

# Matthew 10:16-25

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're in Matthew's Gospel, having had a bit of a departure last week, just to talk about the laying on of hands and why that in James is not a formula, if you recall. So we're back to Matthew 10, and we're going to be starting at verse 16.

And before we start at verse 16, I want to remind us of the context of verse 6. The reason for this is that it will stand us in good stead as we go forward, and it will stand us in good stead particularly when we get to chapters 24 and 25.

So verse 6 says, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Well, the whole of Matthew's Gospel is directed at Jewish Christians, or at Jews, perhaps more broadly.

And it's important to keep that context. And as we go into this morning, we'll realise that failure to observe that context can lead to confusion as to what of Matthew's Gospel applies to the church. Now, obviously, the church is supposed to learn from all of Matthew's Gospel, but what specifically applies to the church and what specifically applies to Jews? And we just begin to break into that contextual difficulty.

[ 1 : 24 ] And by saying that, what we will find as we go forward is that I'm putting myself at odds with an awful lot of scholars who apply scriptures that should be applied to Israel, and they apply them to the church. And because they apply them to the church, it produces confused teaching over things like the rapture of the church.

Now, that's a preview of coming attractions to some extent, but there's a little bit in this morning where we need to take cognizance of this to decide how best to interpret this scripture.

So, this passage we're about to read comes on the back of Jesus' plan to use others to propagate his Gospel.

And he started this process before he was crucified, before he rose from the dead, before the Holy Spirit came. It was obviously a long-term plan. He was preparing them for a future that was going to involve them taking the Gospel around the world.

And he empowered them temporarily to do that. He established his teaching through people who were less than desirable, if you remember.

[ 2 : 42 ] Boanerges, the Sons of Thunder, Judas Iscariot, Simon the Zealot, otherwise known as Simon the Terrorist. There were these people who were... You also had Peter in there, who wasn't a scholar.

The worst Greek in the whole New Testament is 2 Peter, which is the only one he wrote himself.

So, he wasn't a scholar. Jesus did not need people to be anything other than obedient, because he would empower them.

And we all have this calling to share the things of God. It's a calling on every believer to do that as and when they get opportunity.

And for some, it's a big thing. For some, they're called to go out to far-flung tribes who haven't ever heard the Gospel. Well, to others, it's a matter of gossiping the Gospel to your neighbours or your friends and wasting no opportunity to share the good things of God.

Obviously, people have different lives that lead them either into real danger. If you were Christians in Saudi Arabia at the moment, if you were professing Christians, you would be in mortal danger.

[ 4 : 01 ] In the UK at the moment, you're in danger of being locked up if you do it on the streets. But other than that, you're not likely to die. So, it just depends where you are in the world and how big the opposition is.

And so, what this morning's scripture looks at more is, are we ready? And my answer is, I'm really not sure, because I've never been subjected to it.

And it would be false to stand up here and say, I'm ready to die for Jesus. Well, until somebody holds a knife to my throat, I'm not sure. At that moment, I will become sure. But actually, I don't need to be sure until that moment.

Because if I am prepared to die for him, it will be because he has strengthened me. Yeah? Sorry? Yeah, just like Peter.

So, what this passage is, is a series of warnings about what life following him will or could bring. Let's read it and then we'll go through it.

[ 5 : 05 ] We're just going to read from verse 16 through to verse 23. Matthew 10, 16. Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.

So be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues.

And you will even be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say, for it will be given to you in that hour what you are to say.

For it is not you who speak, but it is the spirit of your father who speaks in you. Brother will betray brother to death and a father his child. And the children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

You will be hated by all because of my name. But it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next.

[ 6 : 15 ] For truly, I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. A disciple is not above his master, his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

It is enough of the disciple that he become like his teacher and the slave like his master. If they called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household?

So it's a challenging passage. I want to just... When you look for adverts for missions on the internet, this is the kind of thing you see.

I'm sorry I can't stand right out of your way. But it's ever so touchy-feely nice. You know? And I'm not saying it's wrong, by the way. I'm not saying there shouldn't be mission societies and they shouldn't go out and do what they do.

They do some great stuff. But when they invite you to a mission field, it's... I'm going to use the word saccharine.

[ 7 : 21 ] Right? Not because I think it's wrong. But there's another one. You know, let's all share the gospel together. There's another one.

You know, meet these families all over the world. Go to far-flung places. Have a great time. Learn a lot. Meet new people. It's going to be a wonderful opportunity for you. Conversely, and sadly I couldn't find one to do with mission work, but I found this.

Ernest Shackleton's advertisement for a South Pole expedition. Men wanted for hazardous journey, low wages, bitter cold, long hours of complete darkness, safe return, doubtful, honour and recognition in the event of success.

Yes. That's good. When we look at the Jesus standard for the mission field, it is, I'm sending you out a sheep among wolves.

And you're not just going to go and be there and sit among the wolves, but you're going to get right up their nose. Because you're going to tell them what they don't want to hear, the gospel message.

[ 8 : 37 ] So if there was any chance of you escaping being lunch for the wolves, you've blown it by what you're going to challenge them with. They're going to hate you all the more.

Well, when you go on one of these mission trips now, what you get is, they've done a health and safety risk assessment.

And you will know what your food's going to be and how often you'll be fed. They'll tell you the arrangements for looking after all your luggage, you know, both large suitcases of clothes and stuff. They'll tell you what sort of place you're going to be sleeping in and you'll have a nice bed and what time breakfast is and what days off you're going to get, because we all need days off to go and explore and things like that.

And please, I'm not saying any of this is wrong. What I'm saying is this is not what Jesus spoke about. What Jesus spoke about was something entirely different. Sheep among wolves. When we embark on, when we go to attempt various endeavours, we quite often take on the name of a

mascot, don't we?

[ 9 : 50 ] Like the Bracknell Bears or the Southampton Tigers or something like that. And we pick an animal as our mascot that is fearsome and strong and indomitable.

But you don't very often pick sheep. You know, watch out for us. We are the sheep. It doesn't have that ring to it of driving people into a fearful corner, does it?

It's kind of, you know, what? Sheep. Yeah, well, you know. So our similitude that we would pick, sheep, it's not favoured hugely by the world.

Don't mess with us, we're the sheep. Well, the connotation behind sheep is that they don't fight back. One of the songs we sang had this principle in it.

I can't bring it to mind now, but the thing is, when you're a sheep, you are defenceless, particularly among wolves.

[ 11 : 13 ] You can do nothing to fight back as a sheep against a wolf. And not only that, the one thing you can do is run.

But you can't even do that particularly well if you're a sheep. You're a bit slow and a bit unsteady and you keep falling over and all sorts of things. In fact, if you're a sheep, you're a bit dense as well. I mean, they just eat anything. The shepherd has to lead them to their food all the time. They can't go and, I mean, like the tiger or the wolf can go and find food, kill it and eat it.

The sheep can't do that. They need to be fed and they need the constant attention of the shepherd. The shepherd needs to take them everywhere. I used to, I forgot to put it up, I used to have a photo of the two different shepherds.

There's our kind of shepherd, which drives the sheep, and the Middle East shepherd that leads the sheep. Sheep need really, well, they either need to be driven or led, but they can't do it on their own.

[ 12 : 19 ] They need the constant attention of the shepherd. So the connotation here is you don't fight back. You go amongst the wolves and you tell them what they don't want to hear.

And when they turn on you, you don't fight back. And this is alien to our spirits in many ways. We kind of, you know, want to square up to people.

And I remember being in a shopping precinct a while ago, a long while ago, in Froome in Somerset. And this guy came up out of the crowd. We were doing a gospel session in the shops.

And this guy came out of the crowd and he squared up to me. So I'm going to hit you. And I said, well, I'm not going to hit you back. And he was very drunk.

And he took his coat off to do this deed. And he went around the crowd saying, oh, this will you, oh, this will you. And nobody would hold his coat. So because nobody would hold his coat, he couldn't hit me. Which kind of is illogical, but I guess it works if you're drunk enough.

[ 13 : 29 ] But he'd made this promise that he was going to hit me. But he needed a reason to get out of it because I didn't run off or I didn't go for him. I just said, well, go on then. I'm not going to hit you back. Probably my one moment of bravery in such a situation.

But the thing is that what we've read and we'll come back to it in a moment is God will give you what you need to say in the moment. I didn't have to go there with a plan for people who were going to try and hit me.

Or do anything else to me for that matter. I had to go with the knowledge that God would fill my mouth with the right words, given a particular set of circumstances of which I had no foreknowledge. But our job is not to fight back or take revenge. We don't take revenge. We can do nothing in our own defence except run. And we're no good at that either. Polycarp, his story and my version of it is going to be much potted.

But they basically challenged him publicly. They said we will. They were going to put him to death and they said, we will. We will not put you to death if you will pray for these atheists, meaning the Christians, because they won't worship in the Roman God.

[ 14 : 50 ] So they were considered by the Romans as atheists. And he, this is again a potted version, but he basically said, sure, I'll pray for the atheists.

And he turned towards all the Romans and he prayed for them, which of course enraged them all the more. So they put him to death. But he had no fear for his own life, which brings me to one other point, which we may well come back to as we go through.

And that is this. We have to have an eternal view of this. Because the disciples that preach this didn't survive. Apart from John, every one of them died a martyr's death.

And they tried to kill John. They tried to boil him in oil. And for some reason, he didn't cook. So they put him on Patmos instead, where he wrote Revelation. So they really didn't succeed in doing a lot to shut up the word of God with what they did to John.

But all of the disciples died martyr's death. So this thing about God will look after you. God will save you. God will keep you from trouble is true eternally.

[ 15 : 59 ] But it's not necessarily true temporally. It's not saying you will be spared from trouble in this world. It's saying you will be saved eternally.

You will get through it. And there will be a glorious future for you. If not on this earth, in eternity. But people do get confused when they try to...

And you've heard it a lot from the word faith movement. Where the idea is, if you've got enough faith, then all things will fall by the wayside. And you will succeed, brother.

The problem with that is, the disciples who were chosen by Jesus did not have that experience. They are still awaiting their most glorious time to come.

And I would suggest that that might be in Revelation where the elders are seated on thrones and praising and worshipping God in heaven.

[ 17 : 01 ] That's another Bible study. But we're like sheep. And Jesus, of course, was the Lamb of God. And all the symbolisms around Jesus were about lambs.

All the sacrifices that spoke of his coming were slaughtering of lambs. So he was the Lamb of God. And he says, I'm sending you out like sheep too.

You're going to suffer exactly what I suffered. You're going to go through the things that I went through. And when you think about how he overcame it all and how he came out of it gloriously, it didn't preclude him going to death or suffering the scourging or the crown of thorns or any of those things, the spear in the side.

It didn't preclude any of those things. The moment of glory was the resurrection. And all Jews are expecting a resurrection because they've read the book of Daniel, chapter 12, verse 2.

All will be resurrected, some to eternal life, blessing, and some to eternal contempt. So they're all expecting a resurrection.

[ 18 : 20 ] And that's where the glory comes. It doesn't necessarily come in this life. And it's an important thing to keep in mind because there is a cost to pay to being a Christian.

And people who say, there is no cost. You just have to have enough faith, brother. They're talking rubbish. And you go into dangerous situations with your eyes closed, thinking that it's all going to be all right.

And then suddenly you find things are not all right. And I've actually lost some members of my family because of this wrong teaching. Now, faith impinges on eternity.

So he goes on and says, Be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

Beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues. And you will even be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

[ 19 : 26 ] So you've got to be smart. It's OK to run away if they're after you. Paul ran away from Thessalonica after his three Sabbaths that he spent there.

He left. Jesus twice came to the point where they were going to do something to him. And it says, and he walked through the crowd. Now, that was a miraculous intervention if ever there was one. But he didn't stay there and welcome the trouble. In fact, if you recall from John's gospel, he went to the Feast of Tabernacles, having told his disciples, they said, come on, Jesus, let's get to the Feast of Tabernacles.

And he said, no, I'm not going. So they all left without him. And then he went late, turned up, preached.

And he wouldn't have got as far as preaching if he'd have gone with them because he'd have been intercepted. So he was applying wisdom. So the idea of being shrewd as serpents is that you apply wisdom.

[ 20 : 32 ] And it's OK to go away if you're not wanted, if you're rejected. In fact, other scriptures say if they reject you, shake the dust off your feet and leave.

You don't have to stay there to be tortured unless God has told you to do that, which he obviously has done with some of his servants. And Paul being one of them where he was.

He knew he was destined by God to go to Rome and he knew that his life would end when he did because he would be beheaded. So what Jesus intends all of this to do.

And let's note the people he has asked us to fear. The court. Where they have to go into the court and affirm Christ.

And reject the ways of their accusers. Right up to and including royal thrones. And in Acts 26, we read about Paul talking to the king.

[ 21 : 36 ] And the governor. And challenging them. This wasn't done in a corner. You know this is true. Now, a lot of these guys are simple folk.

You know, they're not men of letters. They're not orators in any normal worldly sense. Paul probably was the exception to that. But.

It was a daunting prospect for these people to know that they're going to be, first of all, scourged in the synagogues. The places of religion, the place where God is revered.

They were going to drag them into the synagogue and scourge them in the synagogue. But it is like that. And to be honest, the way the church has gone in latter years, it's like that in the church.

If you preach the uncompromised gospel, your biggest critic will be other churches. And what we seem to have done, the wider we seem to have done, is we have developed our own sense of morality.

[ 22 : 46 ] That we should be inclusive and accepting and so on and so on. Which has brought a lot of the church to compromise. And we've rejected the things that Jesus said.

Jesus is uncompromising about hell, for example. Many churches say, oh, well, you don't need to think about hell. Hell wasn't real. Hell was just a concept in the mind to discourage you from sinning and all that.

No, no, no. Jesus spoke very clearly about a real hell, which was a place of eternal torment. But it doesn't fit with the moral sensibilities of what I will call a do-gooder culture.

Jesus wouldn't do that to you. It's gentle Jesus, meek and mild, isn't it? Hmm. Read Revelation and see what he does in those last days. It isn't gentle and it isn't meek and mild. He slays whole nations with the sword that proceeds from his mouth.

But for these folk, this is a daunting prospect. I'm sending you out like sheep among the wolves. You can't fight back. You are basically lunch for them.

[ 23 : 53 ] And they're going to scourge you in the synagogues. The religious people are the ones you need to look out for the most. And then they'll put you in front of the courts. In verse 19, they are told when they hand you over, not if.

So they're going to do it. And when they hand you over, just carry on being a sheep. And everything in you wants to cry out, no, I'm innocent.

I just want to love people. I don't want to do any harm. And I don't deserve the punishment that's coming my way. But as Jesus said, be like a sheep. Keep eating grass and wait and see what happens.

I can imagine some of these guys thinking, me? Speak to kings and dignitaries. What will I say? And he covers that, doesn't he?

Verse 19. Do not worry about how or what you are to say, for it will be given to you in that hour what you are to say. Now, I like to plan.

[ 24 : 59 ] I'm not as good at planning as some, but I like to plan. I like to go in with some idea of what I'm going to say. And if I'm going to meet a non-Christian and I'm going to talk about my faith, all the way there I'm playing things through in my head like a little tape recorder.

Just, you know, what am I going to say when I get there? Well, I could say this and I could say that. And he's into this, so maybe I could approach you from that angle and so on. You get there, none of it works. You have to be spontaneous with the Lord.

And I think one of the points of today is to encourage us to be that spontaneous. I've heard speakers who, when they're giving their sermon or speech or whatever it is they're giving, they are stilted and entrapped by their notes and it doesn't flow and it doesn't come out right and people are falling asleep and so on.

And yet when you talk to that same person privately, they are passionate for God. And when you talk to them privately, that passion comes across and you feel really convicted by what they say and there's no lack of flow to it and it flows spontaneously.

And the minute they get up in front of a crowd, that dries up. I really want to encourage us to trust him, that he will give us what to say. So Jesus says, don't worry about what you're going to say and you've got to trust God.

[ 26 : 32 ] Now we've already read in the previous part of this chapter, take no money with you, take no spare food, take no spare clothes, just go. And not only just go, but go as if you're a sheep and you're going among wolves, we're now reading.

And he will give you the abilities that you need. The whole point is, if you go out there all able, God gets no glory.

What a wonderful speaker. Yeah. He gets far more glory if you're a complete numpty and you do a great job. Because you wouldn't have done a great job if he hadn't given you the talent to do a great job.

I know what a coward I can be. I've already done that bit earlier on. The promise to these disciples, and I believe to us as well, is it's not we who speak, but our father who speaks in us.

And there are so often occasions that not just with the unsaved, but sometimes with your brothers and sisters in Christ, where you will be in their life at just an opportune moment to say a certain word that will redirect their lives.

[ 27 : 52 ] But it takes spontaneity with the Lord and it also takes the presence of the Holy Spirit in you, which we read in Scripture as a guarantee.

So you can trust that you are filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore these things will happen when they're appropriate. When you think of it, the whole Bible was produced in the same way.

And I mean, take encouragement from that. That all of the prophets spoke. Now they weren't naturally particularly talented. They were just a voice piece for God and God spoke through them.

So the whole of Scripture was given to us by God speaking to us through men who were otherwise incapable. Some were scholarly like Paul.

Some like Peter were not. But they were all supernaturally gifted in the moment. And what we have is this picture painted and we kind of live in it today of this Christ-hating society of wolves into which they were going to go and preach.

[ 29 : 03 ] A daunting prospect. Then we've got this next line and I'm going to give a little bit of time to this. Those who endure to the end will be saved.

This line of Scripture is taken out of context so much by people who teach the Scriptures and it's taken to mean, first of all, the fact that they will be saved means salvation, means salvation in the spiritual sense.

Salvation in as you're now going to heaven because you're saved. That's not the context of this here. The context of this here is that all these hardships you're going to go through as sheep among the wolves, you will be saved from that.

When the wolf is about to eat you, you will be saved. Which then gives us another small dilemma which is most of them died.

which is why I said at the start we need to have an eternal perspective on this. There's that, I think it's in Revelation chapter 5, that passage that describes the saints under the altar saying, how long, O Lord, before you avenge our blood?

[ 30 : 19 ] And he says, you have to wait a while until all the other people who are going to be killed like you were, arrive. So this is obviously a multi-generational process that we're engaged in here.

These disciples were martyred but were eternally protected. And you probably will remember that the disciples themselves were very fearful.

You could even use the word gutless. up until, not even after the resurrection but after the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. When they changed and became fearless, they didn't fear death and would rather die than recant their beliefs.

This was a supernatural endowment and I take courage from that because by nature I'm a coward. And if I'm faced with a gun held to my head and a knife held to my throat or whatever, I will need supernatural endowment to say, absolutely not, I am not going to recant.

But if it wasn't a supernatural change, if the cowardly Ray did that, Ray would get the glory. But if God supernaturally empowers Ray to do it, then God gets the glory.

[ 31 : 49 ] That was verse 19, wasn't it? And 20, for it is not you who speaks. So verse 21, brother will betray brother to death and to father his child and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

You will be hated by all because of my name, but it is the one who endures to the end who will be saved. That's where we got to. Then verse 23, but whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

We have a dilemma with this. And I'm hoping to unpack it sufficiently and then we'll revisit it when we get to Matthew 23, 4, 5. This, you've got the Son of Man is there telling them that they won't have gone through all the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

But hang on, he's already there. But you won't go through all these cities until he comes. So this has to be speaking of the second coming.

Now, lots of teachers do weird things with this. They say, oh, that was not his literal coming, but he came in judgment in AD 70. And so this relates to what happened in AD 70.

[ 33 : 13 ] But he didn't come in AD 70. And why would we have that confusing thing going on when Jesus has always said he would come back?

So for me, this has to refer to the second coming of Jesus. And I don't think that's rocket science, but you'd be amazed what some teachers make of it out there and some surprisingly scholarly men who say these things and you think, where did you get that from?

It wasn't from the Bible. But just to be clear, you see, this adds to the eternal perspective I'm encouraging us to take because Jesus was telling them who would not live to see it that they wouldn't finish going through.

Now, by they, I have to extrapolate that out to not just the 12 he was speaking this to, but future disciples as well. Because within 50 to 70 years, they'd all gone.

Then you had what happened at AD 70 and then the church continued beyond that. Justin Martyr and Polycarp and others, they took the church forward giving the same message.

[ 34 : 33 ] But of course, these guys have been told speak only to the Jews. Don't go anywhere else for the moment. You're commissioned to speak to the Jews. So, if we go to Matthew 24 verses 29 to 31, to the same people, albeit much further on, he's saying, but immediately after the tribulation of those days, this is speaking of the great tribulation, and immediately after the tribulation finishes, now, if you catch up on the rapture studies, you will know that the great tribulation is the last seven years of Jewish history, which is yet to come, and it's the, it's the last seven years of the 70 weeks of Daniel prophesied in Daniel 9, verse 27, I think.

So, there is this time to come yet. Now, this speaks of something that I'm only going to touch on this morning, because I could do with an extra 45 minutes to unpack it, but what you then must conclude is that Jewish history, in terms of those people who carry the oracles of God, had to stop, and this is where replacement theology comes from.

Now, I'm not a proponent of replacement theology at all, however, you can understand where it came from, because the Jews, in Matthew chapter 12, they committed the unforgivable sin.

They reached a point where it just became impossible for them to carry on, and they then subsequently crucified Jesus, but Jewish history, and because of its Jewish history, also kingdom history was put on hold, and in one sense, we don't preach the gospel of the kingdom.

Oh, controversial statement. We preach the gospel of personal salvation, but the kingdom was going to be brought through Israel, and so, the kingdom of God is at hand.

[ 36 : 49 ] Well, we've got the king, Jesus is here, we have a king, where's the kingdom? Where does the throne sit? Now, that's described in Revelation, isn't it?

The throne of God, and the lamb, and all the thrones of the elders around the throne. We have the throne room and the kingdom in Revelation after the tribulation.

So, I think of it as a timeline, and I probably should have put the timeline on the board. You've got Jewish history, Matthew chapter 12, unforgivable sin, done.

You've then got church history to now, a couple of thousand years, not yet finished, but at some point, and it seems it has to be in the very near future now, but you've got the rest of Jewish history starting shortly.

So, what were we reading? After the tribulation in those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes on the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory, and he will send forth his angels with a great trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

[ 38 : 17 ] So many Christians get lost when they're trying to study the rapture because they take this as a rapture scripture, and I really don't believe it is. This is a Jewish context, and it's talking about the last seven years of Jewish history, yet to come.

Now if we then go back to chapter 23, and I'm getting myself out of kilter with my own notes once again, but never mind. Chapter 23, verse 37, what Jesus said to the Jews, he said, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her, how often I wanted to gather your children together.

Synagogue. I wanted to have synagogue with you, but what does it say? I wanted to gather your children together in the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. so we have Jesus arriving and offering the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

It's within reach. You can reach out and take it, but you were unwilling. I wanted to synagogue with you. Episunago. When Jesus later does come, he uses the same word.

[ 39 : 42 ] So the message to the Jews is we are going to have this synagogue together. So let's read on. I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

Behold, your house is being left to you desolate. It's gone. It's finished for now. But there are unfulfilled covenants, and we've only got to read Romans 9, 10, and 11 to understand that God has not finished with them in the eternal sense, that there will be a day when Israel is restored and believes.

For I say to you, from now on you will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. So there is a time, this is Jesus, the king, who's withholding the kingdom for the moment, and he's telling them, you won't see me again until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

In other words, Israel has to ask for him. You can, we can synagogue together when you ask for me. when you say you will believe.

Now, that message has not gone through all the cities of Israel yet. And so, I take an eternal perspective on this.

[ 41 : 15 ] Now, we have two verses left, and I have two minutes, so a minute of verse. in the last two verses, Jesus says, a disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above master.

It's enough for the disciple to become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. what he's saying is, whatever was the case for him, so is the case for us.

It's not a question of trying, I mean, you will hear preaching from, particularly from the word faith movement, we are like gods, and they'll take this scripture out of context that says, and greater works than these will you do, and what they'll say is, you know, our destiny is to be even greater than Jesus.

That's poppycock. That's absolute poppycock. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master, but we should seek to be Christ-like.

Now that is a huge high calling, to be Christ-like. I find it so easy to fall away from that aim. You know, I'll be going along fine, and then somebody will carve me up on the road, and I'll suddenly become very un-Christ-like, or, or, the place it particularly hits home if someone has a go at your family, and it brings out the Rambo in you.

[ 42 : 44 ] But you know, some of these martyrs, they watched their wives and children killed before their eyes before they died, and they still would not recant. and it's a completely different level of commitment from the one we are used to, or from the one that has so far been expected of us.

And the question I ask myself is, am I willing? And the answer is, I don't know, because it's never been tested. It would be wrong to stand up and say, yes, that's what I want to say, but it wouldn't be honest.

but I can console myself with the fact that it's sufficient for us to be like our master. And if they've called the master of the house Beelzebul, they've called Jesus, the devil, said that his ministry came from demons, if they do that to the master of the house, what are they going to do with you and me?

Exactly the same. The rough ride they gave him, given half a chance, they will give you and me. Last time we were together, we said we need to be like him and we have to speak out against unrighteousness and sin.

We have to speak out about forgiveness and the gospel. We have to be kind and compassionate and we have to remain defenseless like sheep. So Father, this passage of scripture makes me and I suspect all of us feel inadequate to the task that you have for us.

[ 44 : 31 ] And on the one hand it's daunting but on the other hand it's exciting because we can't do any of it unless you give us the power and authority to do it.

And we would ask Lord that you keep us in mind of that and that we don't go to be like Moses the first time around and make crusades of our own but that we engage in your crusades for which you empower us.

Father, be glorified in whatever we do knowing that in our own strength we're pretty useless really, a bit like sheep. and we would ask you to enable us to face the wolves and to be fearless and honest in the face of the wolves.

Not to duck and dive and hide but to be forthright but gentle. Gentle as doves yet wise as serpents. In Jesus' name. Amen.