

Jesus, Lord of Eternity

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Date: 22 June 2025

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[0 : 00] Turn now to our reading from Luke's Gospel. So please do turn in your Bible. We have plenty of visitor Bibles at the side here or at the back.! Please do grab a Bible.

And we are picking up our reading where we left off last week in Luke chapter 20 and verse 20. You'll find that on page 880 in our visitor Bible, page 880.

So Luke 20 and picking up at verse 20. So the scribes and chief priests, they watched Jesus and sent spies who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.

So they asked him, Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God.

Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not? But Jesus perceived their craftiness and said to them, Show me a denarius.

[1 : 21] Whose likeness and inscription does it have? They said, Caesar's. He said to them then, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said. But marveling at his answer, they became silent. There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection.

And they asked him a question saying, Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, Having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife and died without children. And the second and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died.

Afterward, the women also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife. And Jesus said to them, The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.

[2 : 34] But those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. For they cannot die anymore, but because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.

Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living. For all live to him. Then some of the scribes answered, Teacher, you have spoken well, for they no longer dare to ask him any question.

But he said to them, How can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

David thus calls him Lord. So how is he his son? And in the hearing of all the people, He said to his disciples, Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places of honor in the feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense, make long prayers.

[4 : 03] They will receive the greater condemnation. Jesus looked up, and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box. And he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.

And he said, Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on.

Amen. Well, amen. May God bless to us his words this morning. Well, do you open your Bibles once again to Luke chapter 20.

Now, Jesus is not merely Lord of the church. He is Lord of eternity. His rule and his reign stretches over far more than just his people here and now in this world.

Jesus' rule transcends this world. Creation itself points to new creation. And that is where Jesus' rule will be seen in its full splendor.

[5 : 23] For then, his kingdom will reach to every part of this world. Now, such claims are an absolute challenge to this world, aren't they?

A challenge to any in this world who would want to rule and reign, to hold power and prominence. Because Jesus says, No, I'm the king. And there can be no other.

But also, such claims are a challenge because they insist that this world, as we know it, as it is right now, is not the main event.

And so actually, life here and now must reckon with the world to come, must reckon with the supreme rule of Jesus that will one day stretch over this whole world. And that is a challenge that prompts the religious leaders of Jesus' day to once again seek to trap and destroy him.

They will not accept that Jesus is the king who has triumphantly entered his city. Remember back in 1947, we're told they were seeking to destroy him by challenging his religious credentials.

[6 : 38] And when Jesus turned that around upon them, we read chapter 20, verse 19, that at that very hour, they sought to lay hands on Jesus. And so we read in our passage, verse 20, they're watching Jesus, sending spies to find ways to take him down, to take him out.

And in this latest volley of attacks against Jesus, the king, Luke is unpacking for us what it looks like to live under the reign of King Jesus whilst knowing that he will return to establish his rule perfectly over this whole world forever.

And so we see, firstly, that in this present age, Jesus' rule transcends political power. Verses 20 to 26, Jesus' rule transcends political power. Jesus' kingdom has a call upon mankind that far exceeds the duty that any earthly ruler may rightly ask of us.

Now, God has given us earthly rulers and governments as a means of maintaining order and justice in society. At their best, that is what the institution of government is for, to maintain order, to uphold justice by promoting and preserving righteousness, by punishing evil, bringing a stability that ought to serve the world to come.

Well, sadly, justice and righteousness have been so very far from our government's concern this week. They've become the government of death for all the most vulnerable. But where we choose our governments, and we get what we choose, where we too have a responsibility for such grievous decisions because of this, the people who come to ask Jesus about how to interact with governments had no such freedom.

[8 : 31] They were doing this in the era of an empire. And so there's an added force for us in this whole exchange about giving to Caesar what is his. Notice verse 20. Well, it tells us, first of all, that this question is an attempt at entrapment.

There were spies following Jesus and pretending to be sincere in order to destroy Jesus. They aren't simply asking a question. This is an attempt to destroy.

And their insincerity begins, verse 21, with great flattery, flummery even. Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly. You show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God.

It's an attempt to butter Jesus up, to hide their true motive, isn't it? All kinds of pious language to hide a poisonous tongue. Their question is an attempt to place Jesus in a catch-22.

Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar or not? Are the people of Israel bound to have to pay taxes to a foreign power?

[9 : 44] And the catch-22 is that on one hand, if Jesus says, yes, give tribute to Caesar, then the people who have been hanging on his words will be turned against him. Jews in the first century were living under the uke of Roman rule, and they saw this as an affront to their God-given status as the people of God, robbed of the land of promise.

And so the question is, whose side are you on, Jesus? Are you with the people who long to have a resistance movement against Rome or are you with Rome? These questioners think that they've got Jesus skewered, ostracize the people or oppose Rome, lose your following or lose your life. A win-win for those wishing to destroy Jesus. But Jesus is Lord of eternity and will never be fooled or perturbed by the craftiness of man.

Verse 23, he saw through what they were doing. Their craftiness is laid bare. Jesus sees people's hearts, however clever and deceptive we think we might be.

And look at how masterfully Jesus answers their question. He shows firstly their hypocrisy. Verse 24, he says, show me a denarius. A denarius carried the bust of Caesar on it, had him wearing his

crown to signify his deity.

[11:06] And a denarius was likely the cost of the annual tax to Rome. These coins were technically the property of the emperor and the denarius had to be used for the payment of tax.

And so actually as a coin, it was loaded with significance about Roman rule. But Jesus has just turned the trap on its head, do you see? With a simple question. Show me one.

Who has one? You wonder if a spy and his craftiness was quick to pull one out of his pocket to speed up kneeling Jesus without realizing that by doing so he'd be exposing himself.

Do you see the irony? Jesus doesn't have the coin. They do. They're the ones that are using this coin. Caesar's coin. A means by which Caesar meets out and maintains his rule and his control.

If they're so appalled by it, why do they have it? And what's more, if they use it and trade with it and profit through it, then why shouldn't they also pay the due that is then owed to Caesar for benefiting from it?

[12:16] And so Jesus says, whose image is on it? Whose likeness and whose inscription? It's Caesar's. Well, give to him what is his. And so Jesus also shows their misunderstanding.

Notice the change of language involved here. They ask, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar? Jesus says, render to Caesar what is Caesar's.

See, tribute, tax, is not something gifted, given. something owed. There is then a duty placed upon the people of God to render to our government what is owed to them.

That's what Jesus is saying. We err, we feel to uphold and honor God's ordering for his world if we treat human institutions of government as optional extras.

Something that we suppose we might from time to time honor. Taxes, as something that we will pay occasionally when we feel able. But of course only after really leaving the tax man astray as to what our actual earnings are.

[13:24] Our laws are things that don't really apply to us. Or at least we can pick and choose which ones do. No, Jesus upholds government. And whilst this isn't his supreme command here, we'll get on to that, whilst it isn't his supreme command, and whilst there may be times where Jesus' rule means refusing to adhere to Caesar's rule, we do need to be clear and careful.

If, for instance, there is a matter in which our government acts in a way that places them in total opposition to God's supreme rule over our lives, and we conclude that we cannot obey them, then we need to be careful that perhaps a principled disobedience doesn't become total and wanton disregard for government.

Jesus says, render to Caesar what is Caesar's. But that is the minor note here, isn't it? Because we see that Jesus makes a claim over far more than our pounds or political allegiance.

The climax here is that Caesar's actually belittled in comparison to the claims of God. Do you see Jesus' starting point is, whose image is on the coin? Okay, well it belongs to him.

Render it to Caesar. But there's a world of difference between the image on silver and the image on a soul.

[14:58] Jesus' command to render to God the things that are God's is to say that the image of God is indelibly placed within man at creation. So yes, Caesar has claim on your coins, but your Lord lays claim on your life.

Whose image and inscription is stamped upon your soul? Listen to Ralph Davis here. He says, we read verse 25 and think what a slick answer it was.

We talk about responsibility to the state, or we throw around and talk about two kingdoms, or ramble on about the secular and the sacred, or even raise the difficulties that we may face when these two realms conflict, and we don't hear Jesus.

Pay back to God the things that are God's. When he said that, he minimized Caesar, he trivialized Caesar, he set him in the shade. And he says, I don't know if I can do what Jesus requires.

What does it mean to pay back to God the things that are God's, except to offer him all that I am and have? Jesus' demand here costs far more than we typically imagine as we sit in front of this text.

[16:10] Do you see, this isn't a case of let's do both. These claims are not equal. Jesus' response to this catch 22 is to say, Caesar can piddle about with your taxes all he wants.

I want more than that. I want everything. And so there'll be times that this supreme claim on us means that Caesar has to have his place, rightly, that we submit to government and be law-abiding citizens.

But there will be times that Jesus' supreme claim on us means that Caesar has to have his place rightly and that we cannot possibly let him dictate upon us the things that are God's to dictate. We cannot possibly allow a mere ruler to supplant the supreme Lord of eternity in whose image we've been made. To whom we owe everything. It's a grand claim, isn't it?

And it makes clear that actually it's a duty that we owe to God to give him honour, to give him his due. God isn't begging that we would gift him some time, some interest, some praise.

[17:22] No. It is his rightful due and he will collect. Now it might seem to some that the whole language of duty isn't very warm, it's a bit cold, but duty can be a delight, can't it?

I've been learning what it is to fulfil the duties of father, a duty, a responsibility is placed upon me for our little daughter, there are things that I must do, but that doesn't mean that it isn't a delight to do them.

And God places upon us a duty that is owed to him as creator, his image is written into our very identity and that duty is seen in rendering to him our whole lives, lives given over totally and completely to the rule and reign of Jesus.

And so just in this realm of political power alone, there is a question there, will we submit to Jesus above all others? Will his concerns become our concerns?

What will we do if perhaps we've had a long association with a particular political party or cause? But it's becoming increasingly clear that they are intent on distorting or even killing the image of God.

[18:37] Will we give over even our politics to Jesus so that the inscription upon humanity that matters most to us isn't our rights and responsibilities as Britons, as Scots, or wherever it is, but as saints?

because that is a citizenship that transcends this world. And so our ultimate loyalty, our ultimate fealty is not to the kingdoms of this world, but to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And his is a kingdom that transcends this present age, this present era. And so there's a challenge, isn't it? That's a challenge, isn't it? It is a demand for supreme loyalty, supreme devotion, but also latent within Jesus' demand are words of hope, of promise.

Because he is speaking, isn't he, of a rule and reign that will last forever, a rule and reign that has already begun, of a kingdom that has already broken into this world.

And so giving to God the things that are God's is also taking hold of all that we were created for, taking hold of life in the wondrous kingdom of God. Or to use the words of the writer to the Hebrews, it is to desire a better country that is a heavenly one.

[19:56] Therefore God is not ashamed to be called your God, for he has prepared for your city. Jesus' rule transcends political power, demands of us everything in this world.

But then also we see that Jesus' rule transcends both coffin and creation. Verses 27 to 44, Jesus' rule transcends both coffin and creation.

Jesus is not just king of this world of creation, he's king of new creation. And so even the things that are part of this created order for this life, they are to serve and be subject to the world to come.

God's vision is too narrow, we're too short-sighted if we think of Jesus merely as Lord of this world. Jesus' reign and rule stretches beyond here and now.

And so when we taste fully and finally of his glorious and eternal kingdom, we will be changed, the old will be gone, the new will come. And that is something that will alter the whole reality of this world, marriage included.

[21:11] And so that's really what's behind this question here from the Sadducees. They come to Jesus with another question, another trap, a ridiculous question. But then how often does bad theology stem from hypotheticals or even concocted hypotheticals?

Their question brings to Jesus the whole realm of marriage. But going on behind their question about marriage is both unbelief about the resurrection, and misunderstanding about the resurrection.

Creation itself has a goal in mind. New creation. And so the wonders of new creation have an impact on the things that relate to creation in this world, and that includes marriage.

And so notice the Sadducees come to Jesus and we're told, to make it perfectly plain what their issue is, we're told, verse 27, that they deny the resurrection. And so they bring their concocted question, and it's a question rooted in the provision of Levirate marriage from God's law.

The law that said, verse 28, if a man's brother dies, having been married but without children, then the man must marry his brother's widow and raise up offspring for his brother.

[22 : 30] father. The idea being that a family's interest in the promised land carried through a family's inheritance through their children. And so this was a law to safeguard that inheritance, indeed an inheritance that pointed beyond this world to the world to come.

But here, the Sadducees too, just like the spies, think that they have Jesus skewered. It's a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* approach.

They make it seemingly ridiculous. What happens if a whole family of seven brothers, all don't have offspring, and then once they've all died, then the widow, we could call her the widow of widows, what happens when she dies?

Verse 33, what happens when they are supposedly resurrected Jesus? Whose wife will she be? wife to all seven? Well, we already knew the game's been given away, hasn't it?

They don't believe in the resurrection, so they cannot possibly grasp the significance of the age to come. And so Jesus does begin by tackling their misunderstanding of marriage.

[23 : 46] But it must be said at this point that if our view of God is such that a scenario like this would stump his cosmic plans, then our view of God is far too small. It's patently absurd.

Jesus certainly isn't stumped. And he spells out that it is possible for us to not quite grasp the full glory of the age to come. The age to come isn't just going to be an extension of this world.

Yes, there will be some continuity. We've seen already that service in God's kingdom begins here and now, and it will continue in the age to come. But the age to come isn't just going to carry on as we knew this age.

Except, you know, it'll be forever or something mundane like that. No, it's going to be totally different, remade, a new era, a new age. And so marriage will not be what it was here.

Jesus says, verse 34, in this age, people are given in marriage. But verse 35, in the age to come, those who will be there, those who have rendered to God what is God's, those who have come to him in repentance and faith, those who have submitted to Jesus as king, they will not be given in marriage.

[25 : 03] There won't be marriage in the new creation. Or rather, there will only be one marriage in the new creation. The marriage between Christ and his bride. But why won't there be marriage?

Well, because one age will give way to another. And look at what will characterize the new age, verse 36. Those who are raised to enjoy the fullness of the world to come, well, they will be like the angels, in that death will no longer reign.

There will be no more death experienced anymore. For they will be sons of God, sons of resurrection. And so the age to come won't need marriage in the way that this present age has needed it.

You see, even right from the beginning of creation, marriage had a role to play in God's plan for this world and the world to come. Remember, marriage was given for the better service of God's kingdom.

That is, marriage has always been about more than just this world. It has always pointed to and been geared towards the world to come. That's why woman was given to man as a helper.

[26 : 17] To help in the context of filling the earth and subduing it. Bringing it under the complete rule and reign of the Lord God.

A helper was given to help in being fruitful and multiplying to fill the earth with the sons of God. God. But that will no longer be needed in the age to come when this whole world is recreated and made new.

Because the nature of the work that we'll participate in will have changed. There'll be no more subduing to do. And the need to fill the earth will have ceased.

For Jesus will have claimed the great multitude of his people. And there'll be no death to deplete that number. And so no need to reproduce. And so even this question from the Sadducees exposes that they haven't possibly comprehended all that the scriptures speak of, all that God has promised. They cannot see that Jesus' rule transcends this world. That this world points beyond itself to an eternal kingdom. That is the goal and glory of all history. Now of course as we say all these things there is a thought for many of us who are married.

[27 : 35] Maybe we read Jesus' words here and can't help but be sad at the prospect of not being given in marriage to our spouse in the new creation. And that is in some sense understandable.

But it does also suggest that we can have too small a view of the new creation. Jesus' rule transcends the coffin and creation.

He promises a kingdom that is far beyond this world. And the reality is that marriage will not be so much abolished in the age to come as it will be superseded.

So be assured, Jesus will not use his kingdom as a means of depriving us in any way. Everything will be better in the age of resurrection. Because the great enemy, death itself, will have been defeated.

The very thing that shines a dark shadow over every part of this life in some way. It will be gone. The world to come will only be better. And I do think that that needs to include and must include our relationships.

[28 : 42] So whilst we may not be married, I think it is fair to assume that those relationships we cherish most in this world will not be worse off, but better off. For one, they'll no longer be stained and affected by sin.

And so they'll be set up to enjoy fuller intimacy and deeper joy than ever before. Yes, the outline of the relationship might look different, but the fulfillment of it will only be greater.

The reality is on that day, there will be to enjoy a raft of pleasures and joys that are hard for us to comprehend in this age. A raft of joys that will eclipse and outshine even the most wholesome and happy marriage in this world.

Listen to one preacher on this. He says, Suppose marriage, at its sweetest and best and highest, were simply a pointer, a shadow, a slight token of something infinitely more grand and glorious, beyond all our imagining and almost beyond belief.

A relationship with God, which is unspeakable in its intensity, splendor and rapture. After all, marriage was instituted as a help towards closer fellowship with the Lord.

[29 : 56] And this is the very thing that will not be needed in heaven, where we shall see him face to face and will require nothing to bring us nearer.

Marriage will therefore not be needed for its present purpose, but it will not thereby be jettisoned. It is only its earthly purpose that will be dispensed with. Or as C.S. Lewis said, Neither man nor woman will be asked to throw away weapons that have been used victoriously.

It's the beaten and the fugitives who throw away their swords. The conquerors sheath theirs and retain them. And so, thinking about all these things, there is literally a world of encouragement for us.

And so, in this whole area of marriage, Jesus exposes faulty views of the world to come, but also faulty views of this world. Do you see how we could get something like marriage so horribly wrong if we don't get that it is to serve the world to come?

We could put far too much weight on it being that which will bring us fulfillment. We could make it the idol that we long for more than anything else, that will answer all our woes.

[31 : 16] But in truth, this speaks to us about more than just marriage, but about all manner of things in this created order, all manner of institutions. Creation will give way to new creation.

creation. And so, any institution, the institution of marriage or even political institutions, and indeed everything else, has been given to serve the age to come. Because, verse 38, God is the God of the living, not the dead.

And so, that is why Jesus must also deal with this whole question of resurrection and his own identity as the Christ, but the divine Christ. And that's what's behind these two Old Testament passages that Jesus then speaks of at the end of chapter 20.

Jesus is intent on showing clearly that from the very beginning, the hope of resurrection and the world to come has hung over this world. That it's been a precious revelation of God from the beginning.

Verse 37, Moses certainly knew that and experienced such a revelation, such a hope, hanging over his interaction at the burning bush in Exodus 3.

[32 : 32] God appeared to Moses, declaring himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now, notice what God didn't say.

He didn't say that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But he is their God. I am their God.

And so, whilst the patriarchs had long since died, there is a sense in which they're not dead. That's Jesus' point. God's own revelation of himself speaks of resurrection.

That there's life beyond this life. Because God is the God of the living and not the dead. You see, when God established his covenant with Abraham, he said that it would be an everlasting covenant to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

The eternal God has made an eternal covenant with Abraham and his offspring to be God to them. Well, that is surely a relationship that is established for eternity.

[33 : 34] And we can take heart in that. Our God is the God who binds himself to people with a bond that means new circumstance, new enemy. Not even death itself can rupture that relationship.

So that even when death does come and sting us, God still holds on to his own until such time as he sees fit to raise them to eternal life.

So that he can say, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, even though they died long ago. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Because Jesus is not merely a king for this world or from this world.

You see, the reason we could have such a contracted view of the world to come is because we don't quite grasp from where Jesus came into this world.

That's what's behind the question Jesus puts to the Pharisees in verses 41 and 42. He asks, how can they say that the Christ is the son of David?

[34 : 36] A common view, a common saying. And Jesus doesn't deny it, but he adds to it by raising a conundrum to the Sadducees. So he quotes from Psalm 110.

King David himself refers to the Christ as his Lord. David himself could see that the Christ would be exalted to God's right hand and would in due course make his enemies his footstool.

Well, how could the Christ be David's Lord and David's son? Here was the very scriptures that these religious leaders professed to be experts in, exposing the reality that they missed the key message throughout them.

That Christ was not simply going to be a great king who could exceed King David in power and rule in this world. No, no, no. That is once again to see things only in the context of this world.

But Jesus is again and again trying to get the religious establishment and us to see that his purposes are far above this world. He's wanting us to grasp along with the Sadducees that if we see Jesus as merely some sort of tonic to something that troubles us in this world only.

[35 : 57] Some sort of king who will improve some of what it means to live in this world. To make life a little bit better here and now. Then we have totally misunderstood the scriptures as a whole.

The Christ could be both Lord and son to David because the Christ was both God and man. Born in David's line, born of a woman.

But as Luke told us right at the very beginning of his gospel. Born because of God's spirit. The son of David and the son of God.

And so Jesus is king not only of creation but of the cosmos. And the coffin will not stop his rule. For he will be king of the new creation. Where the enemy that is dead will be conquered beneath his feet, beneath his footstool.

And so the question we are faced with is is our king too small? Is your Jesus too small? And so our horizons too small?

[37 : 09] Jesus insists God is the God of the living, not the dead. God is the God of those who will be raised to eternal life in his kingdom. Not the God of the dead. And so finally he says, finally we see Jesus' rule demands consecration, not charade.

Jesus' rule demands consecration, not charade. From verse 40, sorry I've lost my place, from verse 45 to chapter 21 verse 4.

Jesus' supreme rule over earth and eternity, over church and creation and new creation, demands that we respond to him appropriately. And he's not interested in supposed shoes of devotion.

That is the wheelhouse of the sanctimonious, the scribes who love the shoe, the charade of religion. That is for those who live only for this world.

Such things are the display of those who do not really believe or grasp that Jesus is Lord over everything and that his kingdom fully belongs to the world to come. Jesus wouldn't let himself be pounded off.

[38 : 25] He insists that this life is not to be for ourselves and that this life is not ultimate, but rather this life is to be for Jesus because he promises life to come in the kingdom that's coming.

And so notice the kinds of behaviors that are characteristic of failing to grasp the wonders of the world to come. Jesus' glorious reign. Verse 46. Such a thing produces mere shoe, the finery of

religion, loving long robes.

It loves the fawning of the people, loving greetings in the marketplace, and it loves fame in the right circles, the best seats in the synagogue, and at soirees, known as being somebodies in this world, celebrated for what we are in this life.

It is sailing through this life in ways that are heralded by this world, being made much of in this world. All the while, notice, devouring the vulnerable, taking advantage of widows, but dripping all manner of pious words out of their minds.

Jesus says, no, no, no, yuck. No, instead, he puts before us one of these poor widows as an example. The kind of people you exploit are actually an example.

[39 : 49] Do you see 21 verse 2? A widow. And this widow exemplifies not a charade, but what it looks like to render to God what is God's.

This whole passage began with a question about a coin and giving money. And this is where it ends, with two coins and giving money. And so we see here that rendering unto God what is his is not asking us to give God something beyond, something that is beyond us.

It's not asking us to be superhero Christians. He isn't setting a bar up here that only a handful of Christians can really ever attain. No. Notice, the widow has but two little coins to give.

Whilst it's generally a good thing to read Christian biographies, I sometimes find them a bit discouraging because it can seem that those who really are sold out for Jesus and make a difference for him are a different breed to me.

Made of different stuff, wired differently. Superhero Christians. But then I remember the widow. Do you see? Her giving wasn't something in this world that would be worth writing him about.

[41 : 11] The actual value of one of these little coins is about 60p. It's all that she had. That's the point, isn't it? It isn't about how much we can give, but rather the heart behind the giving.

Is it from a heart that's totally and solely given over to God? Is it from a heart that wants to render to God all that it is? Or is it a charade that like Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, they wanted a reputation of giving generously like Barnabas, but they didn't actually want the cost of it?

Are we prepared to render to God that which is God's whole hearts, whole lives, whole wallets?

Listen to James Philip on this. The claims of Christ are royal claims. Our forefathers used to speak of the crown rights of the Redeemer.

It is no less than this that our Lord's words imply. No less than this that is involved in the call of the gospel. The call to conversion, to consecration, is a call to give God his rightful due to render to him what is his by sovereign right.

[42 : 32] And friends, rendering to God what is God's does and must affect our wallets. It is certainly not less than rendering money to God, but it is much more than that.

One of the values we make as members of this church, as partners together in our family business, is that we promise to give a fitting proportion of our time, our talents, and our money to the church's work in the world.

We'll listen to James Philip again. Speaking about giving tithing, he says it's embedded in the Old Testament law, but it's not abrogated in the New Testament. And he says it's a sacramental sign that we belong to Christ.

Our giving must therefore be a real token, not out of that which is over and above, out of the margin, out of that which we do not really need, out of what was not necessary to themselves, but giving with a red streak of blood in it.

I can't think of a better way to explain a fitting proportion than to say it is giving with a red streak of blood in it. It is costly, not just the leftovers.

[43 : 45] Giving our time with a red streak of blood in it. Giving our talents, our gifts, our service with a red streak of blood in it.

And giving our money with a red streak of blood in it. That is a picture of consecration, isn't it? That is rendering to God that which is God's.

The details for each of us will look different. We're differently gifted and differently blessed, but Jesus' rule, His glorious rule over a coming glorious kingdom demands not a charade, not a charade of devotion, us really being self-serving and self-interested, but demands consecration.

A whole heart, a whole life devoted to the King of Kings and to His kingdom that's coming. And friends, when that is the posture of our hearts and the practice of our lives, then Jesus' words about our service, however little we might think of it, His words are, truly I tell you, this per widow, this per

Christian has put in more than all of them.

We put in all that you have. And on the day when all things are brought to the light, there will be those who, 20 verse 47, receive great condemnation for the charade.

[45 : 11] But there will also be those who receive great commendation for their consecration. And so, how big is our Jesus?

Is He big enough that we're clear on the world to come? And is He big enough that we give Him His crown rights?

Will we render? Are we rendering to God that which is God's? Let's pray. Lord God, we need to have a bigger view of eternity and a bigger view of Your Son.

And so help us with this. Be gracious to us that we would with the eyes of faith be given to see and to glimpse something of the wondrous and coming kingdom of Jesus.

And so grant us Your Spirit's help that we would give to You all that's Yours by right. We ask for Your help because we need it.

[46 : 30] We ask for it in Jesus' name. Amen.