

Matthew 14:1-12

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- [0 : 00] Well, good morning all. So, today's the day we start Matthew 14, but you may recall that we didn't finish Matthew 13 last week because the speaker went on too long.
- ! Let's just pray. Father, we thank you for your word. And we thank you that as we explore the riches of your word, we grow. And we don't only grow in you, but we grow together.
- And we're aware of you joining us together as a sort of process as we study your word. And we thank you for that. We thank you that we are in safe hands when we are in your hands and when we're in your word.
- And we would ask this morning that we don't just study this word for the sake of gaining information, but we want to gain information. We want to gain a closeness with you and with each other as we study your word.
- And we want our lives to be actually changed in Jesus' mighty name. Amen. Amen. So, turn to the end of chapter 13 of Matthew.
- [1 : 14] And you may recall that during that chapter, I'm not going to read from that chapter, I don't think, but you may remember that we were looking at Jesus' return to his hometown of Nazareth, that once again he was utterly rejected by the people in his hometown of Nazareth.
- And in fact, how they tried to kill him by throwing off a cliff, which we actually didn't get from Matthew's gospel, but from Luke's account of the same story. And we read there that he could do no miracle there because of their unbelief.
- And if you remember, we deduced that this was not because he was incapable of doing a miracle there, but because there were a variety of reasons that he chose not to do. And if you want to know what those reasons are, I'll send you last week's recording, because I don't have time to go through it again.
- But it was clear that he chose not to do those miracles, and we discussed why that was. And then we clarified also that where the Bible said, it said Jesus marveled at their unbelief, or was astonished at their unbelief, wondered at their unbelief.
- It's written in English as if that kind of took Jesus by surprise, and we went through the fact that it didn't take him by surprise at all, because he is, after all, omniscient, so you can't take someone who's omniscient by surprise.
- [2 : 38] But that this was, in fact, the gut reaction of a loving God to the rejection of the people that he loved. He suffered as we suffer when people reject what we say to them.
- And I use an example from my own experience, when people come on a Christianity Explored or similar course to my house, and they don't turn to Christ. And it mortifies me, the fact that they've been in my house, drunk my tea, eaten my biscuits, and are going to go to hell.
- It doesn't make me feel guilty, but it doesn't bless me, the fact. And I'm not surprised by it. I'm not taken aback by it, in one sense.
- But it's still a gut-wrenching thing to go through. And you remember we looked at Ezekiel 33 and verse 11, where it's expressed in the book of Ezekiel.

God says, Now, God knew that they wouldn't repent and live, but it didn't mean that he didn't have that visceral reaction to the fact that they had chosen to go to hell.

[3 : 51] When the people you love chose to go in the complete opposite direction from the one you want them to take, it has that effect. And the emotions that we feel are emotions that he also feels, probably with much more intensity than we could even imagine.

Another one we could have looked at, but we ran out of time, was John 11, which speaks of, you can by all means turn there, John 11 speaks of the raising of Nazareth.

Lazarus. Get your teeth in, right? And in verse 35 of John 11, you have this very simple, shortest verse in the Bible, which says, Jesus wept.

And you think to yourself, well, why would he weep? Because he knew what he'd gone there for, and he knew what the outcome would be. Why would that bring weeping? But the people around him said, see how he loved him.

And so there was a visceral reaction to the death of Lazarus, even though he knew he was about to raise him. And we need to, we need to keep in mind that Jesus was entirely God, but was also entirely human.

[5 : 07] And so he suffered human emotions when stuff that brings about human emotions happened to him, as well as being omniscient, so all-knowing, so he knew what the outcome would be, and as well as being almighty, almighty, omnipotent.

So that's a sort of summary, but what we didn't get to was the applications of this, because we had gone through Matthew 13 and realised that this situation where he was expressing regret at these things, and we were thinking, well, how can he then be God, and how could he be omniscient, as well as being seemingly surprised, and it led us to a conclusion, which we didn't get to voice last week, there are no contradictions in God's word.

What appears to be a contradiction, study at that point, because those things have been put there so that you will unearth nuggets. That's my view of it, anyway. So we need to be diligent, and an application for us is to be like the Bereans, and lots of people claim to be like the Bereans.

What they do is they say, oh, I've been Berean about this, and what they've actually done is they've quoted their favourite speaker. Don't, in a sense, I'd almost say don't have favourite speakers, but that's silly because some of them are, some of them might say, really don't have them as a favourite speaker, but some speakers are reliable.

However, none of them are right about everything. Not one. Don't take everything I say as gospel, because I'm only a man and I get it wrong.

[6 : 53] And you know me well enough to know that when I get it wrong, I'm happy to tell you that I got it wrong and correct that. But there'll be those errors that I make that I don't even know about. So study the word for yourselves.

There is no substitute for studying the word for yourself. You should either be confirming what I've said or coming to me and saying, Ray, you got that wrong and here's why. We must remember that Jesus loves us with a passion that we can't even imagine and so the emotions we feel, he feels even more intensely.

Another lesson for us in this whole, if you think back to the whole of chapter 13, Jesus' responses were always driven by love. Our response to the unsaved and the people who slight us and the people who stand against us and the people who make themselves our enemy should also be a loving response.

And by that I don't mean a mamby-pamby response. I mean we should speak the truth in love and we don't compromise on the truth and we don't go, there, there, your sin's okay. No, that's not what I mean. I mean we do what Jesus did, was to be uncompromising with the word whilst also retaining love for the person with whom we're dealing.

and remember this because this is so important and to me this was a statement made by a man you've probably heard called Paul Washer and Paul Washer is someone who at the very least you can say is he preaches the uncompromising gospel and he said the gospel message is not a message of unconditional salvation but it is a message of unconditional salvation for those who believe and it's an eternal death sentence to those who don't.

[8 : 45] And we kind of need to have that perspective and that sense of urgency that it is so important for people to listen to and take in the gospel which has a power of its own if we get it to their ears it has a power of its own to transform people.

But often I think we hang back from sharing the gospel because we don't want to offend but if we get a perspective that reminds us that when they finish this life having not turned to Christ they have an eternal death sentence.

Sometimes and I speak this from personal experience sometimes my fear of being not liked exceeds my fear that this person will go to hell. And I need to address that balance so that my fear is of a different nature.

My fear is this person might not get saved. And it makes me more avid and it makes me more enthusiastic for the gospel. May it be the case for all of us.

So with that chapter 14. Now I'll try not to fail to get to the bits of application at the end of this.

[10 : 08] But to start our study of Matthew 14 I want you to turn to Mark chapter 1 and verse 14 just to put a bit of context in ahead of time.

And this verse simply says, now after John had been taken into custody Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God. So that verse is written after Jesus' baptism and so it's fair to assume that Jesus' baptism was pretty much the end of John the Baptist's ministry.

There may have been an overlap of some kind but it wasn't a big overlap. And very soon after Jesus' baptism John the Baptist was put in prison. And then we read an account of the death of John the Baptist in Matthew 14 which is where we need to go now.

And having studied through the parables and having studied what happened to Jesus when he returned to his hometown. And again I'm not going to rehearse those studies because we only finished them last week and the recordings are there and the notes are there if you want to go through them again.

But suddenly out of he's in Nazareth and he did not do many miracles there we go to at that time Herod the Tetrarch heard the news about Jesus.

[11 : 40] Now that just seems of first reading to be a little bit disjointed. what's that got to do with the previous parts of Matthew's gospel? Why did Matthew put the death of John the Baptist in this gospel and why did he put it where it is?

It's a kind of a conundrum and as with many of the conundra, is that the right plural for conundrums? When dealing with all of the various conundra so far, most of them Jesus hasn't explained and you've got to dig to find a suitable scripturally sound view of what these parables meant or what this action meant.

And we're in a similar situation here where we just need to understand what was significant about the death of John the Baptist that made Matthew include it in his gospel and right here.

So let's read it through. We're just going to go to verse 12. At that time, Herod the Tetrarch heard the news about Jesus and said to his servants, this is John the Baptist.

He has risen from the dead and that's why miraculous powers are at work in him. For when Herod and John, sorry, when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.

[13 : 11] For John had been saying to him, it is not lawful for you to have her. Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd because they regarded John as a prophet.

But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.

Having been prompted by her mother, she said, give me here on a platter, the head of John the Baptist. Although she was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths and because of his dinner guests.

He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl and she brought it to her mother, his disciples came and took away the body and buried it and they went and reported it to Jesus.

So we're going through the Gospels, we're going through the parables, we've been describing the kingdom of God and then suddenly we're talking about John the Baptist's death which kind of think, well why is that significant?

[14 : 23] And hopefully we'll uncover some of the reasons why it was significant. John the Baptist carried a message and right up to the day that he was in prison the message was repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

And it was an unwavering message and it was a message that when Herod the Tetrarch otherwise known as Herod Antipas, when he took his brother's wife as his own wife, he said repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.

His message to Herod the king was repent. And we read in another part of scripture that he liked to listen to John, he saw that John was a holy man and yet we've just read but he wanted him put to death but he was afraid to put him to death for political reasons, didn't want to upset the crowds.

Herod's position was one of a puppet ruler of the Roman Empire and he was called Herod the Tetrarch.

Herod the Great, and we'll go through a bit of the history of Herod the Great in a moment, but Herod the Great, he was kind of king of all this lot and you may or may not know the story that when he finally died he was eaten by worms from the inside out.

[15 : 54] But the short version of the story is that his kingdom was then divided into four bits and given to his four sons. One of the reasons he had four sons was because he killed two of his sons, he used to have six, but he was known as a vicious leader and if you challenged him you got executed.

He didn't involve himself in debate or any of the nicenesses of discussion, he just, if you spoke against him, he killed you. So a discussion with two of his sons resulted in their death.

He also, I think, killed two of his wives. So he had wives plural. And it was said that you were safer being his pig than you were being his son or daughter or wife because you were less likely to get killed if you were his pig.

But what happened then was his kingdom got divided and it got divided into four between the sons. And so this area here plus this area here was a quarter roughly of the kingdom.

Hence the word tetrarch means leader or king of four. He was king of a quarter of the whole area. next door was this other tetrarchy of Philip and it was Philip, Herod Philip, which was Antipas' brother whose wife he finished up married to.

[17 : 26] That just gives you a picture that I hope is helpful. And now I'm even more confused than I was. So this message of repentance was pummeled at Antipas.

you shouldn't have her. She's not your legitimate wife. I don't know if any of you have ever been in that situation and had it either go for you or against you. I remember I was in the civil service and one of my colleagues was upset one day and I took her aside for a coffee and I said what's up?

You're really out of sorts. And she recounted this story of this man who she'd fallen in love with who was married and they were having this affair and he promised to leave his wife and all of this.

And I said to her do you realise that this relationship is completely inappropriate? The man you're chasing is not a man you have any right to chase.

Do you want to be known as a homebreaker? Is that where you're headed in life? And she was taken aback. And I said I don't say this to condemn you but it's a modern thing that you just go and take somebody else's spouse but it's not right and it's not godly and you will bring a heap of trouble on you if you don't give up this man now.

[18 : 49] Well the short version of the story is she did give him up. And so that affair ended as a result of me speaking some of God's word to her even though she didn't get instantly saved.

but it took me screwing up my courage to give that message to someone because if you're in the civil service I don't know if any of you have ever been civil servants but it's very woke.

And so that was hate speech in their eyes. And saying the things that John the Baptist said to Herod Philip was also hate speech.

You know you can't tell me I'm a sinner I'm the king. I'm going to lock you up. In fact I want to kill you but I can't do that for political reasons so you just stay locked up.

And at the point where we get this account in Matthew's gospel he'd probably been locked up for around about two years. Certainly more than a year. Maybe a bit more than two. But it was a prolonged period of imprisonment.

[19 : 55] And strangely he was imprisoned in what was the home of Herod. He was in the basement of of the same building that Herod lived in and Herod used to drag him out and talk to him because by talking to him he deduced that this was a righteous and holy man.

But then he sent him back into the prison and carried on with his sin. So this is the man we're dealing with here.

and at the risk of totally departing from the flow of my notes why would this be significant for Matthew to record now?

Well when you think of it John the Baptist the same Herod Herod Antipas was responsible for the death of John the Baptist and he was also going to be in charge when it came to killing Jesus.

And so to the audience that were in the receiving end of Matthew's Gospel which was predominantly a Jewish audience he was effectively pointing out that the same justice system that killed John the Baptist also killed Jesus.

[21 : 11] And that the hallmarks of the death of Jesus was very similar to the hallmarks of John the Baptist. in that there was no due process other than the corrupt process that was instigated by Herod himself and Jesus had other layers to go through.

He went through a corrupt Jewish process first and then eventually through a corrupt Roman process. But the point is there was no real justice and that the message to repent was being ignored and not I would go as far as not just to say ignore ignored but actively proceeded against.

Like I am not going to be seen to repent. There was no there's no there has to be humility for repentance does there not?

You have to be able to say sorry I got that wrong. Herod was in a party and he was this is Herod Antipas he was in a party with all his mates around him.

Chances are the Bible doesn't say it. Chances are there was a lot of drink flowing there. Probably a little bit like this. And I think one of the reasons Matthew puts this forward is because it really I'd use the phrase it tells people writ large what the regime was about and where people's hearts really were and these were the hearts upon which Jesus depended for his life later on.

[22 : 49] In fact it says that Herod wanted to meet Jesus because we've just read he says in verse one Herod the Tetrarch heard the news about Jesus and said to his servants this is John the Baptist raised from the dead.

Now this tells me something that I hadn't previously considered because generally you read about John the Baptist and there's no record of signs and wonders. And yet Herod said signs and wonders means that John the Baptist has been risen from the dead.

So there must have been some signs and wonders attached to John's ministry. They're not recorded and we don't know what they were. I just make a deduction from that statement. But he wanted to see Jesus.

And I suspect again it's not clearly stated in scripture so it's purely my conjecture that he wanted to see Jesus to see if it really was John the Baptist. I could be wrong about that.

But in any event he wanted to see Jesus. And then we've got the account when Herod had John arrested so this is a year or two prior he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias the wife of his brother Philip.

[24 : 13] Now you can imagine being those of us who are married men in the room when somebody continually has a go at your wife and says you're in sin you should get back to your husband.

This is adultery. This is utter sin. In fact it's an abomination in the sight of God. And so on and so on which I can imagine John the Baptist didn't pull punches so that message was being hammered.

And I can imagine Herodias coming to a point saying for goodness sake you need to do something about this man. Kill him. And Herod saying but if I kill him I'll upset all the Jews and I'm there to pander to the Jews because I'm supposed to keep the peace because the Roman puppet leader is supposed to preserve peace among the Jews.

So he said I'll lock him up. He'll be out of the way. He'll be out of your hair. He won't be continually coming and condemning you for committing adultery. So because of Herodias he locked John the Baptist up.

Now his imprisonment was unjust. His subsequent death was even more unjust. In fact one has to conclude it was an utterly pointless death.

[25 : 30] But then you'd say the same of other Jewish prophets over the years who were killed simply for expressing a view. Nothing like that happens in our day does it?

People don't get locked up for expressing a view. Oh that's hate speech! Jewish people were killed. Now his father, he was claiming just as his father did to be Jew friendly and therefore he claimed to respect the law of the Jews.

So he wasn't only keeping Roman law because this society had two legal systems running side by side because they were beholden to Rome and so they were keeping Roman law but they were also for the Jews much more important trying to keep God's law.

And Herod Antipas just like Herod the Great had done claimed to be Jew friendly. You know you're alright with me. I'll look after you. I'll let you have your worship and pat them on the head and let them do their stuff.

But what John the Baptist was showing was their hypocrisy. You might remember just as an aside Herod the Great was very perturbed when the Magi showed up and said we've come to find the King of the Jews that's just been born.

[26 : 55] King of the Jews? I'm the King of the Jews! Where is he? I want to kill him. Well that mindset had been passed down to all the Herods and Herod Antipas was known as a vicious leader who would not countenance any opposition but he was also known to be a paedophile an adulterer and a sexual pervert in other ways and so don't we put strange people in charge of our society sometimes?

But Herod the Great made these same claims to be Jew friendly and so John the Baptist was saying but it's against God's law for you to have her.

You are a hypocrite. If you call me a hypocrite I'll lock you up. You see the dilemma. Now the reason I'm laboring that dilemma because when we get to the end and we talk about application we face similar things.

So another reason Matthew included it was not just to show that this justice or injustice system was being perpetrated and that Jesus was going to die under the same system but that to anyone who says repent and believe you're going to get the same.

You'll either get people who go yeah I do need to repent and believe or predominantly you're going to get people who say you can't call me a sinner and unfortunately the stance that we've taken and by we I mean the wider church the stance we've taken is well we won't mention sin.

[28 : 31] Lots of alpha courses you can go on don't even mention sin they don't mention repentance they only mention what a blessing it is to be with God they don't they don't say you have to realise that you have sin there is something you need to be saved from without sin you don't need saving you can still get a blessing but you don't need saving because there's nothing to be saved from if there's no sin John the Baptist was saying Herod this is sin and you need to repent now I'll lock you up so both of them were carrying this message of repentance and both of them died for it is the summary of that so some interesting sort of things I mean I don't want to get off into a history lesson because we're really here to get to what the spirit of

God is saying through this but Herod the great this evil vicious ruler who killed people on a whim executed two of his wives two of his sons he also executed the whole of the Sanhedrin at one point he actually killed the lot of them in one go because he didn't like what they were saying about his doctrines!

So they had to find a new Sanhedrin and probably the new Sanhedrin would think twice about disagreeing with Herod so there was this regime that had been imposed over the Jews that was godless and in spite of oh yes you can have your Sanhedrin you can have your religious leaders you can have your law but actually Rome's law will supersede it I was thinking when we were worshipping in many ways the death of John the Baptist could be seen as a loss not a victory and at the time Jesus' death would have been seen as a loss not a victory they tried to impose something on the corrupt!

Roman law and what came out of it well they just killed him and carried! on as if nothing had been said but because we have an eternal perspective on God's judgments and on God's systems and on God's government these were not victories for them at all they simply served to confirm that they were worthy of judgment that they were worthy of the fires of hell!

and mostly through scriptures we see again and again and again that God allows people enough rope to sin big enough to reap the condemnation that goes with that sin he was also!

[31 : 38] He was paranoid hence he killed everybody that you know they're against me I'll kill them they're against me I'll kill them he was a very paranoid! character Herod Antipas was also paranoid hence when he was having this feast and he was surrounded by people that he was kind of sucking up to he didn't want to kill John the Baptist because he didn't want to offend the people but an even bigger thing for him was he didn't want to look silly in front of his mates you could have anything you want up to half my he owned so he was offering something he wasn't able to give in reality but he he he he made this offer and then when she said okay fine I'll have the head of John the Baptist he was in a real dilemma he had conflicting fears if I have

John beheaded the Jews will rise up against me and if I don't have him beheaded I'll look silly in front of my mates and that dilemma is one that alright in a smaller way but I can remember I can remember preaching the gospel on the streets of Froome and one of my colleagues from work showed up and I suddenly felt very vulnerable because it wasn't widely known at my workplace that I preached the gospel on the streets and now it was going to be all over my workplace that I preached the gospel on the streets and I felt vulnerable and I could easily have gone okay I won't pursue this but I kept preaching and so when I next got into work they all knew it led to some interesting conversations but my point is that

Herod Antipas was he inherited his father's characteristics and so he was in this conflict now it's a conflict in some measure or other we all face from time to time when we have to make a stand for the gospel and it's going to lead to us being unpopular I remember in the civil service when they said would you like to join the diversity group and I said well yes yes let's just paint a little picture about the situation into which

John the Baptist had spoken concerning Herod Herod was originally married to a lady called Phasaelis and she was the daughter of a Nabataean Arab leader so he was linked by marriage to an Arab kingdom and then he divorces his wife and steals his brother's wife so suddenly he has an Arab kingdom that wants to make war against him which they did so that the level of bloodshed that took place as a result of this man's adulterous desires was that an Arab kingdom made war against his kingdom and won and thousands of people died and an awful lot of blood was shed and the only reason Herod Antipas got the kingdom back was because Rome stepped in and took up the battle on his behalf and gave him his kingdom back now the far reaching effects of sin are quite often overlooked and we pass laws that allow people to just get divorced on a whim when I was a teenager divorce was hard you had to fight hard if you wanted a divorce and the courts were not ready to grant it unless circumstances were extreme now you can kind of do it just online and it takes a little bit of time for the paperwork to go through but there's no real challenge to your divorce now nobody says but you promised this woman that only death would part you what's this about that kind of challenge doesn't happen anymore and the far reaching effects of an adultery the far reaching effects of sin generally are overlooked so I think one of the reasons

Matthew put this there was to remind people of the far reaching effects of sin thousands of people died because of this sin and then you've got Herodias' side who she gave birth to her first husband she gave birth to this child called Salome I get that from Josephus by the way it's not a biblical name you don't see it in the Bible but if it was Salome Salome the third she was Salome of the seven veils fame you know the dance of the seven veils I'm not going to explain that because there are too many children in the room so when she divorced Philip and married Herod Antipas this was his stepdaughter and when he married once he married let me get this right because I get confused with things like this

[37 : 35] Salome was once he'd married Herodias Salome was his niece as well as his stepdaughter now he was a known paedophile what kind of an uncle would want their teenage niece to dance a dance like the dance of the seven veils so an erotic almost naked dance in front of all your drunken mates drunken lecherous mates it's a kind of a you think that's sick and what kind of mother would say my daughter will dance for you it's reckoned that she was between 14 and 16 years of age could have been slightly younger unlikely to have been older what kind of a mother would put a 14 year old girl up in front of all these things all these men to try to achieve the obtaining of somebody's head on a platter and we all sit and we go sick horrible it's a sinful mother that would do that and a sinful man that would do that this level of debauchery is what you've escaped by getting saved as long as you stay with the gospel and as long as you follow the

Lord and as long as you don't go back into your old ways because what we learn from scripture is when you go back into your old ways it's like a pig a sow returning to its wallowing and a dog returning to its own vomit so had you stayed in sin you would still be pursuing sin and it would never satisfy you so you would pursue more sin and that wouldn't satisfy you so you'd pursue more sin and you'd finish up grossly sinful possibly even to parade in your daughter in front of people who would do what you wanted as a result because the moral boundaries are gone there's moral bankruptcy comes in as a result of this pursuit of sin but this was what he did that John the Baptist had previously spoken out against and it had obviously increased in its magnitude and the day when John the Baptist was beheaded that sin was at its peak how does that compare to the death of Jesus right

John John was known by Herod to be a righteous and holy man and he put his head on a platter Jesus was found innocent I find no fault in him and he said to the crowd what Pilate said who would you like Jesus or Barabbas spared we'll have Barabbas we want our sin in principle these are parallel with each other I think you'll agree so I suppose what I'm getting to I think there are several things here where we can take a lesson the things that John suffered and Jesus suffered if we are going to put the gospel out there we can also expect to suffer now we may be fortunate and we may not be beheaded for it but should we be prepared to be and I think the answer to that is yes we should be prepared to be now I can't speak for you and this is where the lesson comes I think is when we make a stance even in the face of death the one thing the

Romans used to say to Christians who were facing martyrdom and death was if you recant we'll let you live and that's that's in I've got a book at home with various documents in it from the early church and one of the things one of the things that I can't remember which emperor it was had said in reply was yes if they will recant don't execute them but they're very unlikely to recant was the tone of the document Christians will not deny their faith now speaking personally there are times I can imagine when that would terrify me so what what is our defence against the terror that will make us stand up and be counted and make us say to dignitaries to politicians my goodness at the moment there's so many politicians that need to be told you are in the deepest of sin and you need to repent what is it that will make us able to do that and not fear the prison and not fear the vilification and not fear at some point in the future I'm sure even death we have to remember that the disciples after Pentecost prior to

Pentecost had been scared hiding just the way I feel when I'm faced with the prospect of you know if somebody wheeled Prince Charles into my he's King Charles now isn't he I forget if King Charles had been wheeled in to me and I had to say you're a sinner man you need to repent that would be scary for me unless I was empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak to kings and princes and what was said in the gospel was fear not what you shall say when you speak to kings and princes fear not what you shall say for I will give you the words to say and I've known that in moderation on occasion when I was on the streets a man did threaten me I'm gonna I'm gonna hit you and and I said well I'm not gonna hit you back and you need to know Jesus and he never did hit me but there was a chance and I just think we all need to be ready to face the music and in order to be ready to face the music we need to pray and we need to ask for God to empower us because without his empowering you probably will cave in

[43 : 55] I'm reminded of the burning at the stake of I'm sorry I don't do names Latimer Latimer and next to him was Ridley Latimer and Ridley being burnt at the stake and as the fires are licking up around their legs they were saying today we are going to light a candle that will never be put out now that is the Holy Spirit at work no man naturally faces being burnt at the stake with that equanimity so serving the Lord is costly and I think that's the message we take away from this apart from the history lesson serving the Lord is costly David said in 2 Samuel 24 verse 24 you can read it when you get home because I'm about to my alarm's about to go off David said

I will not give unto the Lord that which costs me nothing and he was offered when he was buying this threshing floor which was later as I understand it was the site of the temple but as he was buying this threshing floor and the man who owned it said you can have it you can have it he said no I need to pay for it and there's a sense in which we are called to pay a price for distributing the gospel now we don't know what price each individual will have to pay but whatever it is we need to be ready to pay it and in order to be ready to pay it we need to be close to God and we need to be filled with his spirit and we need to continually pray for that filling so that we will not be the one that caves in at the time when it's put to the test and I hope that's been helpful father thank you for this word and thank you that you are at work in us and that by your holy spirit you live in us and lord would you help us to be diligent in the study of your word would you help us to be men and women of God who love you enough and love the unsaved people in the world enough to put our lives on the line for them as you did your word tells us that greater love has no man than he would lay down his life for his friends you call us even beyond that to lay down our lives for our enemies and lord for me that is a very big call one to which in my own flesh I feel inadequate to meet but I do pray lord that you will be at work in us and we will be bold when we need to be bold and we will be uncompromising over sin in our own lives and we'll be uncompromising but loving in telling our friends when they're in sin and encouraging them to towards you and towards your kingdom in Jesus name amen