

# The Urgent Importance of Repentance

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[ 0 : 01 ] But this morning we are back in Luke's Gospel with Josh and we're going to be reading this morning the end of Luke chapter 12 and into Luke chapter 13. So if you need a Bible, we have visitors' Bibles around the place at the sides at the front.

Don't be shy. Get up and grab one or ask one of the stewards to be glad to give them to you. In those Bibles, I think it's page 872, Luke chapter 12, and we're reading from verse 54 through to verse 21 of chapter 13.

This is just after Jesus has said these remarkable words about him coming to the earth to bring great division. And he also said to the crowds, when you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once a shower is coming.

We're familiar with that here in the west of Scotland, aren't we? And so it happens all too often. And when you see the south wind blowing, you'll say, well, there'll be scorching heat. Don't get much of that here.

But that happens too in the Middle East. You hypocrites, says Jesus, you know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky. But why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

[ 1 : 18 ] And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer puts you in prison.

I tell you, you will never get out until you've paid the very last penny. There was some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And he answered them, do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you.

But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those 18 upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell and killed them, do you think they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?

No, I tell you. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. And he told this parable.

[ 2 : 29 ] A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vine dresser, look, for three years now I've come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none.

Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground? And he answered him, sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put manure.

And then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good. But if not, you can cut it down. Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and there was a woman who had a disabling spirit for 18 years.

She was bent over and couldn't fully straighten herself. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, woman, you are freed from your disability.

And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight. And she glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, there are six days in which work ought to be done.

[ 3 : 36 ] Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day. And the Lord answered him, you hypocrites. Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?

And must not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for 18 years, must not she be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?

As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame. And all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

He said, therefore, what is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It's like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.

And again, he said, to what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It's like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened.

[ 4 : 50 ] Amen. May God bless his word to us and help us to understand his word to us today. We'll do open your Bibles once again to Luke chapter 12.

The human heart can easily find ways of putting off that which is most important and indeed most uncomfortable.

Most people don't like to think about ultimate things when it comes to death, for example. We typically use euphemisms for it. And if death is uncomfortable, then how much more anything to do with God's judgment?

We hate to think about it or talk about it. Even many Christians would prefer not having to reckon with the idea or have to speak about it with others.

But these matters of immense importance cannot be put off. We saw last week that Jesus beckons his followers to render their riches to him, to focus their efforts, their resources, their lives, not on this world, but on being rich toward God.

[ 6 : 11 ] Because we never know when the time will come that our souls are required of us. Verse 20, the rich fool didn't do that.

But also, Jesus has just spoken very plainly about the fact that he hasn't come to bring peace, but division. Verse 51.

Indeed, verse 49, he has come to cast fire on the earth to usher in the great day of the Lord. And so Jesus is the most polarizing person in history.

He comes to divide those who will hear and heed his word in faith, and so take hold of his kingdom forever with joy, from those who would hide from and hate his word foolishly, and so store up for themselves his kindled fire of judgment.

And so the final matter of central importance as we follow Jesus on the only path to glory is the urgency of repentance.

[ 7 : 21 ] And so we see firstly in verses 54 to 59 that judgment is clearly coming. Judgment is clearly coming. Verses 54 to 59. Everything to do with Jesus' arrival in this world speaks to the impending day of the Lord, a day of judgment.

The great day of the Lord is a day of both judgment and salvation. And these verses are all about discernment, discerning what all the signs point to, discerning what Jesus' incarnation and ministry bring before the world.

Now, I grew up well acquainted with the expression, red sky at night, shepherd's delight, red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning. Although in the north coast of Northern Ireland, much like here in Glasgow, it was much more the warnings that we were acquainted with.

And these expressions were a way of reading the weather, what was to come. And that's exactly what we find here in verse 54. Just after speaking about bringing fire and division, Jesus says, when you see a cloud, you know that a shower is coming.

Verse 55, when you see the south wind blowing, you know it'll be a scorcher. But notice the implication Jesus is drawing, verse 56. You hypocrites.

[ 8 : 43 ] You can interpret the sky and the earth, but what is plain as day before you, what I've been speaking to you about, what you've been seeing happening before your very eyes, you are ignoring.

And it's the same today, isn't it? We get all kinds of forecasts and predictions beamed onto our TVs, into our news. Yes, about the weather, about endless things, trivial things.

What sports team or players are going to emerge to be the star this season. Predictions about who will make it on the plane for the next Lions Tour to Australia. But also whole industry set up to forecast elections.

We get John Curtis reading the signs and the polls for us every time there's an election. We get predictions about the money markets and interest rates. There are think tanks and offices set up about predicting all manner of things.

We live in a world where we're bombarded with predictions about the next big thing, the next crucial event. It's everywhere predicting, interpreting the things of, verse 56, earth and sky.

[ 9 : 52 ] But in the midst of all this forecasting and predicting about the waxing and waning of markets and material things and MPs and all the rest, where is the intrigue? Where is the following of the signs about ultimate things?

Matters of life or rather death? Matters of judgment and eternity? Well, for the professing church of Jesus' day, here was the Christ walking in their midst.

Here was the one who fulfilled all prophetic expectation. And yet, the world and worse, the church of the day had their fingers in their ears. Fussing about with, verse 13, 12, 13, inheritances.

Fussing about with the weather. Not discerning that Jesus' arrival signals the arrival of judgment upon this world. That's what the prophets spoke of.

The great day of the Lord was the day of both God's judgment and of God's salvation. Listen to Joel. Blow the trumpet in Zion. Sound an alarm on my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble.

[ 10 : 58 ] For the day of the Lord is coming. It is near. A day of darkness and gloom. A day of clouds and thick darkness. Fire devours them. And behind them a flame burns.

Just as Jesus said, he came to bring fire. But notice Joel also says, yet even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful.

Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Fear not, O land. Be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things. Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given me early reign for your vindication.

And so here was Jesus, walking amidst the people of Israel. The forerunner had come to prepare for him. And Jesus had set about displaying signs of the coming of his kingdom, the coming of the great day of the Lord.

He defeated the devil in the wilderness. He'd begun to work out that victory across the promised land. He'd begun to enact glimpses of the wonderful year of the Lord's favor. But all along he's opposed.

[ 12 : 08 ] First, the professors of theology, the religious leaders of the day, are belligerent towards him at every turn. They even claim Jesus to be on the side of Satan. And so the division that Jesus has just spoken of in verse 51 is already apparent.

The course is set that Jesus and the religious and political establishment will end in great conflict. The conflict of the death of the Christ. And all of this was going to be of great import because it would signal the beginning of the day of the Lord.

Jesus' message was clear. Read the signs. Judgment is coming. I have come to bring fire, were his words.

Discern what's happening. But it's not just important to recognize the signs, the reality. But actually to respond to it.

That's why we check the weather, isn't it? Living in Glasgow, we check the weather to see which raincoat we need today. The heavy one or the light one. And so Jesus isn't just saying, look around.

[ 13 : 18 ] He's saying, look out. Before it's too late. And so do you see here that Jesus' words are the ones that actually search humanity, not the other way around.

It so often seems like Jesus and his church are on the defensive. As the so-called leading lights of this world lob grenades at the church to supposedly undermine and weaken us. With all of our claims about the non-existence of God or the cruelty of God or whatever it is.

But no, the reality is that Jesus himself is lobbing the grenades at the foundations of our sense of autonomy, security, importance in this world.

Searching each and every one of us. Look at how confronting he is to humanity in all of our pretensions of autonomy and wisdom and might. He says, you hypocrites.

You cannot even see what is plainly hitting you right between the eyes. You won't face up to even the plainest and clearest of warnings about what matters ultimately.

[ 14 : 21 ] If you get the weather wrong, you might get soaked or end up sweating or sunburned. But if you get it wrong about the coming day of the Lord. Well, says Jesus, verse 58.

You'll be dragged before the judge. Handed over to the officer and put in prison. Verse 59. You will never get out until you've paid everything back. And of course, there's no way for us to pay everything back on our own.

Verse 57. Jesus says, why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? The Christ has come. The whole calendar of the world has pivoted.

Judgment is coming clearly, surely. That's what the arrival of the Christ brings. Interpret his arrival. And that is what it means.

And so before it does, there's time to respond. Verse 58. If someone is heading to the magistrate with their accuser, there's time on the way to make a settlement.

[ 15 : 24 ] If a judgment is coming and you know that it is and you can see that you're guilty, then make a settlement. Otherwise, you'll face the full force of the law.

Jesus is saying that whilst he is here and until he comes again, there's time to do business with him. Before it's too late. Before you're handed over forever to face the penalty for all that you've done that's wrong.

For wanton rebellion against God's rule and his order for the world. And for willing rejection of Jesus as king, as savior.

For wanting to have life my way in every which way. He's told us that a day is coming when our souls will be required of us.

We do not know when. God has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed. And we cannot avoid that.

[ 16 : 28 ] The signs are still clear. And you know, even if we do not know our Bibles, even if we cannot pay attention to every prophecy of scripture, our hearts, our consciences still point oh so clearly to what is to come.

We all know deep down, don't we? We all know that we are less than we ought to be. We all know that we're guilty of wrong. That we have done the things we shouldn't have.

And not done things we knew we should have. And our consciences on these things are nudging us, telling us, forecasting to us that judgment is coming.

Clearly coming. And these things need to be reckoned with, not disregarded. There's too much at stake to be found to be hypocrites by Jesus.

And that is why he tells us, verses 1 to 5 of chapter 13, that repentance is crucial. Repentance is crucial. Because God's judgment is coming for everyone.

[ 17 : 28 ] However much we would like to deflect from that, to decry it, or even to deny it, God's judgment is coming for everyone. It is a comprehensive judgment. We don't much like to talk about judgment, do we?

To be judgmental is one of the great sins of our world. And worse still, many people will not tolerate the idea that God might be judge. That he could ever possibly rule that our lifestyle, our desires, our choices, our actions could ever be wrong or sinful.

To many that is anathema. Even to many who would want to retain the label of being Christian. But also on the flip side, some will decry any and every disaster in this world, every tragedy, as being irrefutable evidence of God's just judgment upon wickedness.

Almost as if when any sadness or hardship enters life, it ought to beg the question, well, what have you done to deserve this? And so on one side, there's a common conception of a God who feebly acquiesces to whatever we want to do and wish to be true.

One who will not judge. And on the other, one who is meeting out judgment perpetually through any trial and any hardship. And such muddled thinking isn't a product of our contemporary society.

[ 18 : 47 ] Jesus faced the exact same thing. Look at what he has put to him. With all of his talk about judgment, here we have mention of an atrocity. Chapter 13, verse 1.

Pilate has mingled the blood of some Galileans with sacrifices. The crowd raised some sort of cruel and murderous act to Jesus.

We cannot be sure exactly why they're interjecting with this. They could have been holding up Pilate as someone who obviously would be deserving of judgment and fire. Or perhaps they were thinking this atrocity was an example of judgment being meted out.

And they are able to see and interpret things. We can't be sure. But we can know. Is that Jesus, what we can know is that Jesus sets the tune of the conversation.

Verse 2. Do you think these Galileans were worse sinners than all others? Does their suffering mean they're receiving great judgment for their great sin?

[ 19 : 49 ] No, says Jesus. Notice he doesn't say that they weren't sinners. But rather he's saying that tragedy, atrocity, is not a precise measure for human sinfulness.

And on top of this, Jesus adds his own scenario. Verse 4. What about the 18 who perished? Not because of an atrocity, but because of an accident. What about those who died under the falling of the Tower of Siloam?

Were they worse offenders than everyone else in Jerusalem? Were they picked out especially to have judgment fall on them in this way? Because their sins were the most heinous? No.

But here's the thing in all of this. We can be oh so quick to talk about death and judgment when it involves others. How easy it is to comment on the latest deaths in the news.

A stabbing, a car crash, a plane crash, wildfires. These things can be on the tongues of a whole community. But perhaps not so much when it's our own death.

[ 20 : 58 ] When tragedy is going to strike us. And so Jesus is once again being very confronting here. He doesn't just let us slip out of things. Change the subject. Divert attention elsewhere.

We can't just say, what about that atrocity over there? Jesus says, let all of those things be warning alarms for you. Do you see his refrain in these verses?

Verse 3, verse 5. No, I tell you. Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

There's no escaping ultimate realities. They'll come for us all. And so Jesus says, repent. Now is the time to repent.

Listen to J.I. Packer on repentance. He says, in the military, nobody doubts what's meant when the order is given. Halt. About turn.

[ 22 : 00 ] Quick march. It means that the soldiers are being told to turn their backs on the direction in which they're going. And to start marching in the opposite direction from the way they were going before.

That's what repentance is. You see, human beings by instinct. And this is our fallenness finding expression. By instinct, we walk at a distance from God.

And God says, turn around, face me, and walk towards me. The basic problem with fallen human nature is that we all want to be independent of God.

And God says, stop it. To repent means reshaping your life in quite a radical way. And people, just because they find it too costly a prospect, they try to devise a way of being Christian, which doesn't involve anything as radical as a bite turn.

Quick march. Jesus says, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. And repentance isn't a one-time thing.

[ 23 : 06 ] It's the persevering commitment to keep turning away from sin. Turning away from what we want most. Turning away from what we think is best.

And turning to God. And the reality is that we'll find that as we grow and mature as Christians, we only come to see more things that we need to turn away from. And turn to God instead.

Now, Jesus' words about judgment do not come to us as some kind of sadistic expression. He isn't warning of impending judgment to be cruel or nasty or harsh. Or anything like that.

Quite the opposite. He warns. Because he wants us to do something before it's too late. He warns us in love to halt.

About turn. Quick march. To abandon our arrogance. Our sense of autonomy. To shake off all of our self-centeredness and sin. To forsake our folly and our fickleness towards him.

[ 24 : 09 ] To accept that we will not ever on our own be able to prioritize that which is most essential for our lives. Unless we turn to him. To acknowledge that we will make shipwreck if we go our own way.

To accept there will be storing up wrath. If we reject the Lord, our maker. And instead, Jesus beckons us to turn to receive from God.

To find in him solace from the judgment. To make settlement before it's too late. Jesus is saying to us, do not miss all the warnings.

Every earthly calamity is an eternal warning. That unless you repent, you likewise will perish. And those warnings are to be heeded today.

Without delay. Because thirdly, verses 4 to 9. Or 5 to 9. Patience will cease. Sorry, 6 to 9.

[ 25 : 15 ] Patience will cease. There is opportunity now. In God's patience for many to respond in repentance. But God's patience is not without end.

It is not uncommon for Jesus' delay in coming back to be misunderstood. In Peter's second letter, he quotes false teachers who cry, Where is the promise of his coming?

For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation. And it's not uncommon to have the implications of such misguided thinking play out.

After all, the desire to reject any notion of God judging the world is actually saying, With these false teachers, where is the promise of his coming?

He isn't coming back to judge. Don't worry about that. No, no. Live as you please. Do as you like. And don't worry about the consequences. But the answer to that question, the answer to Jesus' delay is not to see it as casting doubt.

[ 26 : 25 ] Rather, it's an example of his remarkable patience. Here's what Peter says. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some kind of slowness, But is patient towards you, Not wishing that any should perish, But that all should reach repentance.

God's patience is born out of a desire that more and more people reach repentance. And that's the very thing we see in this parable that Jesus tells.

Verse 6, A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. Must have been a mature one. He's expecting fruit, and so there'd been lots of care and nurture expended upon it.

But verse 7, he finds three years in a row that produces new fruit. And so he tells the vine dresser to cut it down. Why should it waste ground?

Why should it take up good ground? God has given Israel opportunity after opportunity to bear the fruit that is in keeping with repentance. He has been gracious beyond measure.

[ 27 : 31 ] And above that, he sent prophet after prophet to warn them, to call them back. He has given more than fair opportunity. And so when that has proven unfruitful, when there's no evidence of hearing and heeding, The time comes to cut the tree down.

John the Baptist, back in chapter 3, has already said, Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree, therefore, that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

But look at how exceedingly gracious God is. Verse 8, Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and lay on manure.

Then, if it should bear fruit next year, well and good. But if not, you can cut it down. Do you see this digging, this manure?

It's saying to us that Jesus' arrival, his presence, his words of warning, this is another opportunity. It's yet more patience. God desires that all might reach repentance.

[ 28 : 40 ] But here's the thing. It won't be him who's to blame if we refuse or run out of time. If that is the case, we will not experience anything other than that which we are pleased to choose.

Nonetheless, here is Jesus pleading with Israel to take heed. Do not let opportunity pass you by. And he pleads with us still. Do not let the night set in.

Do not let time slip away so that there's no option left but to set the axe upon the root of the tree. God is remarkably patient. But his patience will cease.

Opportunity will depart. But Jesus would warn us. He would warn us with tears in his eyes. Do not go that way. He pleads with us.

Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Do not put that off. Notice that implicit amongst all of this is that there is a way out.

[ 29 : 52 ] There is a way for the debt to be settled out of court, verse 58. There is a way out of perishing, verses 3 and 5, repentance. And verse 9, it's possible to bear fruit.

Jesus' words don't come to us as some grim horror story that's designed to scare us. He means to face us up to the reality of ultimate things, but always to divert us to something better, something wonderful.

And that's what we see in these final verses, verses 10 to 21. The gospel brings comfort. The gospel brings comfort. Jesus graciously offers relief and release from our moral crookedness.

And that is the only hope we have in the face of coming judgment. We cannot fix ourselves. No amount of trying to shape up will ever be able to pay every last penny of our sin against a good and loving heavenly father who we've scorned in so many ways.

Jesus confronts us with ultimate things, but he does so whilst prescribing the remedy. He doesn't draw out the reality of judgment without also seeking to usher people to something better, much better.

[ 31 : 09 ] And that's why Luke arranges this account like this to finish with the instance of a woman being healed. We've seen healings before. And in Luke's gospel, they are often given as pictures, as glimpses of the wonders of God's kingdom, what it will be like when it's fully consummated.

But at other points, Luke arranges his account to show us something very specific that Jesus is able to do through the picture of a healing. And here, as Jesus beckons us with great seriousness and solemnity to repent, Luke concludes by showing us the sheer wonder and delight of the power of Jesus at work through the gospel.

But as he does that, he also exposes once again, the inability of the professing church to discern the times, to discern what Jesus was here to do.

And so verse 10, Jesus is in a synagogue teaching on the Sabbath. And verse 11, a woman with some kind of disability is present. She had known the affliction for 18 years, bent over, crippled.

Although notice, despite this great affliction, she was still gathered for worship. Where else is there any solace in the midst of such misery? I think it's worth noticing this.

[ 32 : 32 ] Here was a woman in a terrible state, but she was still out to worship. It can be tempting when tragedy strikes to take some time away from church. But actually, even in the face of ongoing and dire need, the place where we can find what we need most is always the place where Jesus is, the place where Jesus speaks.

And this lady's predicament would have been obvious to all. And you knew that if there are times where our presence here on Sundays is done so through tears and grief and pain, that's more than okay.

As it is here. Jesus, verse 12, he sees her. And as he often does with those in dire need, he sees and he can do something about it. That's what happens.

Jesus frees her from her disability, laying hands on her. Verse 13, she was made straight and she glorified God. But notice this event provokes ire from the ruler of the synagogue.

Verse 14, he was indignant because Jesus had dared to heal on the Sabbath. There are six days for work. Come on, any of those days to be healed, but not on the Sabbath.



[ 33 : 50 ] Such is always the way with the sanctimonious. They fuss about with minutia and miss the splendor of what Jesus is doing all around them. They're happy to see and inflict misery in the so-called defense of morality.

But Jesus is having none of it. This is just another instance of not being able to read the times. Notice, once again, verse 15, you hypocrites. You're all happy to take your animals to be watered on the Sabbath.

You can make space for animal rights on the Sabbath. But not for any sense of humanity. We see some of that today, don't we?

Animals often appear to have more rights than humans. Outrage has sparked over any instance of somebody being silly with their pet. But so much silence about wrongs inflicted upon people.

Notice Jesus makes it so stark. You show mercy to animals. But verse 16, you're happy to pile misery on a woman. An image bearer. Someone blessed with humanity.

[ 34 : 58 ] More than that, more than just a woman. One who's privileged to be a daughter of Abraham. One who knows the covenant. More than that. One who's been bound by the devil. And more still, bound for 18 years.

You can imagine the sanctimony that would, the kind of sanctimony that would say, Well, she's been so afflicted for such a long time. What's another day to wait?

No, no, no. That is to totally misread the times. That is to miss out, to be blind to salvation. To be blind to what Jesus has come to do.

He has come to bring freedom, to offer freedom. He's declared the arrival of the year of the Lord's favor. The Sabbath of all Sabbaths. Back in chapter 4. And part of the trouble with interpreting the times properly.

Of grasping exactly what it is that Jesus has come to do. Part of the problem is that it doesn't leave room for her own little kingdoms to remain. And so that means self-righteousness must give way to repentance.

[ 36 : 04 ] It's an ugly thing when we want to fend off Jesus' call upon us. We end up striving to retain our little empires. We strive to hold our own sense of righteousness. Our good deeds.

That would set us above everyone else. Or at least most other people. Here was this ruler of the synagogue. No doubt taking great delight in his meticulous Sabbath observance.

But Jesus says, you hypocrites. That is failing to read the times. And it's interesting that such miserliness is in the context of Sabbath.

Sabbath itself is bound up with freedom. The word repeated again and again throughout these verses is freedom. Verse 12. The woman is freed. Verse 15.

Untied. Unbound. Set free. Verse 16. Loosed from the bond. Set free. And Sabbath as an idea, as a thing, is bound up with freedom because it was given to those who were set free from slavery.

[ 37 : 09 ] Slaves don't enjoy Sabbaths. And so here is a total misreading of Jesus of the time of what was coming. It doesn't have to be judgment.

It can be freedom. Jesus has come for salvation. And so verse 17. All that is left for those who won't recognize who Jesus is and what he's come to do.

What he's come to signal. To see that he's come to usher in the great day of the Lord. All that's left for those who won't see it. Verse 17. Is shame. Shame.

Instead of tasting his glorious deeds. Tasting his kingdom. Tasting his glorious Sabbath. His wonderful rest. His liberating power. This ruler couldn't see it.

He's left with shame. There's one final thing to say about this miracle. Because Luke, as he has done before, uses this lady as an enacted parable.

- [ 38 : 12 ] Do you notice verse 11? She was bent over. She couldn't straighten herself. And uprightness. Uprightness of posture is a uniquely human trait.
- Because it speaks not just to our physique. But also to the dignity with which man is bestowed. As image bearers of God. Man is a moral and spiritual creature.
- And our uprightness speaks to that. And so to be bent over. Unable to stand straight. Is to be less than what our full human glory should be. It's to be like a slave under a heavy burden.
- And she was gripped by Satan. That's what we're told. Verse 16. Here was a picture of a grim spiritual condition. A picture of what we are before God on our own.
- Unable to straighten ourselves. Carrying a burden of guilt. And with a judge appointed to carry out judgment. And so how wondrous then that look.
- [ 39 : 14 ] That Jesus means to reassure us that when we do repent. When we do come to Jesus. He can wonderfully restore us. He does wonderfully restore us. Verse 13. He can make us straight.
- And so the climax of this teaching of Jesus. Is not the grim reality of judgment. But rather the glorious rescue that Jesus promises.
- There is patience. God is patient. Desiring that all might reach repentance. And Jesus is able to save to the utmost. Those who repent.
- Indeed. Whilst his kingdom might not look like much now. In the face of a great tide of unbelief. Of getting Jesus horrified. Probably wrong. Here was but one woman. Rescued from Satan and judgment.
- But such glimpses of his kingdom. Are like a mustard seed. Verse 19. Or like leaven amongst flour. Verse 21. It might seem slight. Small insignificant.
- [ 40 : 14 ] When most of Israel were hypocrites. Failing to read the times. It might seem small and insignificant. When our riches in this world. Aren't given for this world.
- But for being rich toward God. It might seem like little. When there is certain judgment to come. But. Jesus assures us. Any glimpse of the victory of his kingdom.
- Is like that mustard seed that grows. To be big enough to have birds nesting in it. Or to leaven all manner of flour. Friends.
- Jesus beckons us to repent. To read the times. To have always before us. The ultimate realities of life and death. Heaven and hell. Salvation and judgment. And as he does so.
- He also assures us that he can make us straight. He can make us fruitful. He can make us whole.
- [ 41 : 12 ] He can settle our debt. If only we will come to him. The day of the Lord will reveal a terrible judgment upon this world.
- But. But. But. It will also reveal a glorious salvation. For those who have repented. Let's pray.
- Lord God. Grant us your grace.
- That we would never presume upon your patience. And grant us the wonderful fruit. That is in keeping with repentance. That our homes would.
- Forever be your kingdom. And not this world. And so please be at work in our hearts. That we would surrender them to you. We pray in Jesus name.
- [ 42 : 10 ] Amen.