4. Is shortly sent away. I think it's safe. To conclude. That he was not. A fellow dinner guest. He's a plant. He was here. Not because of church.

Family hospitality. No. He was bait. Which is why Jesus. Asks the question. Verse 3. Is it lawful. To heal on the Sabbath. Or not. Jesus can read the room.

He knows what's going on here. Verse 4. Silence. No answer. They aren't the ones. On trial here. Or so they think. They think it's Jesus.

Jesus heals the man. Of course he does. That's what he does. And so verse 5. Knowing what was brewing. Jesus poses another question. Which of you. Having a son.

[37 : 32] Or an ox. Even. That has fallen into a well. On a Sabbath. Will not immediately. Pull him out. Silence. Again. Now these two scenarios.

Are essentially the same. If your son. Or animal. Fell into a well. And the water. Rises up over them. You wouldn't hesitate. To rescue them. On the Sabbath. But that is exactly. The scenario.

For this man's body. Had water. Rising up. To kill him. Water on the inside. And so Jesus. Is exposing.

That these self-righteous. Sanctimonious Pharisees. Would of course. Act in salvation. If it was to suit them. Their family. Their flock. Their son. Or their silver. Luke wants us.

To see in this incident. That there is. An enmity. At play. In the rejection of Jesus. By those who toy about with him. An enmity at play. When people spend time.

[38 : 26] Even much time. In Jesus orbit. But resist his work. Resist his word. And that enmity. Ultimately calls. Salvation. Evil. Jesus has made clear.

From the off. That his ministry. Is in essence. The arrival of the Sabbath. Of Sabbaths. That's how he casts it. And so it's no surprise. That the Pharisees.

Are constantly taking issue. With the Sabbath. His ministry. Is the Sabbaths. Of Sabbaths. The great year. Of the Lord's fever. The arrival. Of rescue. And relief. Of cleansing.

And clearing of debts. Of freedom. And salvation. And each weekly Sabbath. Is an opportunity. To taste of that. Listen to James Philip here.

He says. This miracle. Is also a parable. Of the gospel itself. The bringing of healing. Of restoration. Life and renewal. And so the question. That arises for us.

[39 : 21] Is to ask. Whether our Sabbaths. Serve to reflect. The glory of the gospel. We proclaim. Well. Is that what our Sundays. Are about. And that's a penetrating question.

Is our gathering. Simply an opportunity. To say that we've been. In Jesus orbit. Whilst having little desire. To follow Jesus. In obedience. Is our gathering. Simply an opportunity.

To say that we've. Been with Jesus. Socially. Whilst having little interest. In Jesus's radical salvation. Is our Sabbath. Sunday by Sunday. Simply the time.

When we come. To put Jesus to the test. And his words. To the test. Rather than coming. To the place. Where there is opportunity. To taste. Of all that he promises.

Is our Sabbath. A time. When we will. Eat and drink. With Jesus. And have him. Teach in our streets. Only to hear him. One day say. I do not know. Where you're from. Luke is facing us up.

[40 : 19] With the question. Is our Sabbath. Is our gathering. Right here. Is it going to be. Another time. When Jesus says. That he is willing. To gather us in. Like a hen.

Gathers its brood. Only for us to say. We're not willing. When we gather like this. When Christ's word is open. And he is speaking to us through it.

He is beckoning us to a feast. To a banquet. He's telling us of the splendor of his kingdom. He's giving us tastes. Of what it will be like. When history reaches its conclusion.

He's offering to us. His healing balm. He's placing before us. The open door. And he's beckoning us. All the time to go through it. So don't. Miss out.

Don't presume. That you'll be there. No heed. The Lord Jesus. When he says. Strive to enter through the narrow door. So come to Jesus.

[41 : 18] Maybe for you today. It will be coming for the first time. Come to him. And join those. Who come from east and west. North and south. Who will gather for the banquet.

Who will have the rich food and mature wine. Don't be among those. Who will watch on in terror forevermore.

Conscious of what they've chosen to miss out on. Choose life. Not death. Strive to enter through the narrow door.

It is the only door. But here today. In this word. It is an open door. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

Grant us your grace this day. That we would not hold you at arm's length. Would you silence any influence around us. That might sway us away from you.

[42 : 30] And so away from your kingdom. And grant us your grace. That we would never let your warnings wash over us. But instead.

Would you enable us to receive them as they are meant. As the offer of life. Eternal life. In and through your son. In whose name we pray.

Amen.