

A Conflicted Procession

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[0 : 00] Well, we turn now to our Bible reading to hear God speak to us through His Word this morning.! Our Bible reading is from Luke chapter 19. There's visitors' Bibles at the side and at the front here as well, if you need to get one.

Luke chapter 19, that's on page 878 of the church Bibles. So Luke chapter 19, and we're reading verses 28 to 48.

Luke 19, beginning at verse 28. So those who were sent away and found it just as He had told them.

And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, Why are you untying the colt? And they said, The Lord has need of it. And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it.

And as He rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. As He was drawing near, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of His disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

[1 : 49] Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples.

He answered, I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out. And when He drew near and saw the city, He wept over it, saying, Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace.

But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you.

And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, It is written, My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it in a dead of robbers.

And He was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy Him. But they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on His words.

[3 : 17] Well, amen. And may God bless to us His word this morning. We'll do you open your Bibles once again to Luke chapter 19.

Now, with Jesus, neutrality is not an option. However much we might like to absent ourselves from dealing with Jesus, that isn't an option.

There are only two possible responses to Him. Glad submission, grateful praise, or grim refusal, grievous rejection. Either serve Him or scorn Him.

And to do anything other than recognize Him as the true King, as our only Savior, is to refuse and reject Him. There is no in-between.

Neutrality with Jesus is not an option. As the rightful sovereign over this whole world, He demands that we come to Him in submission and faith.

[4 : 23] Anything else is to set ourselves up against Him. Anything else is to refuse His long-suffering, patient offer of grace and peace. And in the end, He will not stand for that.

He will not be mocked. And that is something that we see in our passage this morning. We've reached the final and climactic section of Luke's Gospel. Jesus arrives at Jerusalem.

He's been on a journey towards Jerusalem ever since chapter 9. But not just a geographical journey. For the journey has also been a picture and a proclamation of what it means to follow Him to His glorious kingdom.

His destination has always been beyond Jerusalem, but always through Jerusalem. And through the cross to be taken up to glory.

And so He arrives at Jerusalem now in chapter 19. And then we'll see in the very last verses in chapter 24 that Jesus ascends to His glory. And the way that Luke has structured this closing section of His Gospel is around two entries into the city of Jerusalem.

[5 : 38] Of course, Jesus moves in and out of Jerusalem once He's arrived to teach during the day and to return to the Mount of Olives at night. You can see that in chapter 21, verses 37 and 38.

But amidst Jesus moving in and out of the city, there are two particular entries which give shape to this climactic message.

Two entries that He wants to draw our attention to. The first is here in our passage this morning. A triumphant one. A glorious procession in which we see a king arriving home to his capital city is a great conqueror.

And so the first half of this final section of Luke's Gospel is taken up with the significance of Jesus as king. But then there is another entry that Luke wants us to see.

So notice here in our passage, verse 29, he sends two disciples. And he sends them ahead to make preparations for his entry to go and get the colt. And then he tells them what to say to the owner when questioned.

[6 : 44] But similarly, if you turn over to chapter 22, verse 8, we see again he sends two disciples to go and prepare for Passover to make arrangements for them to use the guest room, the upper room.

And he tells them what to say to the owner when they're questioned. Two entries. The first entry is public, a procession, a display of Jesus as king.

And the second entry is private, just for the disciples as they celebrate Passover. And the focus of the second entry, and so the second half of this final section, is Luke's concern to show us that Jesus is king through Jesus being the Passover lamb.

His sufferings are not unexpected. They're not a deviation from course. They are the very means of his throne being established forever over this whole world.

And so with that in mind, this week, as we begin to get into the first half of the climax of Luke's gospel, the focus then is all on Jesus, the king, the conquering king, arriving home to his city.

[7 : 58] And so we see firstly in verses 28 to 40, a king to be praised. A king to be praised. Jesus is the glorious Messiah king, and so he truly deserves the praises of this world, and he will be praised.

And so it will be an exposing and perilous thing for those who refuse to do so now. We see in these verses a conflicted procession.

On the one hand, rejoicing, great rejoicing of a triumphant king come to rescue and rule. But we also see rebuke, don't we, from those who despise his rule.

But this is a procession nonetheless. That's the first thing to be clear about in these verses. Jesus arrives to Jerusalem as the king who's been long promised, the king who's been sent from heaven to grant peace on earth, peace from heaven poured out into the world of man.

And so notice the ways that we're told that Jesus is king. Firstly, look at verse 30. He sends his disciples to get a colt. Why a colt? Well, this is Jesus showing us that what is about to unfold is in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy from Zechariah chapter 9.

[9 : 20] A prophecy all about the arrival of the king. Listen to Zechariah's words. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you.

Righteous and having salvation is he. Humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the fall of a donkey. And he shall speak peace to the nations.

His rule shall be from sea to sea. And also because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free. On that day, the Lord their God will save them as the flock of his people.

And Zechariah goes on to say, there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin. And so here, about to ride into Jerusalem on a colt, was that very king.

In Jesus there had arrived the king who brings salvation, the king who speaks peace, the king who brings God's salvation through the cleansing of sin. Here has arrived the king who pours open the fountain of God's cleansing.

[10 : 38] But notice too, verse 38, in response to Jesus' arrival, the assembled disciples sing out in praise of this king. And they do so in the language of Psalm 118.

But they change a word in it. They insert the word king. In Psalm 118, it's simply, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

But no, here, to leave us beyond any doubt, here they say, blessed is the king. And so the whole picture here is of a procession of the king entering his city.

What one might expect of a king returning victoriously from battle. And so the crowds don't just sing praise, they don't just pour out honor on Jesus with words, they lay their cloaks down to prepare his way, to line his path.

And it fits. Jesus is a conquering king, coming to his own, isn't he? His earthly ministry had begun with a battle.

[11 : 41] A battle that he decisively won. Remember all the way back in chapter 4, Jesus headed out into the wilderness, led by the Spirit, on the attack, to do battle with Satan in the temptations.

And Jesus landed a decisive victory, and then continued to work that victory out in the defeat of the armies of Satan as he cast out demons. And as he undid in glimpses the effects of the fall and death and disease.

And so here is Jesus, the victorious king, now come to be celebrated in glory in his city. And the picture we have of Jesus as king is heightened further, isn't it?

By the whole way the events unfold. Do you notice Luke tells us that Jesus prepared the disciples for what might be asked of them? Verse 31. And then he recounts the very thing happening to them.

Verse 33 and 34. Say, the Lord has need of it. Surely Luke gives us this twice to pose to his readers, to ask the question of how could Jesus have known?

[12 : 51] And as we ask such a question, we're being helped to grasp something of Jesus' sovereign control. He is in total control of what is to happen. No surprises, no roadblocks, no diversions.

The king has arrived, and he is in total control of what will come. But here's the reality. When someone is declared to be king, that comes with a mandate to rule, doesn't it?

And so Jesus' arrival as king also brings an expectation of a response from the people. In our country, from time to time, there are instances of those who are Republican and anti-monarchy getting a bit of an airing.

And so we get things like hashtag not my king. Wanting to dismantle the monarchy and things like that here, well, that wasn't birthed in our country. We didn't give birth to such things.

The human heart from the very beginning has taken issue with kings, particularly the true king who demands to rule over this world. And so the declaration that Jesus is king is a challenge to each and everyone in this world.

[13 : 59] Will we submit to his rule gladly, or will we say, not my king? But remember what's at stake in all of this.

Zechariah spoke of the king coming on a cult who was bringing salvation, who was speaking peace, who was going to bring cleansing from sin. But these things come only through the king.

They do come gloriously through the king, but only through the king. And so there is a truly fitting response to all of this.

That's the second emphasis in these verses. Jesus is to be praised for the fact of his kingship, but also for the nature of it. As the cliques are spread out for his path, verse 37, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God for all the mighty things that Jesus had done.

And we have the quote then from Psalm 118, Blessed is the king who comes, peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Do you see the language of peace again?

[15 : 13] Zechariah prophesied that the coming king would speak peace. That precious declaration of peace is present through Outlook's gospel. The angels sing of it in the opening chapters. And Jesus proclaims it to certain people as he declares that their faith has saved them.

As he says, their sins are forgiven. And so here, as the king arrives to his city, the praise, the rejoicing is because his peace is now public.

His peace is open and offered far and wide. the peace of heaven has broken through to the earth.

And that is a cause of great rejoicing.

Praise is the response that Jesus deserves. Notice also, here Jesus is no longer secretive about his identity. He doesn't mind people praising him. Back in chapter 9, he'd warned his disciples not to tell anyone who he was.

But now, verses 39 and 40, he won't silence the praise. In fact, he says, if the crowds won't celebrate him, then the very stones of the ground will.

[16:23] But there's more to notice here about why Jesus is so praiseworthy. It isn't just that he is the king come to bring peace. It's the nature of his kingship, of how he will do this, that deserves immense praise.

Notice we get that little detail about the cult in verse 30. It's a cult that no one has ever sat on. You see, there's a uniqueness to Jesus.

His is a path not previously trod. His throne, a throne that is so different to anything else in this world. And that uniqueness plays out through the thread that Luke has been weaving all the way through his gospel.

Notice verse 37. The praise and rejoicing breaks out as Jesus is on the way down the Mount of Olives. Jesus' triumphal entry is a journey downwards.

Again, we've seen Luke use direction language to help us pick up a theme that runs throughout the whole gospel. That Jesus means to bring down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of humble estate.

[17:30] That Jesus has been appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel. And now we see that he does that by himself stripping down from his throne in order to be raised up and exalted in glory on his throne.

And so whilst Jesus comes down the mountain, notice it's from Bethany, verse 29, comes down the mountain through Bethany to journey to Jerusalem and to the cross.

But there's a symmetry because at the very end of Luke, Jesus also departs from Jerusalem and returns up the mountain to Bethany to then be lifted up to glory. So his journey is to go down to be lifted up.

Jesus is the unique king who lowered himself that he might be lifted up and have us lifted up with him as his precious and redeemed people. He stooped down from heaven that the peace of heaven might be poured out on the earth.

Jesus is worthy of praise because he is not like any other king in this world. And so that is a challenge to us, isn't it? Will we have this Jesus as our king?

[18:45] Will we be given to praise him? For we actually have more of the picture than this multitude of the disciples had at this time, don't we? We knew that he did carry on through Jerusalem and became the atoning sacrifice for sin.

And we knew that he was raised in vindication as the first fruits of our resurrection and that he did indeed ascend to glory where he awaits us. And so our song of praise oughtn't to be but a one-off or a merely occasional thing, but a note of praise and rejoicing and thanksgiving ought to be a baseline and undercurrent of our lives as Christians.

So that here on earth we are joining with the angels in the heavenly throne room to ascribe to Jesus the praise and thanks that we owe him. It would be perverse, wouldn't it?

If we've come to Jesus aware of our need, asking for mercy, if we've come to him as the only hope that we have pleading for his grace to cover our sin, to cover our mess, to cover our struggles, it would be perverse if there was no ongoing or tangible hint or display or echo of praise for him, of delight in what he's done for us.

Of course, sometimes we will just be overcome with a sense of thanksgiving and praise that's perhaps triggered within us as we hear God's words, as we reflect on it. But as well as that, we do also need to train ourselves to praise, don't we?

[20:23] Train ourselves to thank God and rejoice in him, which means learning to consciously take time to consider all that it means for Jesus to be king, to take time and effort to consider his wondrous grace that we have received so that our hearts will be tuned again to sing his praise.

Now, whilst our praise for Jesus is a necessary thing, it isn't to be a secretive thing. Listen to Charles Simeon, the great old Cambridge preacher.

He says, Shall it be said that there is no such occasion now for our public acknowledgements as there was then? We answer, that the world needs as much as ever to have their attention drawn to the Lord Jesus and to be stimulated to love and serve him.

And if this were not the case, still, it would be our duty to confess him openly since in heaven where he is universally known, he is universally and incessantly adored.

As long as infinite greatness and unbounded goodness deserve our admiration, so long will it be reasonable to bless and magnify our adorable Jesus with all our might.

[21 : 40] Amen. Praise is the necessary response and it's the reasonable response. Charles Simeon goes on to say that such praise of Jesus is actually a delight to our own souls.

He says, Who can doubt which were the happier? The disciples who shouted forth the praises of their Lord or the Pharisees who with malignant jealousy strove to silence them?

Indeed, he says, a devout and grateful spirit is a fortieth of heaven itself. But this isn't always the response with which Jesus is greeted, is it?

Jesus isn't always praised. Verse 39, the Pharisees call on Jesus to rebuke his disciples for their praise and their rebuke is rank unbelief.

Refusal to praise Jesus is rejection of Jesus. There is no neutrality. And so look at Jesus' response. If these disciples were silent, the very stones would break forth in praise.

[22 : 46] Remember, Jesus speaking of stones isn't a one-off, is it, in Luke? John the Baptist said that if the offspring of Abraham fail to repent and believe in Jesus, then from the stones would come children for Abraham.

See, Jesus is saying that his plan is unstoppable. He will bring salvation, he will bring peace, he will speak peace, he will bring cleansing, and he will be praised.

He will win to himself a people who delight in his salvation. salvation. But the question then comes to us, will our voice be a constant presence in that chorus of praise?

Will yours? Even when others scorn such praise and thanksgiving, you see, the rebuke of the Pharisees is aimed at who? The disciples.

There will always be Pharisees in abundance, ready and willing to mock and censure our love and affection for Jesus. But listen to Charles Simeon again. Envy is of a peculiarly malignant character and they who have no piety themselves hate to behold the exercise of it in others.

[23 : 59] Knew, however, that if man condemn, God approves the exercises of love and that they who confess Christ before men shall be confessed by him before God and all his holy angels.

Well, Luke goes on to show us what flues from the Pharisees refusal of Jesus, their refusal to have him as king to sing his praises and we see in verses 41 to 44, the king who offers peace for now.

The king who offers peace for now. Blatant and persistent refusal of Jesus' offer of peace will eventually see his patience cease.

Jesus speaks in these verses of a terrible punishment that will fall on Jerusalem and his people but even as he does so, it is through tears. God's long suffering patience is dripping with compassion and even as judgment falls, there's a heaviness of heart but fall it will when Jesus is refused.

The Pharisees rebuke here sets up Jesus' first interaction with Jerusalem. Verse 41, Jesus arrives at the city and his first act is to weep over it. the religious establishment have just refused Jesus again.

[25 : 30] The tapestry of Israel's history throughout the Old Testament has been refusal, rejection, and resistance of God's hand of grace and mercy. The people that God had set apart to be his, those he'd rescued from slavery, those he'd poured out his precious words to again and again, speaking life and fullness to them.

It's these very people who perpetually refuse him and continue to do so despite prophet after prophet being sent to speak God's word to them. And even now they had God himself in the person of his son coming to speak peace to them.

But all they want is hostility. But that isn't just Israel's history, is it? It is humanity's. To this present day, God is scorned and mocked.

His ways, his design are called evil, toxic. All this, despite creation itself testifying in wondrous glory, God's beautiful character and his nature.

But people won't have it, will they? The human heart is given to say to God, don't get in my way, don't mess with things that I like, shh, keep out of my life, keep away from me.

[26 : 50] But look at how perilous that is. Here we see Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, weeping over those who had received profound privilege, but who have preferred their own way. Refusing God's patience, refusing God's peace.

And yet, here he is again sending his son, the Christ. Here he was arriving in Jerusalem, heralded by the crowds of disciples. Here he was riding on Zechariah's colt as plain as day for them.

Jerusalem, the king has come, offering peace. He's come to deal with sin. Look at verse 42. If only you would see and know, even you Jerusalem, particularly you Jerusalem, if only you could see the things that make for peace.

If only you would see the offer of peace that stretched out to you and has been repeatedly, that here right now before you is my son, the promised king, the one who can make peace, the one who can forever bring cleansing from sin.

If only you would receive him, be given him praise to him. Jesus has already spoken words like this back in chapter 13.

[28 : 04] There has been no shortage of opportunity. Look back to chapter 13, verse 34, where Jesus returns to what he spoken of previously.

Back there he says, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it. How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing.

Opportunity after opportunity, willingness beyond willingness from God. And then verse 35, behold, your house is forsaken. And notice how he ends verse 35.

And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Well, he has just arrived. And the disciples were singing those very words.

But yet again, refusal. And so all that is left is ruin. Verse 43, enemies will come and surround you.

[29 : 15] Verse 44, and tear you down to the ground. No stone will be left on top of the other. Total ruin, but yet expressed through tears.

It didn't need to be like this. Total ruin. A ruin that did come to pass in the first century, in AD 70, when Jerusalem was indeed raised to the ground, the temple destroyed.

The Bible tells us that we live now in the age of God's patience. That he desires that all might reach repentance. We live in the time when Jesus continues to preach peace.

Those are words used in Ephesians by Paul. He says, Jesus himself is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility that he might reconcile us to God.

And Jesus came and he preached peace to you who are far off. And he preached peace to those who are near. Of course, Jesus didn't actually preach to the Ephesian church.

[30 : 25] But Paul is saying that as Paul preached to them, it was Jesus himself who was speaking and offering peace. So that still today, as God's word is opened and proclaimed from his church, from his pulpits, then Jesus himself is the one who is here right now in our midst declaring aloud the offer of the gospel, the offer of peace with God.

So that as God's word is opened and preached, that it is yet another day of his visitation for us.

Right here, right now. And Jesus weeps over those who would refuse it.

Such is his tenderness and compassion. He desires that people take hold of salvation, not judgment. But his patience will run out. Do not let it run out for you.

Here today is the day of your visitation. Listen to the warning from Hebrews. Hebrews. If we go on sinning deliberately, after receiving a knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment.

How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, profaned the blood of his covenant?

[31 : 49] Jesus would beckon us through tears to receive his peace, to make use of his patience, and be given to his praise today.

Will we listen to him? Well, finally, we see in verses 45 to 48, the king who seeks proper worship.

The king who seeks proper worship.

Jesus will never stand for his church being corrupted away from the real worship which brings life to his people. temple. After weeping over the city, Jesus enters it, and his first stop is his temple.

And he finds that it has become a place of greed rather than grace, greed rather than glorifying God. And so Jesus is left with no option but to cleanse it out.

Now, at this point, some people would have to travel a great distance to get to the temple, and as they visited the temple, they would be required to have sacrifices in order to be assured of pardon from sin and in order to enjoy fellowship with God.

[33 : 00] And so animals would be bought in and around Jerusalem rather than bringing the whole way on a long journey. But those responsible for the temple had spotted the opportunity to make a

quick buck.

Using the temple as means of monopolizing trade for these sacrifices taking advantage of those who were going to rejoice in God and to receive from God so that worshippers arrived at the temple and were faced with greed and not grace.

Verse 45, here Jesus enters the temple and drives out the greedy, those who perverted his house into a den for robbers.

That's Jesus picking up language from Jeremiah 7, where we see the people saying in one breath, this is the temple of the Lord, this is the temple of the Lord, this is the temple of the Lord. But God says their words are deceptive because they're given presumptuously to all manner of evil.

And he tells them that their temple won't be unconditional safety for them. God goes on through Jeremiah to say, you will come and stand before me, will you come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, we are delivered, only to go on doing these abominations.

[34 : 23] Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Do you see, belonging to an evangelical church, a Bible believing church, a reformed church, there will be no unconditional defense if bubbling under the surface are hearts given to greed and not grace.

Jesus won't stand for such things, not then, and not today. Jesus' entry into the temple here also harks back to Malachi 3, where we see the absolute seriousness with which God takes the worship of his people.

Listen to Malachi, the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple, but who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears, for he is like a refiner's fire.

He's coming to fight off all that would corrupt his temple, to purify and refine, to cleanse it out as we see. And we need to be clear, that is a fight that is ongoing and it is a fight that Jesus will not lose.

He is so totally committed to his church that he's prepared to bring real and pointed challenge to churches who would take him too lightly, who would pay lip service to him, who would take him and his worship and twist it to bring harm instead of hope, who are driven by greed instead of grace.

[36 : 03] of course, it will always be good for a church when Jesus gets to work to right the ship, it will always be good, but it won't be pain free.

And so we need to be realistic, don't we? It isn't beyond us, if we're honest, to be tempted by a religion that serves us. And so we mustn't think that this would never happen to us, so while we're far too well taught, for that to be the case here, Jesus was dealing with the temple.

The heart of the religious life of a people who had unbelievable privilege at God's hand. And so you know, a head filled with theological knowledge that isn't matched with a heart that is in awe of God and given to praising Him, well, that is prime real estate on which to build corrupt religion.

It's prime real estate on which to build that which will rob God, rob His people. Verse 46, quoting Isaiah, Jesus' house was to be a house of prayer, and prayer is the expression of real and living faith.

Prayer is a recognition that God is God, we are not. Prayer is admitting that we are in need and dependent upon a God who does pour out grace and peace. And so the posture that ought to mark true worship ought to be much more the posture that we see in prayer, not self-serving ideas, not filling our pockets with what we can exploit out of others.

[37 : 43] And so we have to be honest, this greed, this self-serving religion doesn't only manifest around money, does it? That, of course, money can be exploited, it's possible in a loving church family to take advantage of that from others, to be self-serving and self-seeking.

What can I get out of other people? What can I get other people to give me and do for me? Rather than thinking, what can I do for others? But that greed can be true for other things, can't it?

Influence, a platform, so that church is a place to become a mover and a shaker, a place to begin to wield some sort of power or authority over people, and so we can become very, very protective of our own ministries.

We might even have very significant roles, we might carry lots of responsibilities, but be driven by what it really does for me, what it gets me, and concern for what any change to that might mean for me.

This is my corner of influence, my realm, and I won't let it go without a fight. Who cares what's best for the church, for the ministry, what's best for me? And you see, when the temple, when the church becomes all about serving ourselves, all about serving me, all about my ego, my place, burnishing

my pride, well, Jesus calls that robbery.

[39 : 08] That is not what his house is for, and his commitment to clearing that out is absolute. Look at how Luke finishes this off, verse 47.

Jesus was daily teaching in the temple, and we see that those whom Jesus confronts wish to destroy him. When we get all twisted up, perverting church and worship to be all about ourselves and what we can get out of it, then we are setting a course that may ultimately see us seeking to destroy Jesus himself.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Jesus' desire isn't to bring destruction. His desire is to see his temple flourish. And so how are we to think of the temple today?

Well, Paul in 1 Corinthians says that the church corporately is God's temple. And we knew that we are to build it with living stones. It's precious. And so Paul says that there are ways to build, there are ways to worship, to minister, that won't last, that are done using cheap materials that will be burnt up in the end.

And there are ways to build that are costly, that will stand in eternity, building with gold and precious stones. And so we have to ask, are we as a church given to worship and service that is building the church, the temple, with our best in costly ways?

[40 : 35] Or are we robbing God of what it is? But Paul also talks in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 of our individual bodies being a temple of God's Spirit.

And so we do have to ask, is my body, is yours rendered over to God, given to his worship, to his service, given that he might rule it, rule it with his peace and his grace?

Or is my life and your life robbing him of what is his? It doesn't have to be like that.

Jesus' words here provoke two reactions. There is no neutrality. Verse 47, one of them is destructive animosity towards Jesus. Let's destroy him. But there's another, isn't there?

Verse 48, wonder at his every word, wonder at every word that speaks and offers and is dripping with his patient, persevering offer of peace.

[41 : 39] The King has come. The peace of heaven has overflowed into this world. And Jesus is saying to us, will you praise me? Or will you provoke me?

Will you receive my peace? Or will my purifying fire have to visit you? Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we so want our hearts to be filled with praise for you, for your Son.

But we are conscious of the many barriers that can get in the way of this. And so grant us your grace and your help that we would be learning evermore to join with the angels of heaven in giving to you unceasing praise as you deserve.

Help us, we pray. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.