

Judgement begins Today

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 July 2005

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 0 0] Well, do turn with me, if you would, to Matthew chapter 11. Very unnerving for a bloke having all these visiting preachers here. I had Sinclair Ferguson last week.

At least he was doing the preaching then. Now I've got Alistair Begg sitting in the front row making me nervous. But there we are. You're very welcome, Alistair. The message of the gospel of the kingdom and the ruler of that kingdom, Jesus Christ, pierces and divides the hearts of men and women with eternal consequences.

Always. Matthew in his gospel has now shown us that kingdom proclaimed right from the beginning, clearly and widely. First of all by John the Baptist in chapter 3.

Then by Jesus himself in his words in the Sermon on the Mount. By his deeds in chapter 8 and 9. His miracles. Then in chapter 10, the kingdom has been proclaimed also by the apostles, by Jesus' followers going into all the towns and cities of Israel.

But what we see now with increasing clarity in these chapters that are before us, chapter 11 and 12 particularly, is the division that that message causes in the world.

[1 : 2 0] Remember, Jesus promised that to his disciples in chapter 10. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword to divide father and son, mother and daughter, and so on.

And here especially, we see in these chapters the rejection of Jesus by the very people who, of all the people in the world, should have welcomed him most joyfully of all, by Israel.

And particularly by the religious leaders, the Bible teachers of Israel, the Pharisees and the scribes. And these chapters that we're going to look at over the next few weeks, in many ways, give us a prophetic turning point.

We're reaching a moment of destiny for Israel, for that generation, as Jesus calls them here in verse 16. Their attitude, the attitude that we see in these chapters, foreshadows the ultimate rejection of Jesus by his own people.

Just look at verse 14 in chapter 12 there. They're conspiring together, these Bible teachers of Israel, conspiring together how to destroy him.

[2 : 3 3] And therefore, the very next verse that Matthew records for us is just as ominous. It's terrible, isn't it? Jesus withdrew himself from them.

And he quotes from the prophet Isaiah, all about the gospel turning from the Jews and going to the Gentiles, because they would rejoice, and they would hope in him.

It's one of the great mysteries, isn't it? Of the story of God's salvation, that God's redemption for the world is so clearly bound up with the faith of Israel, on the one hand, and yet on the other, it's also equally bound up with Israel's rejection of the Messiah, of Jesus.

That's a great conundrum, the great paradox that Paul wrestles with in chapters 9 to 11 of Romans. But this is what we're seeing here happening in these very chapters.

But though rooted in history, these chapters speak to us very, very clearly today. They speak to people of all times, of all cultures, because always when God's word and the gospel of his kingdom collides with this world, with the world's thinking, with its attitudes, with its religions, with its morality, always, and most especially when it collides with this world in the fullness of God's revelation, in the person of Jesus Christ himself, in the gospel of Jesus and the kingdom, always, we find that the result is one of convulsions, of confrontation, of crisis, within people's hearts, as individuals, within communities, and even at times within nations.

[4 : 22] And these reactions are sometimes surprising, sometimes they're violent, sometimes they're just perplexing. But always, as we see in scripture, and as we witness in life, always these reactions have eternal consequences.

And that's what we see demonstrated for us in these chapters, 11 and 12, the different responses of the message of the kingdom from different people. It goes on in chapter 14 and 15 too, and right up to chapter 16, until we see the right, true response in Peter's confession, you are the Christ, the son of the living God.

But we see these demonstrated before us, and then in chapter 13, Jesus explains these reactions in the parables of the kingdom, and tells us why it is that we see what we see in our world.

But today in chapter 11, we're going to look at these stories before us, and we can see that the emphasis is very, very clear indeed, isn't it? Jesus is saying quite clearly to us that you cannot presume forever on the mercy and grace of God.

He set a day for judgment, and moreover, that judgment has begun. And a time comes for every generation to make up its mind, make up its mind about Jesus and the gospel of his kingdom.

[5 : 48] And Matthew says to us, that time's come, that time is now. Judgment begins today. And the chapter falls into three sections.

We can see it quite easily. There's three different reactions to Jesus. First of all, we have Jesus' dealings with John the Baptist and what he says about him. And that's a response of perplexity. And then we go on from that, verses 16 to 24, to the reaction that Jesus gets from this generation.

It's very different. A reaction of complete perversity. Then in verse 25, and following Jesus' words about the right response to him. A response of penitence.

It's interesting, isn't it, how everything God wants to tell us begins with a P. But there we are. We'll look at it handily under these three titles. First of all then, let's look at these first verses about John the Baptist.

And here we have a reaction, don't we, of honest perplexity. The point here is that Jesus is making is that the message of Jesus and his kingdom can at times cause heartfelt doubts.

[7 : 00] Even among the greatest believers in the history of the world. And that ought to be a great encouragement to us. There are all kinds of interpretations of what John's situation was here.

There are all kinds of sermons on it, no doubt. Was he suffering from depression? Was he backsliding? Was he disappointed in Jesus? Why had he fallen away? We could get sidetracked into all kinds of issues like that about John and his spiritual depression.

But, we must see the context here. John's question is surely best explained, isn't it, by the response that Jesus gives to John. And he makes two responses.

You'll see, he first of all responds directly to John, go and speak to John. And then he responds to the crowd about John. And if we look at the second of those first, verse 7 following, it makes it clear to us that Jesus isn't criticizing John.

In fact, far from it. He's lauding John. He's telling us, not only is this man the greatest prophet who ever lived, he's the greatest man born of woman. You can't get much higher praise than that, can you?

[8 : 05] So clearly, Jesus is not condemning John. Clearly, John's doubts are not an indication of wavering, of unbelief. No. Jesus is saying John is the most solid believer you could ever expect to find.

That's the point of the contrast, isn't it, in verses 7 to 9. Jesus is contrasting John here, I think, to Herod, to the enemy, to the one who's captivated John, who's got him in his prison.

Chapter 14 tells us all about the dreadful business that went on there. But Herod, you see, is a king who wears fine clothes and lives in fine palaces. And Jesus says, that's not what you went to see.

Herod is a man who is swayed like a wavering reed, a shaking reed. But that's not what you went out to see. It's interesting, that verse there about the shaking reed has caused commentators all sorts of puzzles.

But you'll be happy to know that I've had a numismatic insight upon this. Any of you know what a numismatic insight is? Well, ask John Goddard, he'll tell you. Numismatics is the study of coins. And John has written an article with his son about this.

[9 : 16] John will show you, if you like, a coin from the year 20 AD which was minted by Herod himself, probably to commemorate the founding of the city of Tiberias in that year.

And on the reverse of that coin is a picture of a shaking reed, a reed shaken in the wind. Now, Herod put that on there because the reed was a symbol of fertility, of durability.

It was often used for somebody who was founding a city and that's what he'd done. But of course, the people being the people not liking their leader, turned the tables on Herod.

Proverbially speaking, a shaken reed was to signify somebody who was a waverer, a shaker, somebody who kept changing their minds and opinions. Of course, Herod was just like that.

He was an old fox, changed his mind depending on which way the wind was blowing politically, all for his own gain. And you see, Jesus is saying, John was the very opposite of that.

[10 : 15] He's not a waverer. He's not a spin doctor. He was absolutely solid. And yet, there is no question that John here seems to be having doubts.

But it's easy to understand why, isn't it? If Jesus really was the Messiah that John had proclaimed, if God's kingdom had arrived with Jesus, well, what was happening?

Why was John in prison? Why had his ministry been stopped? More to the point, why hadn't Jesus done something about it? Why hadn't he exerted his lordship over Herod and said, let John out of prison?

And where was the judgment that John had promised? Remember in chapter 3, he'll come with a winnowing fork and fire sifting out in the judgment.

That's what the prophets expected on the day of judgment. God vindicating the righteous and judging the wicked. And where was all that if Jesus really was the Messiah?

[11 : 20] Where's the judgment, Jesus, of your kingdom? And we can understand why John would have been very perplexed. He's asking exactly the same kind of questions, actually, that people have asked ever since, that you and I ask today.

If Jesus really is God, if the kingdom has come and begun with him, if Jesus does rule the world, then why is the world as we see it? Why is the world full of evil and wickedness and injustice?

Don't you find yourself asking that? Sometimes it's very personal, isn't it? If Jesus really does rule, why hasn't he healed my particular illness?

Or my loved one's illness? Why is it that my prayers for things which seem to be good and right just don't seem to be answered? Why is it that the Lord could have allowed me to lose my life partner prematurely?

When we could have had so many more years together? We all ask these questions. And there are times when we're all perplexed. And there's so many things that make us perplexed.

[12 : 37] Even though we do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom, even though we do trust, even though we are unshaken by unbelief. And these things although they don't break our faith, they may very well often destroy our assurance, our peace.

We begin to doubt our Savior, don't we? Sometimes there may be sin in our hearts and we say to ourselves, can this Jesus really ever make me holy?

not yet. And it's all because, as Jesus will go on to teach us so clearly in chapter 13 in the parables of the kingdom, it's all because there is still a not yet about his kingdom.

It has begun. He is the one who has come and who's conquered all evil. His rule has begun on earth, but, but there is a but. There's a not yet because he hasn't yet brought this age to its final conclusion.

And so, while he's patient, while he's gracious, while he's merciful, while he's offering his salvation to all in the world who will respond, there are many things which are still wrong, which are still unjust, which are still tainted by sin.

[13 : 57] And there's plenty of evidence all around us for all of these things. But there's also ample evidence to strengthen our faith, to dispel our doubts, to teach us that we can have assurance that Jesus won't ever disappoint.

And that's the response that Jesus gives to John, isn't it, in verse 4. He points John to his words and to his works. He points John to the promises in scripture about Jesus and says, this is all promised, John, this is what you've seen.

Quotes from Isaiah 35. About the blind being healed and the lame walking and the dead rising. He points him to Isaiah 61 about the good news being preached to the poor.

And he says, all that's been promised about me, John, you've seen it. Even though, even though as yet you haven't seen the judgment that is also promised, you've seen all that.

Isn't that enough? Trust in me. You've seen enough. I've done enough. And friends, that's always the message when we have fears and doubts and anxieties and lack of assurance.

[15 : 09] What we don't need is lectures on the doctrine of assurance. What we need is to be pointed to the Savior, to Jesus Christ, to his words and his work, to the person of our Savior.

Jesus says, look to me, hear about me, read about me in the scriptures, fill your mind and hearts with the gospel that was promised and the gospel that's been fulfilled in me, and trust me.

And there may be many perplexing things in our lives. And yes, you don't understand it all, and yes, there will be questions. And notice Jesus doesn't actually answer John's specific questions.

And there are some questions that we have, some conundrums, some perplexities in life that we will never have directly answered. But Jesus says there's always enough.

Christ has done enough, he's revealed enough for us to trust him right to the end. Maybe some of you this morning need to hear that very particularly. Maybe you are being assailed by doubts because of these kind of perplexing issues in your life or in the life of your loved ones.

- [16 : 21] Jesus' answer is one of great comfort. These things are never a barrier. to faith. There's always enough, there's always enough evidence to trust the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We just need to be told it again and again. We need to see it and hear it and understand it in the scriptures again and again. Faith comes by hearing, Paul says in Romans 10, but assurance also comes by hearing.
- Remember John in his epistle in 1 John 5 and 13, he says, I write these things to you who believe so that you may know and be sure. If that's you today, you need to listen to him.
- Look to Jesus. Listen to Jesus. Look at the evidence in scripture. See what he promised. See what he's done. Look to the history of the world church and see what Christ has done in these thousands of years.
- The same gospel that you believe, says Paul to the Colossians, is bearing fruit all over the world. Look at the evidence. Trust. Take heart.
- [17 : 30] See how gentle and kind Jesus is to a perplexed believer like John. Take comfort. He's just the same with perplexed believers today.
- Although, there is also as well as comfort a warning, isn't there, in verse 6. Blessed are those who don't fall away on account of me. Blessed are those who don't fall away and reject Christ just because there are things they can't understand and because there are things that are not yet answered.
- There's ample evidence, Jesus says, for faith in me and therefore he demands that faith and trust in him. Don't fall away because you refuse the evidence. The evidence is there.
- Don't persist. in refusing to see the truth because that is culpable. There's always enough to believe, says Jesus.
- But of course, sadly, there are those who do refuse, who do willfully shut their eyes, who will not see the clear evidence of Jesus Christ and his kingdom.
- [18 : 43] salvation. And that's what we see in verses 16 to 24 in the reaction that Jesus receives from those he calls this generation. It's a reaction, isn't it, of hardened perversity.
- The point here is that the message of Jesus and his kingdom has often been met by pride and derision, even from the most privileged people in the history of the world.
- It's quite staggering. That's who this generation were that Jesus is speaking to in verse 16. Just think about it, they had received the two greatest messengers from God ever in the history of the world, John the Baptist and now Jesus himself, the Son of God in the flesh.
- And yet they refused them both, they rejected them both, they spurned and scorned them both. That's a picture, isn't it, in verse 17. Jesus says you're like grumpy, whining children who have been far too late up at night.
- I wanted to play weddings and they wouldn't play with me. I wanted to play funerals and they wouldn't play with me. We've seen it all, haven't we? Grumpy, tired children.
- [19 : 57] That's what Jesus says you've been this generation. There's a great difference, you see, he's saying, between honest doubts and hardened unbelief in your response to the gospel.
- John came, you see, in verse 18, with a solemn note of repentance and there is that note in the gospel. And they said, oh, he's got a demon. They wrote him off as one of those fire and brimstone preachers.
- They scorned his austere lifestyle. They said, oh, it's the dark shadow of Scottish Calvinism. And they rejected him. But then Jesus came in verse 19 quite the opposite, emphasizing the grace and the mercy and the sheer joy of the kingdom of God.

But they had exactly the same reaction, just in different words. They wrote him off as frivolous and lightweight, eating and drinking. Oh, he's a happy, clappy fundamentalist, you see. Can't have that.

You see, when your heart is opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and his kingdom, whatever way that gospel is presented, you'll find fault with it. It doesn't matter what it is, you will find something to criticize.

[21 : 09] You'll dislike the preacher and his manner. Or you'll dislike the kind of songs that are sung. Or you'll dislike the welcome at the door of the church.

Oh, it's far too friendly and in your face. Oh, it's far too cold and nobody spoke to me. 101 things you'll find to write off the message of the gospel, however it's presented.

And here, this privileged generation persistently and perversely rejected the message of the gospel of kingdom.

They opposed John's call to repent, they opposed Jesus' call to rejoice with equal ferocity, with equal unbelief. You see, in verse 19 it says, God's wisdom, his gospel, includes both of these emphases.

It includes the solemn, searching, piercing command to repent, and it also includes the joyful proclamation of grace and mercy. And yet, astonishingly, men and women oppose both of them just the same.

[22 : 14] And so, Jesus says, there are consequences. Verse 20 is inevitable after these verses.

You can't presume forever on the mercy and the grace of God. That's what he's saying, you can't play the petulant, grumpy child with God forever. There's a price to be paid for opposition to Jesus Christ.

And these verses are grim verses, aren't they? You see, that price is a judgment whose magnitude and severity is directly proportional to the dimension of the privilege of the revelation and the opportunity that has been so perversely scorned and rejected.

These towns and cities were the most privileged places in the whole earth. Verse 20, we see Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God in the flesh, doing all his greatest mighty works there, not least of which was his preaching and teaching, as verse 1 reminded us.

He preached, he taught, he declared the gospel, he proclaimed and demonstrated the kingdom in these very places above all. This, people were spoiled with the gospel.

[23 : 31] They were spoiled with the greatest preacher that had ever been or ever was. And yet in the main they totally rejected him. Don't you find that astonishing? It should encourage us, shouldn't it, when we find in our witness and evangelism at the very best a mixed reaction.

not necessarily our feeble communication, although we can always do better, not necessarily our feeble personal witness, although we can always, always do better.

There is a rejection of Jesus himself which defies all reason. But it's especially damning, says Jesus in verse 21, because he says that even the very worst pagan cities in the world would have repented and believed if they'd seen what you've seen.

If they'd seen the evidence that had been heaped up upon you, they would have believed without question. Tyre and Sidon are places that are denounced in the Old Testament by the prophets.

You can read about it in Isaiah 23 or Ezekiel 26 to 28. They were the very epitome of the arrogance of pagan nations. And notice what Jesus is saying.

[24 : 52] He says it will be far worse for you than for them. Far worse than the heinous wickedness and savagery and immorality of these pagan cities is the refusal and challenge of the true gospel of Jesus Christ by good, right-living religious people.

That's what he's saying. Isn't that staggering? Isn't that staggering? Verse 24, he says it's going to be worse for you than it was for Sodom. Sodom was a byword for filth, for degradation, for arrogant self-sufficiency, for immorality.

Absolutely the lowest of the low. Jesus in verse 23 denounces Capernaum here in words that are taken from Isaiah chapter 14.

They're the words that the prophet uses to give God's judgment against the king of Babylon. Babylon is the image all the way through scripture of everything that is anti-God.

It's the enemy of God. It's the city of Satan. It's the place that's at war with the city of God. And Jesus says to these people you can be as religious as you like, you can be as moral as you like, you can read the Bible as much as you like, you can have all that ethics and good living.

[26 : 15] But if you refuse me as your Savior and Lord, it'll be worse for you than for them.

You will go down to Hades, he says, you'll go to hell. That's very sobering, isn't that? But that, you see, Jesus says, is where perverse unbelief leads to, always and only.

I think it's very sobering for us here in Glasgow today in the 21st century. Think of the immense privileges that we've had in this city, in this country, of the gospel, truth, for hundreds of years, for thousands of years, for millennia.

The motto of our city is let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the word and the praising of his name, now just conveniently reduced to let Glasgow flourish. And Glasgow did flourish.

This was a great trading city, a great building city. What have we done with that privilege? It's chilling to read Ezekiel chapter 27, that judgment on Tyre that Jesus applies here to Capernaum.

[27 : 26] Tyre was a city that was known as the gateway to the sea. It was a great merchant city. It was a city that built ships and traded with a nation that ruled the waves.

And God took it all away. Well, once Britannia ruled the waves, didn't she? Once we had an empire built on the sea.

Once Glasgow was a great seafaring merchant city. And not a lot of that left. We may not be Capernaum and Bethsaida, but as a city, as a nation, as a people, we must surely be among those the most privileged in the history of the earth, don't you think?

In terms of access to the gospel of Christ. Every single person here this morning by the mercy of God has had an incredible opportunity to hear the message of Jesus Christ, to respond.

What will Jesus say of this generation on that day? It's a question for all of us, isn't it? It's a warning against the perversity of unbelief.

[28 : 40] The last little section here, though, gives a third reaction to the gospel of Jesus, doesn't it? Very different. One of humble penitence. And the wonderful reality here is that the message of Jesus and his kingdom can be felt with even the greatest heartfelt desire.

It can be met with that, even among the most humble and lowly and ordinary people. in all the world. It's not a matter of cleverness or of aptitude. It's a matter of the gracious revelation of God to those who will leave their pride behind, who will hope in Jesus Christ.

Verse 25 makes it clear, doesn't it, that understanding and grasping the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a matter of intellect, but a matter of attitude. It's not about worthiness, it's about willingness to come to Jesus.

There will always be the perverse who refuse Christ. And alas, Jesus says, often they are the worldly wise and those who rejoice in their own understanding. But also, always, there will be those whose eyes God will open, who will come to him like little children.

It's ironic, Jesus offers them the rest that all the Old Testament law and prophets promised. God promised a land of rest, it was never quite realized.

[30 : 03] Under the kingdom of David and Solomon, he granted them rest from their enemies, but it didn't last long. The prophets then spoke of the son of David, the root of Jesse, who at last would bring a rest that is eternal.

The very heart of the law and the prophets was that promise of rest, and that's the very thing that the law lovers, the Bible scholars, the Pharisees, rejected.

God because the rest comes from the presence of God himself and being in that presence. And they just couldn't stand being in the presence of Jesus when he came.

It's extraordinary though, isn't it, in these verses that even here in the midst of Jesus pronouncing judgment, in the midst of these dark verses, that still he's urging everyone, all, to come to him.

Even those who are perversely rejecting him, come to him for rest. Even those who are thorough to their law, to religion, to rules and regulations, emptied of the presence of God.

[31 : 05] Jesus is saying, come to my presence. Allow the joy and the wonder and the warmth of my presence melt away your perversity.

Do away with your pride and your moralism and draw you into my rest. Even in the midst of judgment, Jesus is calling, come.

And that's what repentance and faith in Jesus means. A humble penitence that comes to him, that bows the head to receive his yoke, to receive his rule.

And when we do, he says, verse 30, my yoke is easy, my burden is light. Not that it's an easy going, anything goes kind of life. No, quite the reverse.

He tells us all the way through his gospel, it costs us everything. But it's the very antithesis of this sterile religious code of rules and regulations and burdens.

[32 : 06] No, Jesus says, it's a relationship of love with me, with a savior king. It's about being in my presence. I've come to make you whole, to show you life in all its fullness that's been promised all the way through.

Now I've brought it. Come to me. Three reactions to the gospel of Jesus. And the gospel is unchanged and people are unchanged.

And we find just those three reactions today, just as in Jesus' day. And so Jesus' words and his challenge for us today are exactly the same as they were for that generation.

Always it's a double-edged sword. On the one hand there's invitation, there's promise. On the other hand there's warning and there's judgment. Always, always those two things go together.

Why says in verse 15, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. Let me just say two things as we close. First is this.

[33 : 15] We mustn't miss the significance of Jesus' words to John the Baptist. Despite your perplexity, he says to John, the last judgment has actually begun.

In verse 12, Jesus is clear. He says, John is the Elijah promised by the prophet Malachi. That word is fulfilled. The day of judgment has begun. It's begun in the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom.

This generation, Jesus is saying to us, is being judged now. We see that as he pronounces that judgment. It's being judged by the proclamation of his gospel.

And in the response to that proclamation, a violent collision is taking place. The kingdom is going forward violently and forcefully. And there's a violent clash taking place.

People are coming up against it and responding in these different ways. Notice that twice here, verse 22 and verse 24, Jesus refers to a day of judgment in the future.

- [34 : 19] But notice also that the verdict of that day is being declared and forged now by people's response to the gospel, by people's response to Jesus.

You see, gospel proclamation brings eternal realities into the present day and into the present time, into this generation. And the verdict of that day is being decided this day for this generation.

And it's either going to be a verdict of justification being declared right before God by faith now, that is, by submission and obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord.

Or it's a verdict being forged today of condemnation now by unbelief, by rejection, and scorn and refusal of the rogue of Jesus.

And friends, we in our generation, we need to know this. That judgment is being formed today in this generation. The last day will declare a verdict which has been decided now, today, in your response to Jesus Christ.

- [35 : 32] You see, judgment begins today. Secondly, not only has the last judgment begun, but we must be very, very clear that Jesus Christ and none other is that judge.

Verse 28 is emphatic. Jesus says, come to me. He alone is the giver of life. He alone is the giver of rest. This passage could not be more explicitly comprehensive in its claim to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the final and surpassing revelation of God and the one and alone way of salvation.

Look at verse 25. The Father is the Lord of heaven and earth. Verse 27. All things have been handed over to me, says Jesus, by my Father.

Jesus is the sovereign ruler of heaven and earth. There is no rule in the universe outside Jesus Christ. Look at the end of verse 25. The Father is sovereign in revelation.

He reveals to whom he will reveal. Look at verse 27. The Son alone chooses to reveal to those that he decides.

- [36 : 46] There is no revelation of God outside of Jesus Christ. Verse 27 says, Jesus is sovereign in relationships with the Father. No one knows the Father but the Son and those who the Son chooses to reveal him.

There is no relationship with God outside of Jesus Christ. Do you see? Jesus Christ is utterly unique. He alone is Lord of all.

He alone has the issues to decide of salvation and judgment. He alone can give you eternal rest. There is no salvation in this world or in the next outside Jesus Christ.

So the message of verse 28 is for everyone here today. It's for everyone in the world today. It's for everyone in every culture that there's ever been.

Come to me and find rest. Whether you are perplexed, whether you've been perverse in refusing Jesus, or whether you long for him and are penitent.

- [37 : 56] That word is to you. It's a word of promise and a word of warning. Because it's not just an offer, is it? It's a command. It requires a response. Now, in this generation, today.

Jesus Christ. Friends, think about this. Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, offers you today his rest, his salvation, his presence forever.

You've got to grasp it. You must cherish it. Why wouldn't you cherish it? Why would you refuse him? Why would you be perverse?

You must respond today to Jesus Christ. Because if you do refuse, these words of Jesus are equally true for us today.

We can only face the unbearable terror of his wrath. So Jesus says, come to me.

[39 : 11] Today, in this generation. And I will give you rest now. And assurance and peace. And rest then.

On that day. When the verdict decided now is made public to all the universe. and is set and unchangeable for all eternity.

Well, let's pray. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Lord, we pray that you would give us ears this morning to hear these wonderful words of comfort and of blessing and of peace, offering a salvation unimaginable and wonderful.

Do not let us, as we hear your voice today, harden our hearts. For Christ's sake and his glory we ask.

Amen.