

Behold, Something Greater in Christ

Luke 11:27-34

April 26, 2020

We are continuing our study of Luke's gospel and we want to invite you to turn in your Bibles to Luke 11. We are going to be looking at verse 27 and following, and while you're getting situated, I'll try to bring you up to speed with what has been going on so far in this section.

The section started back in verse 14 when Jesus cast out a demon from a man and enabled him to speak. And what should have been an occasion for unmitigated joy and thanksgiving, instead turns into a time of blasphemy and testing. They, the people there, accused Jesus of working with the devil and then they demand a cosmic sign from him. Casting out a demon is not enough. They want to see something more spectacular.

So, what we're seeing, and at this point, in Luke's gospel, what we're seeing, is a clear change of tone, and I want to point that out to you. Jesus wrapped up his ministry in and around Galilee, and he has set his face toward Jerusalem. Luke,

9:50. Where he is going to die for the sins of his people, and we have recognized and talked about this. He's not making a beeline for Jerusalem and get there and just a day's time. He's, he's not making a beeline for Jerusalem. Jerusalem. Because he's on a divine timetable. And so, while he's moving toward that time set by the father, and while he's moving toward Jerusalem for the cross. While he's waiting for the prompting of the Holy Spirit, that now is the moment, now is the hour.

Jesus is now ministering, not in Galilee, any longer, but he's, he's, wrapped that up. He's ministering in and around Judea. Yeah, as he goes along, he is finding the same kind of stubborn, recalcitrant unbelief that has characterized Israel, ever since its inception as a nation. Ever since the Exodus. Ever since God delivered Israel, his people, from Egypt in slavery. Since, ever since the wilderness wanderings.

Jesus is experiencing for himself, personally, he's experiencing what Moses had to deal with over and over again. A people hardened by idolatry. A people hardened by their love of sin. A people stubborn in their pride and unbelief.

Moses himself said of these people at the end of his life, this is kind of his swan song. In Deuteronomy, as he's speaking to the people, and he tells them, even as he's wrapping things up, delivering them the law again, he says, "For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are." He says this in Deuteronomy 31:27. "I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Lord. How much more after my death!" That's certainly proved to be true.

Moses words have stood the test of time. Fifteen centuries from Moses to Christ and that stubborn rebellion has proven his words, time and time again. And, now, here Jesus stands before them. He's God's anointed Messiah. He has come to Israel, and in their stubbornness, in their pride, they have accused him of being in league with Satan. And again, once again, just like the wilderness wanderings, they dare to put God to the test.

And I just want to ask you to think about this. What does justice demand here? What does divine justice demand when a people act this way toward Jesus, who is God's chosen one, God's anointed one? I mean, Jesus is the one who is among them

patiently teaching. Kindly teaching them. He is the one who very kindly, gently, mercifully, compassionately heals all of them: Heals their diseases, casts out their demons, he feeds them even.

What's a just response to the kind of treachery that these people are showing to Jesus. There's one among this crowd, one courageous believing woman in this crowd and she is having a hard time taking all this in. She's hearing her people. She's hearing Jesus speak and she cannot contain herself, so she speaks a word in his favor, siding with Christ.

Look at Luke 11:27, "As he, as Jesus said these things a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!' But he said, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!'

"When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, 'This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah

became a sign to the people of Ninevah, so will the Son of Man be to this generation.'

“‘The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.’”

My title for this morning's sermon comes from the final two verses in the, that Lord, the Lord's refrain, there repeated twice in those last two verses, behold something greater than Solomon, behold, something greater than Jonah is here. And the something greater points back to Jesus' favorite messianic title, which he refers to in verse 30: The Son of Man.

Jesus is the Son of Man and the Son of Man is greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah, greater than all the law and the prophets. The Son of Man is who, the law, the law and the prophets have pointed to all along. It's a messianic title. And

one that Jesus refers to often about 70 times in the synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

And the title, Son of Man, comes from Daniel 7:13 to 14, when God gave Daniel a vision of the Messiah coming in the future. Daniel says, "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like the Son of Man. And he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, and nations and languages should serve him."

So, when Jesus comes to his people, when he comes to Israel, he comes to them with that text firmly fixed in his mind. He refers to him, most often, as I said, as the Son of Man. So, he is cognizant, conscious, constantly about this role. He knows exactly who he is. He knows exactly what he has come to do, and as the son of man, Jesus is commissioned by the ancient of days. That is a reference to God the father, and he is there to usher in the kingdom.

He's there to bring the kingdom of God to earth and he will sit himself on the throne as the sovereign ruler of God's

kingdom. The father sent Jesus, very graciously, sent Jesus first to his own people, sent him to the Jews, and he offered them a place in the kingdom of God. They think they merit such a place. They think their connection to Abraham, merits such a gracious kindness of God. They think that their, their reception of the law and the prophets and all the rest. Their place in the land of Israel, the temple in Jerusalem. They think all of that merits and warrants God's favor toward them.

So as Jesus meets them, as he interacts with them, he makes gracious offers to them because he knows exactly what they are and what they're made of. That they, as Moses said, "are a rebellious and stubborn people." They don't deserve anything. This is all about God's kindness. All about God's favor. So, as he meets them, as he interacts with this people, as he makes gracious offers to them, they show their true colors. They spurn him, and they spurn his gospel.

Among the most religious were the shepherds of Israel. The chief priests, the scribes, the elders, the Pharisees, these shepherds of Israel were tasked with tending the flock of God until the chief shepherd arrives. And when the chief shepherd

arrives, they are to send the flock to him. They are to recognize him because they are ostensibly, supposedly, supposed to be looking for him.

They even know when Herod, when the wise men arrive with, with his, with a retinue, with their entourage and they come to Herod and they say we're looking for Jesus. We've seen his star in the East and have come to worship him, and Herod calls the religious leaders to himself. Where's the Messiah to be born? They know exactly where he's to be born. Pointing to Micah 5:2.

They're the shepherds of Israel. They are tasked with identifying who the Messiah is and then sending all the people to worship him. It's just as John the Baptist did. He must become greater. I must become lesser you go follow him. Don't follow me any longer: Follow him. "I'm not even worthy to untie his sandals."

Well, when he comes to those who are tasked as under shepherds to lead and care for the flock. He finds instead; envy and jealousy have consumed their hearts. He finds, in them, pride and self-interest and among the multitudes of people that

are under them. I mean like people or like people like priests and like priests like people they feed off of one another.

Among the multitudes, he finds only a few like this single woman here. Only a few; like former tax collectors, prostitutes, social outcasts. Those people who know that they are sinners, they all seem very eager to listen, eager to draw nearer to Jesus. It's interesting to note how Jesus, speaking to the Jews here, when he gives them examples, in verse 31 and 32, he used two non-Jewish examples of believing response.

Two Gentile examples. Queen of Sheba. She's a Pagan queen. She's interested, though, enough to traverse the length of the known world in order to listen to the wisdom of Solomon. People of Nineveh, they're at the other end. The North End of the known world, and they repented at the preaching of a very imperfect and reluctant prophet.

Ignorant Gentiles. They seem more interested in Israel's God than Jews do. How does that figure? That gentiles would be more interested in the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob than their own offspring, their own people. But Christ is

commissioned by the Ancient of Days, as that prophecy in Daniel seven says, "to take dominion to receive glory, to rule a kingdom, in order that all peoples, all nations, all languages," not just the Jews, by the way, that includes all the Gentiles too, "that all should serve him."

So, as we look at this text and to say the, the, Jews aren't doing the best job of showing hospitality toward their Messiah, of receiving their Christ and seeing him as the gift of God that he is. That is a, that is a blatant understatement. Isn't it? They have taken for granted the good gift that they've been given. They have acted as if they deserve this. They have not responded in humble faith. They have not responded with repentance.

They've responded to God's grace in Christ with utter disdain and with blasphemy and with more stubborn pride. Since Jesus has found that to be the dominant attitude throughout the land, it, it's not going to take a divine omniscience to see how this is going to end. This is why his language and it's from here all the way through the rest of Luke's gospel.

From here on out, his language is increasingly ominous when he's speaking about the people. It's foreboding, it's even threatening and warning. He's taking the role of Ezekiel's watchman, faithfully sounding the siren of alarm and warning and telling them listen: Judgment is coming. Judgment is coming.

Now along the way, Jesus also does what he came to do. We pointed this out last week that he is the Messiah. He has a role to perform. The hard hearts of Israel cannot thwart God's purposes. They will not stop his plan and so he has come to liberate the captives, to set the people free. He did that in verse 14, freeing the man from the demon and then responding to the charge of being in league with Satan.

He frees other elect believing souls from bondage to false religion by just simply telling them the truth. By freeing them from false religion, from the, from the enslavement of their religious overlords, you might say. He calls them to their side, in verse 23. Calling for allegiance, saying whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

So, Jesus enters the fray of controversy. Not because he loves controversy. He enters into the fray not for the sake of winning any kind of an argument. He does so to strengthen the faith of his own disciples, and also then to awaken faith among those who are not yet his disciples. We said that last time, he's come to strengthen the faith of his disciples. That's why he answers these charges.

He doesn't need to answer them a word; false charges, slanders, blasphemies. They don't even merit a response. He just goes silent when you hear that kind of garbage, and that's what he, that's what he typically does when he's standing before the religious leaders, in before pilot and they charge him over and over again with all these idiotic charges. He just stays silent.

He's not even going to dignify it with a response. So why does he respond here? He wants to strengthen the faith of his own disciples. He wants to awaken faith in the elect. Those who are not yet his disciples, who, but who will believe, or maybe will, like us, read later and will believe.

One dear woman, in this crowd that day, she is emboldened to speak out in faith. And I love this because, Luke tells us in verse 27, that "it was as he said these things." What's, what things? The things that we just studied from verse 17 to verse 26. I mean, he's speaking some hard stuff to that crowd. He's answering charges that have spread among the crowd, and he's controverting and, and, totally contradicting them. He's showing them to be completely vapid without any merit. Any weight whatsoever, and they are stunned to hear him.

So, they, he is in direct opposition to the entire crowd and it's as he said, these things. It's at that moment she speaks up. She sounds off loud and clear. Because she's taking a stand. She will not be silent. She's letting everyone know right then and there, publicly, loudly which side she's standing on. This believing woman speaks up. Because, like the men of Nineveh, and like the Queen of Sheba, she sees, in Christ, she recognizes with eyes of faith: Behold, something greater is here. I dare not be silent.

So we're going to see in this morning's sermon we're going to see four comparisons, in the text, in which Christ is greater

than something. Is greater than something. He's more than something. And my hope is that you, as we go through these four comparisons, these four points, my hope is that you will follow this example of this courageous, outspoken woman of faith. That you'll stand up in the crowd and speak. That you'll be bold and not silent. That you will stand with her and all of us who stand with those who trust in Christ. We stand believing. We stand courageous and convicted, and in conviction we speak.

So, on my prayers that you'll stand with him, you'll see in Christ something supremely greater than anything and everything else. And it's not only for your devotional good that I want this for you, but that's so, that you'll grow in a deep unshakable conviction. A conviction that does not bend and break with whatever the world brings, with whatever changes happen, with whatever controversy you find yourself in, with whatever persecution you face, or even ostracization or whatever.

I want to see you grow in deep conviction, that Christ is supremely greater than everything and anything in this world. And even greater, by the way, we, Josh quoted the memory verse at the early part of the service, here. You'll count him even

greater than your own life. That you'll see in him, that to trade your life for him means you get the creator of life itself.

This is what Jesus meant when he said, just flip back a couple pages, if you haven't refreshed your mind or you haven't been memorizing the, the, memory verse. Just look back at Luke 9:23. Just encourage you to memorize this. This is so important. Luke 9:23 was studied this sometime back. And Jesus said to all, he's calling out to everybody.

He's saying to the entire crowd. He's trying to awaken faith in those who will believe. He's saying, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily." That is, come die with me and follow me. "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me, and of my words." Ohh, this is sobering, "of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

Listen. If you do not have that kind of conviction in your heart about Christ, then you cannot stand strong. You will not follow the example of this woman and speak out publicly because you waver in doubt, in private. You will never rise above the level of spiritual mediocrity because you were always counting your life and your reputation and your goods and anything else as more important and more precious to yourself. My friend, let it go.

You, you're still seeing falsely. You're seeing in this world that, it has something to offer you, that it has some value to you, and so you will always. As long as that's true, you will always be tempted to be ashamed of the Son of Man. A little bit, I don't want that for any of you. Any of you.

And if you're listening to me today. And you're trying to ride the fence. You just need to see that Jesus has not left that option available to you. You're either on one side or the other, and if you're riding the fence well, then you're on the wrong side of it. There are only two ways; death to self, which means life in Christ or the judgment of God.

Just two options. Bold confidence in Christ. Always moving forward in him, always pressing on to holiness, always pressing on to Christ likeness. Or else to be swept away in the wrath of God and condemned with the rest of the world. But the text we're covering today in verse 27 to 32 starts with the good option. It presents the options and the choices in the most attractive of terms, and I want to point you to that.

In point number one, first point, being in Christ is more precious than family. Being in Christ is more precious than family. It's more intimate. More, there's more union to celebrate. More belonging to rejoice in than even the belonging one can find in his or her own family.

Take another look at the text there versus 27 and 28. "As Jesus said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts at which you nursed." And he said, but he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it."

May seem here like Christ has responded to that woman's attempted praise with correction. That's led some to explain,

that this woman's comment is an example of an overemphasis in Israel, that there was on family connection and family belonging. That is, we're all children of Abraham, and we're all chosen people. Connection by birth to the Jews is what counts.

And so, it's on that basis, and with that assumption, that this woman speaks out. Praises Jesus by praising her mother, his mother. And so, then he corrects her false view. But that's, really, not what's going on here. This woman pronouncing blessing on Jesus' mother, a beatitude given to the one who gave birth to Jesus and nurtured him and raised him.

Blessings like that were proverbial in Israel, not just Israel, but around the ancient near east and they weren't primarily aimed at the mother. They had the mother in view, but they had the offspring in focus. As Proverbs 23:25 says, "Let your father and mother be glad and let her who bore you rejoice." That's about the character of the child, right? It's about the character of the child and how it points back to father and mother. So, the praise is about the, really about the greatness of the child in this case, Jesus, and it's in his glory, that his mother finds her glory.

Think, it probably takes a mother to understand that where she finds deep satisfaction and joy in seeing her children excel and exceed and grow and build and prosper. Probably more than fathers understand that, mothers understand that very well because that's what they've devoted their life to, is to strengthen and build and grow and nurture that child.

So, when he succeeds, she rejoices. So, with that in mind, no, notice she's speaking up, as I said, when the crowd is not inclined to share her opinion. Not only that, but she's speaking up and she's a woman. She is in a male dominated culture and to speak out like this in public from the midst of a, from the midst of this mixed crowd of men and women, that is quite an atypical thing for her to do.

Even more remarkable than that is that she speaks up when her culture frowns on doing so. Even more remarkable, is that she stands with Christ when it is not popular to do so. I mean, literally popular, at the popular common level, the crowd is opposing Jesus.

So, by showing solidarity with Christ, taking her stand against the murmuring crowd, being so loud and outspoken; the verb is indicating she's crying out. She's raising her voice. She's not only commending Christ's mother, and in so doing, elevating, and praising Christ himself. She's demonstrating her agreement with everything he's just said. She's siding with him. And, in so doing, understand how this comes across to the unbelieving: She's condemning them.

By siding with Christ, we're condemning the world. In effect, she is rebuking everyone else for rejecting him. How many times have you felt that as you're talking to people and you realize, in the conversation with an unbeliever, someone who is completely committed to this world and its sins, especially, sexual sins going on in the world all around us.

And you realize at that moment when you stand with Christ, and you say what he says about sexual sin, that the people, that you're not trying to make them feel badly, you're just speaking your mind. You're just speaking clearly about what the truth is. You're just siding with the word of God.

You notice the instant that you touch one of the nerves of their sins, how quickly they respond in hostility to you. That's exactly what she's doing here. She's rubbing on the nerves of the sins of this crowd. They're not going to like this, at all. There's gonna be a number of dinner invitations that are gonna be cancelled on her because of this.

May not be very many in the crowd that day who would recognize the theological significance of this woman's beatitude. But we sure can, because we're the readers of Luke's Gospel. We're not just hearing this in the moment, we've actually read the narrative.

So, join me back in Luke chapter 1, because I want you to see this for yourself. In Luke chapter 1, the theological, biblical significance of what she's saying here. When the young virgin Mary had been visited by Gabriel and he told her the news, that she is going to in her womb, God is going to miraculously conceive by the Holy Spirit: The Christ child.

She has said, "Let it be to me according to your word."
"I'm the servant of the Lord; Let him meet to me according to

your word. The Angel departed from her." and she decided at that moment to visit her relative Elizabeth. Elizabeth, who was older and beyond childbearing years and without children herself. And now she is miraculously in her sixth month of pregnancy. This is a sign for Mary. This is a confirmation of her faith, of her believing.

So, in Luke 1:40, we read that Mary entered the House of Zechariah. She entered in, greeted Elizabeth, and then this, in Luke 1:40, when Elizabeth, Luke 1:41, "when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

Thirty-two years before the woman in our text, Luke 11, blessed Mary, Elizabeth gave virtually the same, gave virtually the same blessing for to Mary. So, Elizabeth and the anonymous woman in the crowd that day, they are in agreement. They are saying the exactly the same thing. And remember the spiritual influence at work in Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit when she said what she said.

OK, so. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth speaks, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb." She speaks that, prompted, filled by the Holy Spirit. The woman says the same thing. What is the source of her beatitude proclaimed upon Jesus, upon Jesus mother? That's exactly right: it's a spirit inspired assessment of Mary.

Down in verse 48, chapter one, when Mary joined in with Elizabeth's beatitude, she herself said, "behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed." Now I know that in our time and we've seen this for centuries, that there is in the Roman Catholic Church a blasphemy of worshiping Mary. Of turning her into an idol. Of so elevating her, that they make her part of someone to be devoted to in, in devotion. That is only worship to be prayed to. Prayer is worship.

So that is obviously the wrong way to go here. But what's going on here in the text from Elizabeth, from Mary herself, from this anonymous woman in the crowd, that is not devotion and worship. The woman who spoke up in Luke 27 or Luke 11:27. You can turn back to that text. By the way, the woman who spoke up

there, she has the dubious honor, you might say, of being the one within her own generation to speak out and call Mary blessed. To fulfill what Mary said, "Behold from now on all generations will call me blessed."

Thirty years later, after Mary said that, thirty years later this woman says that. She's in the next generation. None of the men are speaking up. None of the men are saying this, so this woman, as I said, has the dubious honor of representing her generation. "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts of which you nursed."

Jesus has been speaking to the crowd. Verse 17 to verse 26. He's about to speak to an even larger gathering crowd versus 29 to 36. But as this woman speaks, here he stops. He turns his attention away from the crowd, and he speaks to this woman directly. He speaks to her personally and individually.

Look at verse 28, but he said, blessed, rather blessed, rather stop there for a second. Rather, the word "rather" there indicates that there is some degree of correction in what follows. The word, but rather, in our English, may come across

starkly, as depending on how we read it, may come across as a strong corrective. But this is not a strong corrective. It's certainly nothing like a rebuke. It is a corrective, though, but it's mild in nature.

The, the, thing that's going on here is Jesus, though he really does affirm, it's yes, but rather, is maybe how you might fill that in, "yes but rather, yes but let me tell you more." He just wants her to have a fuller, more complete, more accurate reason to pronounce a blessing. So yes, on what you said, yes and amen. But let's, let me show you more, dear woman. Let me show you more.

It's just giving a general corrective to her zealous, but well-intentioned, still incomplete beatitude. Even in the midst of this, as she's taking sides, as she's standing with him, he still endeavors to teach, right in the midst of that. He's not interested in just patting her on the head and giving her some affirmation. Making her feel better. Ohh, you sided with me. Hey, good job. Welcome to the team. Well said, well said, well done. Even in that moment, he's still teaching his people. He's still teaching.

A natural human level, going back to this woman's comments. There's nothing more intimate really than the bond between a mother and a child. I mean quite literally, there is nothing more intimate than that. That a child is conceived inside of a woman's body. That, that baby attaches to the mother inside the womb, and the baby grows and develops to viability within the protection and the warmth and the nurture of her womb. I mean, a mother feels that.

A mother rejoices in that, that intimacy. It's already there. It's put there by God and she rejoices in every leap of a baby, every nudge. Sometimes she feels it painfully, but she still doesn't complain. Once that baby is born. Baby's very survival depends on his mother's loving care. As she nurtures, nurses, him, and nurtures him, and helps him to grow into maturity. Listen. A mother is the, is the, is the example.

A mother and a child. There is an example of such close union just by the sheer physical proximity. The likes of which is virtually, literally unattainable by any other human relationship. Even a husband and a wife. Mother is the closest,

most precious union with her child and that's really indisputable.

Nothing more precious than this intimate union between mother and child. Except for this, Jesus says, except for this. "Blessed, rather yeah, that's, that's, true about Mary, but blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it." Know what he's pointing to, is a greater union, a more precious and intimate bond.

He's pointing to a deeper intimacy than even can be shared between mother and child. Child emerging from his mother. And it's shared among those who hear and keep the word of God. They're in a union that goes deeper than flesh and blood. They're in, they have a bond that transcends space and time. It's a spiritual union that joins all believers of all time together as those who are born of God. Those who share the same family attributes.

And what are those attributes; hearing and keeping the word of God. This anonymous believing woman, she's an illustration of that fact. We just said, time and space and

relations to have separated this woman and Mary. No indication in the text that they're relatives. No indication that they're close, and yet, here they are united in faith. United in their pronouncements of blessing. United in what they value. United in who they stand with. United in hearing and obeying the word of God.

We didn't read it, but back in Luke 1:45, we find out why it was that Elizabeth pronounced this blessing on Mary. She says, blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. Blessed is she who believed.

Listen, Mary was a believer. She's a believer. This woman's beatitude, as precious as it is, blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed. This applies to Mary and Mary alone. Nobody else can partake of that beatitude. But Jesus says the greater beatitude, the more precious reality is what unites Mary to all believers of all time: Hearing and keeping God's word. What a joy.

This dear woman, this believing woman, she has given this precious beatitude to Christ. But it is inadequate, and it really is beside the point. So Plummer, Alfred Plummer says, to the, "To be the mother of Jesus implies no more than a share in his humanity. To hear and keep the word of God implies communion with what is divine, the reality of union with God."

Listen, I'm not quoting him anymore, but the reality of union with God is this precious privilege of communion with God. There is a union of God and we get to enjoy the privilege of communion with God that's experienced in hearing and obeying. And that is true blessedness. Jesus wants us to see that.

By now, we've really come to expect this from Jesus. He's always pointing us, isn't he, to hearing and obeying God's word? It does no good to hear it alone, but, to my, we must obey. If we, if we try to obey without the word of God driving that: That's just religious Pharisaism. Legalism.

So, they have to be combined and joined together, and, indeed, here the verbs are joined together. They are joined together very strongly. In fact, the verbs here indicate there's

a habitual, ongoing nature of hearing and believing and keeping the word of God. What unites us as believers is the continuousness of our faith. The fact that it endures. The fact that it never changes. It's an enduring faith.

The faith we have received from Christ is what he uses to hold us fast and never let us go. Our faith today is of the same character. We're all able to hear the word of God. As in, we really do understand it. I mean, it's words really do make sense to us. I mean, sure, some is less clear than other parts and we need to do more study and more research and investigate. But it generally is plain to us. It's called the perspicuity of scripture.

We see that. We understand it as believers and we really do believe it. We really do trust it. We have no other place to go. We hold it precious to ourselves and dear. We also keep it. We don't keep it just out of duty. We keep it because that's what we can't help, but doing. We keep the word of God.

There's an interesting verb there. It's the verb *phulasso* and *phulasso* is often translated in Scripture, to guard, as in a

guard, guarding a prison, to protect, to watch over, to keep guard, to stand guard duty. *Phulasso*, Jesus used the same word, just a few verses earlier to describe the strongman, verse 21, who he's armed to the teeth, and he's there to guard, *phulasso*. Guard his own palace. Guard, his own stuff. Same word.

That strong man is armed to the teeth, to guard and make sure that he holds on to his stuff. Why is this stuff so important? Because he counts in his treasure, his possessions, his treasure, and in the same way true believers are those who hear the word of God. They're hearing it. They're listening carefully. They're understanding it intellectually. They're embracing it in the will and with the emotions and the affections with joy.

And then they give evidence that they have heard the word and have understand it, stood it, and embraced it by guarding the word. By keeping it. By doing it. By cherishing it. It's because it's our treasure. It's our treasured possession. Hearing and keeping belong together.

There's a Greek construction there, and, some of you guys, Greek students will recognize this as a Granville sharp construction. It shows how these two verbs are in very close union with each other. Shows that those who are characterized by hearing the word of God are also characterized by keeping it, and vice versa. And you cannot separate the two. They're inextricably linked.

So, what characterizes all true believers is this: Believers are those who, on the one hand, hear and understand. Know and embrace the word of God. And then, on the other hand, believers are those who guard and keep and obey the word of God. You will not find one without the other.

Jesus has been nothing, if not consistent. And he has been rather insistent on this point. He said it back in Luke 8:21, when his mother and brothers came to visit him, and he was told about it. He said, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." Same thing here.

But now he turns this into a yet another beatitude. A pronouncement of blessing. A pronouncement of happiness upon

those who hear the word of God and keep it. This is our life. Guarding the word with the same tenacity, the same ferocity, as that powerful rich man guards his wealth. And that's a reason to rejoice, isn't it? It's a reason to rejoice.

If you're a believer in Christ, then you yourself participate in this greater reality in Christ. Enjoy, you enjoy this bond of intimacy that is far more precious to you than even blood, flesh and blood family. Physical family. It's even deeper than the bond that's shared between a mother and a child. Bond is even greater than what unites Jesus himself, with his own physical human mother, Mary.

We are those who hear and keep the word of God, and if we do that, you know we're united to believers of all time, in all places. There is a great company, a host of believers rejoicing in this testimony, in this beatitude. That's how we identify all true believers, right?

Because those who refuse to hear the word of God, those who refuse to listen to it, and to heed it, and to embrace it, they're not believers. I mean, doesn't matter what they say

about themselves and how they represent themselves, they're not Christians.

Likewise, those who listen to the word of God. Listen to it, preached. Listen to it, taught. Listen to sermons or whatever they do. Go to church, but they don't keep it. They don't treat it as precious by obeying it and guarding it. Likewise, they're not believers, are they?

Now we know who to evangelize, right? When we see these things, one of them missing. We want to press in further. We want to ask more questions. If it's just a sinning and errant believer, we want to help them get back on track, right? That's what discipleship is.

But if they don't truly have life, and that's why they're missing one of these elements, or both, we want to, we want them to know the savior. We want them to know something far more precious than family. We also know, who it is that needs to receive this warning about refusing the word of God. There is a warning element about refusing the word of Christ. There is a warning element about rejecting this message.

We need to tell everyone what we ourselves have come to see. Not just that Christ is more precious than family, but there's a second point that having Christ is more momentous than a spectacle. Having Christ is more momentous than a spectacle, more momentous, more significant. He himself is the sign. He is the only sufficient sign, and so we go, wherever he, as a sign points us to go.

Verse 29, Luke tells us that, "when the crowds were increasing, he began to say to them, 'This generation is an evil generation.'" Okay, now that will cool the crowd in a heartbeat.

Not exactly what you call seeker friendly. Completely opposite, by the way, of what I'm hearing so many who are pastoring churches today. They never say anything remotely close to this. Never say anything negative to a gathering crowd. For them, increasing numbers is only an occasion for more flattery and more affirmation of everybody. Just saying a bunch of nice things and flattering them.

Jesus sees something else, as this gathering crowd comes. He sees unbelief in these people. And his interaction with the unbelieving woman has only sharpened his concern. They're, they're, not those who are characterized by hearing and keeping God's word. They're only interested in a spectacle. They themselves have said that back in verse 16.

And there's something in the woman's words, and something in his interaction with the woman that served to direct his attention to those who were there to test him, verse 16. Those who keep seeking a sign from him from heaven.

Alfred Edersheim, he's a rabbinic scholar and expert on the life of Christ. He's written that massive tome, 'The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.' It's fantastic. He identified a midrash in the Psalms that connects to this text. There's a, midrash is basically a rabbinical exposition of scripture, and we heard, Psalm 1, Psalm 21, read earlier, which is a messianic Psalm.

And then there's a section in there on the coronation of Christ, and in that section on the coronation of Christ the king

in Psalm 21, we find these words, written from the rabbinical commentary, after extolling Christ, in with a lot of language that I'm not gonna include right now. The rabbinical commentary talks about Israel's response, says this quote, "Israel are astounded at his light and say, 'Blessed the hour in which the Messiah was created. Blessed the womb whence he issued. Blessed the generation that sees him. Blessed the eye that is worthy to behold him.'" End Quote. Interesting.

Blessed the hour or the time, or, of the Messiah's birth. And then also blessed the womb. Blessed the generation, blessed the eye, and now we're hearing from the woman. She has seen and recognized all of this. All this rabbinic commentary and its beatitudes that it unfolds. She's recognized this. She sees the hour of the Messiah. She sees and blesses the womb from whence he issued. She recognizes the gener, she's part of the generation, she represents the generation, that sees the Messiah with believing eyes. She attests to what God has revealed.

Contrary to the rabbinic comments, Jesus says of the generation that sees him with physical eyes only. "This generation is an evil generation." And about their eyes, look

down in verse 34. About their eyes, he says, "When your eye is bad, your body is full of darkness."

There's no beatitude pronounced on this generation or their eyes. Something greater than Solomon, something greater than Jonah has arrived, and this generation, being an evil generation by nature, is unable to see him, and so they see with unworthy eyes.

Again, verse 29, "This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah for this Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the son of man be to this generation."

Generations and evil generation. The word evil, *poneros*: Morally wicked, morally bad, malicious. Yeah Jesus, just broad brushed his entire generation. You might say, Jesus, I mean there's some standout. Some people that you could, could, affirm, couldn't you? And he says no. Evil generation.

Yeah, there are a few individual exceptions, but it is altogether a generation that is characterized by wicked unbelief and he is pulling no punches. He has telegraphed exactly what he says, and this is exactly why he refuses to give them a sign. What good is a sign going to do. Even if the, the, heavens realign, the planets realign, and the stars come down, what good is any of that going to do, when people are morally opposed to seeing the sign?

The closer Jesus gets here to Jerusalem. Hearts seem harder, will seem more stubborn and now it's not just the leadership anymore. The leadership has managed to leaven the entire lump of dough, and the people have become one mind with their leadership.

They so love the praise of men that they will not part from their bad wicked judgment. Jesus says you want to see a sign? You want to see a sign? He doesn't even bother to point out how many signs that he's already performed. He just says no.

"Not gonna give you another one. I'm not giving you another sign. Not gonna feed your evil doubt. Demands proof from me. Any sign you demand which I provide, you're going to judge that sign

through the eyes of unbelief. You're going to examine it on your own unbelieving terms. So no. I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna satisfy your vain curiosity by which you put God himself to the test. Not going to do it. Not gonna participate in that."

Instead, he says: "What I will do. What I will do, is I will point you back to the word of God. I'll point you back to Jonah. I'll point you back to your Bibles. I'll point you back to the Queen of Sheba and First Kings 10. Go get your Bible and read. That's all the sign you need."

If you'd like to follow along, go ahead and turn back to the book of Jonah. Let's just take a look there. As they're turning there, I just want to say, don't interpret this as Jesus taking away a cookie. As if he's, like simply, punishing them here, is being kind of stubborn himself. It's saying fine, I'm gonna pull it away. I'm taking my toys and going home. It's not what he's doing at all.

Rather, in the fear of the Lord, he's not gonna dignify their unbelief with cosmic signs. He's not gonna tap dance to their tune. But in his love for sinners, he's gonna point them

back to the sign of Jonah and the sign of Jonah is written for them right there, recorded in black and white. It's printed for them on the pages of their own scriptures, and even in this word of condemnation and judgment, there is a grace, isn't there?

So it says in Jonah 1:1 and 2, "The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.'" Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria the kingdom, the empire of Assyria, located on the banks of the Tigris River.

It was a, it was an infamous city, full of immorality, treachery, it was bloodshed. And the Assyrians themselves were known for their, their, terrifying way of doing battle, of, of, dominating a city. When they did overcome in battle, they would stake bodies up on top of stakes and stake heads and pile heads by the city gates and all the rest, just to terrify enemies.

They were a bloodthirsty people. And so Jonah, what did he do when he's given this order from God, "Go to Nineveh, this great city. Call it against them for their evil has come up against me." Jonah, we're told in chapter four of Jonah, he

says, "I didn't want to go because I knew that you're merciful and you'll probably grant them mercy."

So, he's like no, I'm not going, I'm not preaching. So, he took off. He booked passage on a ship to the other side of the world. He is a disobedient prophet. He's hardhearted. He doesn't, he wants Nineveh to get what's coming to them. He knows if he goes and preaches, there's an opportunity they might show, show, some soft heartedness, repent, and then God will withhold his judgment.

He knows God is so compassionate, kind, merciful. He's like nope, I don't even want to risk it. I want fire to fall and you to kill them. Jonah got God's attention even on the other side of the world. Had a great fish swallow him. God gave him three days, three nights to think things over. Down in the belly of a fish. Putrid stuff. I mean seafood itself when it goes bad and it, I mean, it's a, it's a bad place to think.

Jonah came to see things, down there, in God's way. So, God commanded that fish to spit him up on the shore. They started over. Quick note of application here, just obey God the

first time. Right? It's so much simpler. So, God takes Jonah back to square one. Goes back over the script for him.

Look at Chapter 3, verse 1, "The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying," the same thing, "arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and call out against it the message that I tell you." So, good call Jonah.

"Jonah rose and went to Ninevah, according to the word of the LORD and Ninevah was an exceedingly great city, three day's journey in its breath, and Jonah began to go into the city going a day's journey. And he called out, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast. Put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them."

Now we're to imagine that's a summary of his preaching that he said more. But I mean, look, forty yet, forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. And they believed. Everybody repented. From the very top to the bottom of the kingdom. From side to side, everybody stopped, repented. They declared a fast before God.

The King even commanded the animals to fast along with the humans. They believed in this kind of biological connection between humans and animals, and so they said, we're just gonna, not gonna risk it. Everybody's fasting. Nobody's eating. Nobody's drinking. They're busying themselves instead, with praying for mercy, rather than eating and drinking. He reasoned, what, he reasoned rightly too. What good is food if we're consumed by the wrath of the Almighty God in forty days?

We've been locked down in coronavirus isolation for what a few weeks? What's going to come out on the other side? They believe judgment's coming. I'm afraid our culture doesn't believe judgment's coming. They don't take any of this. As a prelude to what's coming in the end. They don't see it as a warning shot. They don't see it as a time for them to stop and think and consider their lives. Consider the God before whom they stand and fall.

But listen, if they'll repent, look, I mean, it's just a, just a modicum of humility. Says in, verse 10, "When God saw what they did. How they turn from their evil way. God relented

of the disaster that he had said that he would do to them and he did not do it."

There are different views here about whether or not the men of Nineveh, at this point, were truly converted and true believers. Setting that aside and there are, there's good reason actually to believe that there was more in the preaching of Jonah. Where they actually did convert. Many of them converted in that city. Repented, became true believers of the God of Israel.

Calvin. John Calvin believes that. Well just setting that aside. The position of abject humility that they took before Yahweh was notable to God. Calvin writes, "We have here a remarkable instance of penitence. That the king should have so forgotten himself and his dignity, to, as to throw aside his splendid dress. To put on sackcloth. And to lie down on ashes."

You see any of the people in positions of power in our day, whether in our country or any other. Who at the preaching of some prophet, is going to set aside their suits, set aside their dinners, set aside their wine, set aside their entertainments,

set aside all the accoutrements of power. Put on sackcloth. Lie down in ashes and ask for God to be merciful.

We need just pause and reflect on what a remarkable thing that the king of the superpower of the world, would humble himself like this. And now Jesus has said, you can go back to Luke, by the way. Now Jesus has said Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh. How so?

How do you become a sign? He came preaching judgment for their sins. When they heard his preaching, they believed him. They took action, they repented of their sins, putting on sackcloth, foregoing all food and drink, and their repentance held sway with God. They repented. God relented. They lived. That's it. That's the sign to Nineveh. That's how Jonah became a sign to Nineveh.

For those who believe Jonah's message and took action, Jonah is a sign that points to deliverance from certain judgment. Repentance means salvation. So, with that in mind, look at Luke 11 again in verse 30. Take a look at what Jesus says, "This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a

sign, but no sign will be given to it. Except the sign of Jonah," or as Jonah became a sign to the people of Ninevah, so will the son of man be to this generation?

You know, what's more momentous, more significant than some spectacle in the sky. According to Jesus it's recorded scripture. It's what's already been recorded. It's what's already been happened, it already happened. These people don't need some cosmic sign. They don't need God writing in the stars and moving planets around and anything else. They need to read their Bibles. They need to believe their Bibles. They need to repent and obey.

Sadly, this generation isn't listening. They're not gonna repent because they're not listening. Because their unbelieving hearts are defenseless against demonic lies. The demon of Baal worship is cast out of Israel. But seven more demons, more wicked than Baal, have entered into their hearts. Demons promoting stubborn pride, murderous jealousy, self-satisfaction, envy, lust, all the rest. How do we know? Because they bought into the lies that are being told about Jesus.

They're, they're, joining in slandering him. They're discrediting his ministry. And now they've got the audacity to test him and demand a sign for him. Prove it to, to, us, Jesus. Why should we trust you? Listen. Having Christ revealed in the written word of God is more momentous than any spectacle. It's more significant than any sign in the sky.

The evil generation that saw Jesus in the flesh. They did not have spiritual eyes to see him for who he was because they didn't believe. My friend, what about you? What about you? Paul told the Corinthians, Jews demand signs. Greeks, they have a different sin, they seek wisdom.

Listen. We, we believers, we preach Christ crucified. We realize a message about a crucified Messiah is a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles. It offends Jews and it offends the sensibilities of Greeks who love wisdom. It doesn't seem wise. It doesn't. It seems self-contradictory. They reason from a heart of stubborn pride and obstinate unbelief, that does not make any sense of the cross.

"But," says Paul to the Corinthians, "to those who are called. To those whom God has chosen, both Jews and Greeks. If you're one of them. Christ to you is the power of God and the wisdom of God. You see God's wisdom and his power in the Cross of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of a crucified Christ. Christ crucified is the power and the wisdom of God." It is the only solution that can atone for your sins fully and finally.

All sins: Thought, word, action, sins of omission, commission, past, present, future sins. All sins are taken care of by those who put their faith in Jesus Christ on the cross. He's the only solution. And the Gospel of a crucified Christ is the only gospel that can grant you perfect righteousness that you need. The very righteousness of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all the law. That's required for you to live in God's presence.

Without righteousness, no one will see God. But in Christ we have his righteousness covering us. And we stand before God in his presence. Christ is more momentous, more significant than any sign in the sky that God could send.

Point number three. Seeing Christ is point number three, more glorious than Solomon. Seeing Christ is more glorious than Solomon and point four, Salvation in Christ is more serious than Jonah. Salvation, is Christ, in Christ is more serious and I just want to apologize for this point. I couldn't find another word ending in O.U.S to rhyme with everything else and fit better with the words, than the word serious. So let me elaborate on what I mean.

The salvation preached in Christ is more serious, more gravely significant, more morally imperative than what Jonah preached to the Ninevites. Look at verses 31 to 32. "The Queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the Earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Behold, something greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

Just a quick summary of that. Those who respond favorably to God's word in the past, they'll condemn the men of this

generation at the judgment. Because the living word of God has come among them, and they did not believe. It's as if Jesus is looking them directly in the eye and saying, "Listen, you have blown it. Blown it beyond recovery and now you can only expect judgment."

How did they blow it? It really is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, isn't it? Of assigning and attributing, to holy, to the Holy Spirit. Saying he did, Jesus did all of his miracles by the power of Satan. It's the Beelzebul charge. You've blown it.

And look in that text in verse 31 to 32, judgment, condemn, judgment, condemn. You've blown it. Judgment's coming. This is terrifying. With lesser light, the pagans repented. The pagans came. You have the greater light. You have the living word of God. It's terrifying.

The queen of the South here is referring to the Queen of Sheba. Her visit to Solomon is recorded in 1 Kings 10. First Kings 10, Sheba or Sabah, is, it refers to the ancient Sabaean kingdom. Which is at its height, it stretched from the southern

part of the Arabian Peninsula, where the current modern country, Yemen is located, and it stretched all the way over to Egypt.

So in First Kings 10:1, it says, "that when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices very much gold, precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind." Obviously a very intelligent woman.

She's accomplished, sophisticated in trade. That, that, kingdom was known for its spice trade. Many other things as well. "She came to Solomon, told him all that's on her mind. "Solomon," asked, "answered all of her questions; There was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her."

"And when the Queen of Sheba had heard all the wisdom of Solomon, in the house that he built, the food at his table, seating of his officials, the attendance of a servant, their clothing, the cupbearers, his burnt offerings, that he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more breath in her."

Another way we say this today, she's breathless. She said that the king, the report was true that I heard in my own land of your words, and of your wisdom. Notice, it's the words that drew her. It's the wisdom that drew her. Money, she's got. Fame, she's got. Power, she has. The words, the wisdom, she does not have those, because they're revelatory.

"When I heard in," the, "my own land your words, your wisdom, I didn't believe the reports." though, "until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpassed the report that I heard. Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom!

"Blessed be the LORD your God, who is delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he's made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness." Amazing. She's overwhelmed. She's breathless with what she's seen. She may be a Pagan queen. Yeah, she gets it. She understands.

This woman is not ruling one of the most prosperous, most powerful ancient kingdoms for nothing. She's an intelligent woman. She is absorbed here. You obviously some of Solomon's theology. She gives glory to Solomon's God to Yahweh. She seems to understand the promises made to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And so she gives glory to that God. She seems to understand why God made Solomon king, not for his own personal enrichment, his own aggrandizement. But why? To execute justice and righteousness.

Several contrasts to learn from here. First between the men of Nineveh, or the men of Nineveh, the Queen of Sheba, and then Israel in Jesus' day. In Jesus' presence, contrast here. First, there's a contrast of ethnicity, right? Sabeans, Ninevites, they're gentiles. According to Ephesians 2:12, they are alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel. They're strangers to the covenants of promise. They have no hope. They're without God in the world. But the Jews, they should know better. They're Israelites.

Romans 9. 9:4 says, "They're Israelites, to them belong the adoption, the glory of the covenants, the giving of the law,

the worship, the promises." Verse five says, "to them belong the patriarchs and of them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen." Came to his own, right?

"John," John 1:11, "came to his own people," his own ethnicity, his own kin, "and his own people did not receive him." His own people crucified him. As Jesus said earlier, it's not physical parentage that counts, or as Paul said in Galatians 6:15, "neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision," but what counts, is a new creation. You need to be born again.

Second, there's a contrast of proximity. Sabeans and Nineveh, they're at a great distance to the south and to the north. From the perspective of Israel, these peoples, these Gentiles live at the remotest parts of the earth and yet they came. And yet they came.

Jews didn't have to go anywhere, did they? They didn't even have to leave their villages. They didn't even have to leave their homes. God sent his only begotten son to them, to visit

them. He came into every receptive town, every receptive village.

Brings up a third contrast, one of receptivity. The queen of Sheba went to great effort and expense to visit Solomon. God sent Jonah, which I think from Jonah's perspective, brought not a little trouble to the irritable little Prophet. These pagans, they're receptive. Israel can't even lift a finger.

Fourth is a contrast of majesty. A contrast of glory. Majesty of Solomon is one thing. We understand, though, about Solomon, right at the start of the very next chapter. First Kings 11, says Solomon, "King Solomon loved many foreign women." Almost unimaginable to think this; he had 700 wives, 300 concubines and his wives turned away his heart. They turned away his heart.

"For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David's father." It's so sad to see that. God gave Solomon wisdom. Sadly, while he started out well, Solomon began to use the wisdom that God gave him to pursue sin.

Even idolatry. Not so with Christ. Such a contrast in majesty between Solomon's wisdom and Christ's'.

"In Christ," Colossians 2:3, "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It's out of that treasure trove that God dipped in and gave Solomon wisdom. It's in Christ, where all the treasures, treasure is hidden. For in him, Colossians 2:9, "The whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and for everyone who seeks and pursues the one more glorious than Solomon."

Colo, Colossians 2:10 says, "You have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority and because of God's gracious choosing." First Corinthians 1:30, "You are in Christ Jesus, you who believe, who became to us wisdom from God," but also because of the indwelling Holy Spirit he became, to us, righteousness, and sanctification and redemption, as well. The wisdom in Christ is far more majestic, far more glorious, and pure, and holy, so that it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Someone greater than Solomon. Contrast of ethnicity, proximity, receptivity, majesty and then finally: Contrast of

eternity. A, contract, contrast of eternity. There's a note of judgment, isn't there? In the final verses, verses 31 to 32, ominous note, frightening note.

Thinking back to Nineveh for a moment, 100 years after Jonah preached to the Ninevites and they repented. You know what happened 100 years, couple generations later, their offspring turned to the sins of their forefathers. And God brought about that promised judgment and he brought it ruthlessly.

It's just to show you folks that God was serious about judging Nineveh, when he sent Jonah to them 100 years earlier. And for those who believe Jonah's message and took action, Jonah to them is a sign that points to deliverance from certain judgment. He's a sign that points to salvation.

But Jonah is also a sign to those who will not believe. Because those who did not believe Jonah's message a century later. A sign the John have pointed to was a sign of certain judgment. Judgment is coming for certain. Queen of the South, the men of Nineveh, they'll rise up at the judgment, as a condemning testimony against the men of Jesus' generation.

You think Jesus believed in life after physical death? When he says the queen of the South is going to rise up in judgment. He acknowledges she's living now. When he talks about the men of Nineveh rising up in judgment, you know he's acknowledging there: He believes in the reality of life. They're living now and they will rise up on that day, as a condemning testimony against the men of Jesus generation.

They had a greater light. They had a greater knowledge. They had greater preaching. They had something greater, wiser than Solomon, Jonah, or all the law, and the prophets, appointed to him. They had the living and incarnate word of God, walking among them, teaching them, dispensing the grace of God to them.

Their problem. Their problem is our problem. Their problem is a human problem. It's a sin problem. They didn't see themselves in any need. They didn't see themselves as sinners. They didn't see their sin the way God sees their sin. They didn't see themselves in grave danger, mortal danger, eternal danger of eternal wrath, and so they counted it a small thing to

test Christ, to demand more proof, to ask him for more evidence, more signs.

In their pride, in their spiritual blindness, they will die in their sins. And these unbelieving Jews will face these Gentile witnesses, when God calls them to testify on judgment day. And after the testimony is finished, the divine judge will drop the gavel and they will succumb to the sentence of eternal judgment, in hell.

My unbelieving friend, what about you? What about you? Will you repent of your unbelief? Will you see your own pride? All your sins against a holy God. And count him as just to condemn you. Condemn is just. To condemn you for your sin against His Holiness.

Will you count him gracious for letting you live and breathe, enjoy life even as you've pursued your sins. Will you put your faith in the supreme gift of God in Christ Jesus? Because he was delivered up for our trespasses. Mine too. He's raised for our justification and all who put trust in him will never be ashamed.

But for you, my believing friends. You and I count ourselves blessed. Because God has granted us eyes to see and ears to hear. Through no doing or action of our own, God has caused us to be born again to a living hope. And we have hearts to believe now, that we might be saved.

We behold something greater in Christ. And that is grace from God. It's a grace that's claimed our lives. It's demanded our loyalty. And now, like this believing woman in Luke 11:27, we too must speak out. This is our time. This is our generation. Let's also speak out for Christ, Amen.

Bow with me in a word of prayer. Our Father we are humbled and stopped in our tracks to think about the grace that you have shown us in Christ. For those of us who believe, you have been so kind and gracious to us. We see the judgment that we could have endured. We don't even see that clearly. We don't even understand the full reality of hell. We don't see what eternal torment really looks like, what it feels like. We get glimpses of it, and it is a horrid reality. It is a terrible, terrifying reality for us. And as you've shown us, the reality of hell and

the reality of your judgment, and that it is certain. That it is gonna come.

We're so grateful to you that you have been gracious to us. We don't merit any grace from you, any favor. We don't merit any kindness. But you have caused us to be able to listen. You've given us open ears. Eyes that can see. Eyes that are worthy to see the Messiah who has come.

We read the pages on the pages of this book, the Holy Bible. And we believe. And we should stop every now and again and take account of that and give thanks to you, and we do so now. We're so thankful for our salvation. We're so thankful for forgiven sin. For a righteousness that's equal to the righteousness of Christ, because it is his righteousness. Account is such a privilege to know you. Now that we're united with Christ, in union with him, it's our joy now to be in communion with you: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We do pray for those who do not yet know union with Christ by faith, and we don't. They do not yet know forgiven sin, they have consciences that are defiled and confusing, and hearts that

are led astray. We do pray for your grace to come to them as well. We pray that you grant them salvation from their sins, like you've done for us. You covered them in the spotless robes of perfect righteousness. And you draw them nearer to you so that they, with us, may give glory and honor to you in the name of your beloved son, Jesus Christ. It's in his name. We pray, amen.