Sharp Rejection

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Date: 15 November 2026

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[0:00] Now please take a seat. We're continuing in Mark's Gospel in chapter 6. So if you are in the Blue Church Bibles, we're on page 841.

It's Mark's Gospel, chapter 6, starting at verse 1 through to verse 30. He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.
And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue. And many who heard him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?
Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him.
And Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household. And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them.
[1:13] And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching. And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two.

He gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff. No bread, no bag, no money in their belts. Not to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics.
He said to them, Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. If any place will not receive you, and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.
So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. King Herod heard of it.
For Jesus' name had become known. Some said, John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him. But others said, He is Elijah.
[2:21] And others said, He is a prophet like one of the prophets of old. But when Herod heard it, he said, John, whom I beheaded, has been raised. For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her.

For John had been saying to Herod, It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death, but she could not.
For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet heard him gladly.
But an opportunity came when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his nobles and his military commanders, the leading men of Galilee. But when Herodias' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests.
And the king said to the girl, Ask me whatever you wish, and I will give it to you. He vowed to her, Whatever you ask me, I will give to you up to half my kingdom. And she went out and said to her mother, For what should I ask?
[3:35] And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

And the king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths, and with his guests, he did not want to break his words to her, and immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head.
He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. And his disciples heard of it.

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They came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.
Well, a sober passage. And let's pray together for the Lord's help as he speaks to us through it. Father, you are good, and your gospel is true.
[4:42] And Lord, your words came through the Lord Jesus into a world that was so ready to reject you. Yet which, in your faithfulness and love, you still sent to your Son to die for us.

We ask that as we listen to you speak through your word this evening, you give us ears to hear. And may, by your Spirit, Lord, you mould our hearts to respond to your gospel.
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ and for your glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I want you to imagine with me two people. I want you to imagine Chris.
Chris was brought up in a Christian home. He went to Sunday school, youth club, and had family Bible time at home. He's the kind of kid who would win the SU Bible Camp quiz every year.
I talked to him at church. He can answer any question you throw at him. His Bible knowledge is excellent. He always has something to say. But he leaves home for university. He goes to church once so that people can report back to his parents that he's been seen at church.
[5:51] He doesn't go long term. He doesn't call himself a Christian amongst the people he knows. He doesn't go wild at university, but he has no interest, really, in following Jesus.

But he meets other Christians at university. He just thinks that they're narrow-minded, even immature, because he knows the Bible better than they do. In his mind, he's proved to himself that he doesn't need it.
He occasionally tells his parents he's been to church, but anyone who really knows him knows he hasn't been since he got there. It's Chris. How about Sarah?
Sarah is someone you meet in your office. She's someone you get to know well. You strike up a friendship with her. And she's just really interested in Christianity. She's enthusiastic. She wants to come along to church and asks if she can come, and you bring her, and she seems interested. She has endless questions for you. She always seems a bit confused by the answers. And whenever the conversation gets personal, she kind of just shuts it down.
[6:56] But she's still interested. But one evening, you're out for drinks with colleagues from work, and the question of a Christian view on sexual ethics comes up.

And Sarah says, she just thinks that a Christian view on sexual ethics is backwards and harmful, and she can't believe that people would really believe that. Privately, she tells you that she's sorry, but she just finds it embarrassing to be associated with that.
She might still come to church, but she doesn't like what the Bible says. It doesn't conform to her values. And she thinks that if Jesus really loved people, he wouldn't ask them to change.
I think we all know people like Chris and Sarah. I've certainly met both at different points in my life. Why is it that some of those people might be your friends?
They might even be members of your own family. Why is it that sometimes those who are most well-informed give the strongest possible rejection of Jesus? Why is it that some people, no matter how many questions you answer, or no matter how many times you talk to them about the Lord, never quite make it over the line?
[8:11] Why do people walk away and reject? Well, what we see in Mark tonight is a sobering truth that lies under the mission that Jesus calls his followers to, that when we go out with the gospel, sometimes we will face very significant rejection.

But God's word prepares us to receive that, helps us to understand the world that we live in, and helps us to see that the first person to experience this rejection was the Lord Jesus himself.
Now, Jesus has already told us about this absolutely up front. If you're one of Jesus' disciples, you've just heard the parable of the sower in Mark 4.
Jesus has just told you not every attempt to share the gospel will be met with growth. Sometimes it will be rejected, and there's so many ways that that rejection comes.
What we find in today's passage is that sometimes that rejection can be incredibly painful, and sometimes that rejection is lethal. Now, Mark, as a gospel writer, often uses structure to make a point, and that's absolutely true of our passage today.
[9:25] The story of the disciples' first mission is sandwiched between two accounts of significant rejection. One gives context for the other. Here, Jesus will send his people out into the world with his authority, but we should expect rejection to come in lots of different ways.

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So we're going to look at those two rejections in the middle of the mission that his people are sent out on. So our first rejection, familiarity without faith.
familiarity with Jesus, but not faith in him. So Jesus goes home to Nazareth, a place so small and entirely insignificant it's not mentioned anywhere in the Old Testament.
It is mentioned once in one obscure history book and never again until the gospels are written, and then it's on the names of every historian and theologian in history. But it's Jesus' hometown.
Jesus comes from absolutely nowhere. And given all that Jesus has done so far, all that he has been shown to be, the news about him having spread so far, so fast, and with such exciting news, you might think that the average resident of Nazareth might be just standing there waiting to go, do you know what?
[10:42] Yes! The Messiah is from Nazareth. We won. We're finally important. It would be good to see some hometown pride. You get the exact opposite when Jesus walks in to Nazareth.

Jesus teaches on the Sabbath, his disciples with him. The people are astonished at his teaching, but not for the right reasons. If you've been following with us through Mark, the word astonished or amazed or marveled, not a perfectly good word.
Actually, quite a neutral word. It really depends on what goes on after that. As you saw from Joe and Brendan in the last couple of weeks, astonished is good, but look at the actual reaction.
Verses 2 and 3. Hear the questions of the crowd. Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How is such mighty works done by his hands?
Just hear those in your mind. How did this guy get this stuff? It couldn't be him.
[11:53] He's from here. He's not important. Who gave these things to him? They can't come from him. There must be some trick. Verse 3 crystallizes this.

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon are not his sisters here with us. We know this guy. He can't be all he's cracked up to be.
He's just the local woodcutter. We've known his family for years. Hear what's actually happening? The dismissal comes because of familiarity with Jesus.
Because in a sense, what town has ever been more blessed in history than Nazareth? 30 years of the incarnate Lord Jesus walking amongst them. Them seeing his sinlessness, hearing stories of his birth.
But as sometimes happens, familiarity breeds contempt. Their presumptions, their assumption that they know about Jesus keeps them from really thinking about Jesus.
[13:02] Because what is the one question that no one in Nazareth will ask of this man? was the question, who is this really? Summary in verse 3, they took offense at him.

You can imagine some man from Nazareth, oh yeah, this big hot shot has been on this tour, thinks that he's important. Well, you're not the Messiah here, lad. They won't think about him any differently no matter what he's done.
they won't actually stop and think, is this man all the things that these miracles are pointing to? Is he really the one who has come to save us?
Because back in the parable of the sower, the words used for offense in this passage is the word that Jesus used for those who fall away, who stumble over Jesus.
That's what the offense is. And the roots of that go hugely far back. Hear these words from Isaiah 8 verses 14 and 15. He will come, a stone of offense, a rock of stumbling to Israel, and many shall stumble on it, to fall and be broken.
[14:19] One will come who the Lord sends speaking in God's name and people will trip over him, stumble over him, not be able to make sense of him. Isn't it interesting that Jesus himself, the son of God, would be the one to cause the people of God to stumble?

That their rejection of him would be how they were brought under judgment? Because their familiarity with him means they will not put their faith in him.
And how devastating for Jesus in his hometown, among his own people who he's known and loved for 30 years. When we hear in verse 4, a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives and his own household.
And Mark goes on, he could do no mighty work there except they laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled, marveled because of their unbelief.
In their presumption, this town rejects the Messiah. In their familiarity, they sinfully dishonor the God who is walking among them.

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[15:36] Now, we're not to take from verse 5 that Jesus' power is in some way constrained by their lack of belief. He is not a battery charged by faith. But remember that the point of the miracles is to point to his identity and to his message, two things Nazareth have rejected out of hand.

No reception, no miracles. As if the rejection of Jesus means that Jesus will take away even the evidence in front of them as a judgment upon these people.
Because the next person to be amazed in this passage is Jesus himself. Amazed at their unbelief, amazed at their lack of faith that those who should know best have outright rejected him.
You must remember that belief and rejection are not neutral categories. They are life and death. As one commentator puts it, what amazes God about humanity is not its sinfulness and propensity for evil, but our hardness of heart and unwillingness to believe in him.
Of course, we're sinners. That's what Jesus died for. But unbelief is the obstacle that keeps us from the Lord Jesus Christ because familiarity about faith isn't good enough.
[17:01] One of the things that Mark is showing us all the way through this gospel is that when the gospel goes out, it divides people because some it draws near in faith, but others it exposes in their unbelief because knowing facts about Jesus is never and has never been the same as believing in him.

There are some people with PhDs in theology who don't have a scrap of faith in the Lord Jesus and many small children with very little understanding who have a big faith in him because familiarity is not the same as faith.
It is absolutely right and good that we teach the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ but knowing that merely acceptance of facts is not what the Lord is looking for but to respond to his son in faith.
Sometimes those who would claim the name of Christ who have most understanding of the Bible are also those who are most aggressive in tearing down his kingdom.
That would be absolutely true of Scotland in the last hundred years that sometimes those who are most familiar are most aggressive in rejection. So what do we do with this?
[18:22] Well partially I think it's important for all of us to know the difference that mere information about Jesus and faith in him are different. For your Christian family here it is absolutely necessary and important to teach your kids the truth of the gospel but also to model it so they see that lived out and even then there's no perfect guarantee that they will come to know the Lord that is down to how they respond to him personally.

It's sobering deeply sobering because we know people who we care about for whom this would directly apply. I'm going to just hold those thoughts for a minute as we come later on to the other rejection that we see.
But in the middle of this let's see the mission that Jesus sends his people out on. So the mission we see Jesus' authority in action.
At the end of verse 6 Jesus goes out among the villages teaching and in verse 7 he sends out the disciples to do the same. And it is a faith shaped mission that he sends his disciples out on.
And this actually should be if I'm honest more surprising to us than what just happened in Nazareth. Because can you think of any less well equipped people to go out and speak the truth about Jesus than the disciples in chapter 6 of Mark?
[19:48] They're about to absolutely completely get it wrong in the next few chapters. We are still two whole chapters away from Peter saying that Jesus is the Christ.

They haven't got there yet. you just kind of think Jesus they're a little undercooked don't send them out yet. Yet Mark is clear so wonderfully clear that when they go out on this mission it is successful.
Let's see how they're sent out. In the verse 7 he gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff no bread no bag no money in their belts but to wear sandals and to not put on two tunics.
These men are sent out with nothing but the clothes on their back and staff in their hands and the authority of the king of the universe.
Do we forget that as we read this? Yes they're sent out with nothing physically but they're sent out with the authority of Christ. They could in a sense not have more. And Jesus isn't sending these disciples out to do something that they can't do.
[21:01] No he's giving them the power that he has shown on display over all of his ministry so far in this gospel to cast out demons and to heal that those miracles might testify to the truth about Jesus that they are speaking and so bring people to repentance.

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And they're sent out in a way that is so different to the rejection that we see on every side. They are sent out in faith, trusting the Lord, modeling the right response to the Lord Jesus Christ in their mission.
It's a mission of proclamation but also of judgment. Look at verses 10 and 11. And whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there.
And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them. They're to go out proclaiming the truth about Jesus, the message of repentance that he has taught.
But if people reject them, well, then they too are rejected. When people respond and they stay with them, they bless that house but when they are sent away that house, well, the dust shook off their feet.
[22:19] Something interestingly that the Jewish people would do when they left a Gentile area, as if the people of whatever town the disciples go to are being treated as no longer the people of God.

Well, friends, they are no longer the people of God if they reject Jesus Christ. That is what the mission does. When we go out and speak the truth about Jesus to people, their responses are not neutral.
We are inviting them to a God who would receive them with open arms if they responded in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ and in repentance. But as they reject the gospel, they come under his judgment.
Our mission will always do one of two things, bring people to faith or bring people under judgment that on the last day the Lord Jesus will say to them, I spoke to you through my people and you rejected me.
Amen. And that frames the rejection that we see at either side of this passage. That amazingly, in the midst of all this rejection, yet people are responding to the gospel.
[23:32] Because the disciples come back and the mission is successful. Verse 30, the apostles returned to Jesus and told him all they had done and taught. It works.

So early on in Mark's gospel, so early on in Christian history, the mission starts and it works. Because they go out with Jesus' authority, of course it works.
Jesus continues to speak through his followers as if he was there in the flesh speaking through them. And we have to remember that is the mission that he sends his people out on. Look, we are not the apostles.
We are just not the twelve. You are not sent out down onto Union Street wearing nothing but a jumper and some jeans and just told to get on with it.
We don't have the exact same task but we do have the same mission, the same Lord and ultimately the same authority of message because when you speak the truth about Jesus those same responses are being brought out of people and people will be held on account on the day of judgment for how they responded to the words of God's people speaking the truth about Christ.
[24:42] Christ. What a huge and monumental task. What an immense privilege to be drawn into that work. To think that the words that you say however falteringly to someone about Jesus could be what the Lord uses to bring them to eternal life with him.

That really does matter. The thing about this story is if you just jump from verse 13 to 30 it's pretty good. But this is 14 to 29 a very dark picture.
So our second rejection then regret without repentance. Verse 14 King Herod heard of it for Jesus name had become known.
Well the mission is successful people are hearing about Jesus in fact the word has made it all the way up to the highest echelons of power the king of Judea has heard about the mission has heard about Jesus but his reaction well we've got to see how Mark slows the narrative right down here. This is one of the longest single stories anywhere in Mark. The only time we've heard Herod's name so far chapter 3 verse 6 the Pharisees went out and immediately held council with the Herodians against him on how to destroy him.
[26:06] So even in Mark's gospel not a good name to hear already but welcome back to Herod as we know from the other gospels the son of Herod who killed the children.

As one commentator puts it quite starkly the Herodian family tree was as twisted as the trunk of an olive tree. This is Herod whose wife here is not only his own niece but also has been stolen from his half-brother after jilting his own wife which sparked a war.

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I mean it's kind of like EastEnders but all the scales are just ramped right up. It's like terrifying. And this family line are as poisonous as the kings and queens of ancient Israel.
In fact it's exactly what Mark is portraying them as. It's interesting who's mentioned. The context for this is back to the question of who is Jesus.
Look at 14 to 16. Some said John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That's why these miraculous powers are at work in him. But others said he is Elijah and others said he's a prophet like one of the prophets of old.
[27:22] But when Herod heard of it he said John who might be headed has been raised. And we haven't heard of John the Baptist since chapter one.

And all we were told then was that he'd been in prison and we never heard why but now we do. We're already told immediately that he's dead because Herod has had him beheaded. We'll come back to that set episode in a minute.
But notice the context here about who Jesus is and his identity. Is he John raised from the dead? Well no, that's to mistake A a dead man for a living man and B the messenger for the Messiah. Although it does give us an idea of where this story is going and what's going to happen to Jesus, doesn't it? That's what happened to the messenger. What happens to the king? Next question, is he one of the prophets of old like that of Deuteronomy 18 that Pauline read for us earlier?
Partially correct but far more. But in the middle of this is he Elijah? Well now that's interesting. In the midst of this whole story. Because Elijah was a prophet at a time when the king of Israel, King Ahab, one of the worst kings of all of Israel's history, an absolute coward, a total offense to the Lord at every point, was ruling with his evil prophet killing wife Jezebel.
[28:48] If you go back and read 1 Kings 18 through 21, it is a brutal depiction of an evil ruler destroying the lives of his people out of pride and cowardice.

But verse 16 of Mark 6 gave the game away. This Herod looks like the worst of his ancestors. He has a wife who also wants the prophets to die, and he has a terribly guilty conscience.
deep and fearful paranoia haunted by the shadow of his greatest regret, and his lack of repentance is in this story his downfall. Because 17 to 29 are starkly and unusually a flashback to an episode, one of the lowest points in the gospel stories.
17 to 29, let's picture the scene, welcome to Herod's sleazy birthday party. Let me say it's not hard to imagine something like this existing today.
John's called out to the king of Judea for his atrocious track record, his false marriage. He is holding the king to account without fear. And because of this, Herodias, Herod's wife, is absolutely fuming.
[30:13] Verse 19, Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death, but she could not. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe.

And when he heard, he was greatly perplexed, and yet heard him gladly. First, what a terrible marriage. You've got Herodias desperate to kill John the Baptist because of pointing out how illegitimate the marriage is, and Herod sitting in an illegitimate marriage, going, well, this guy's interesting, I think I'll keep him around.
I'll just put him in prison, then my wife can't kill him. What an astonishingly odd situation. Now, think about Herodias here.
One commentator says, Herodias felt that the only place where her marriage certificate could be safely written was on the back of a death warrant for John the Baptist. But the king, the king is puzzled.
he knows something's right about John because here's a prophet who looks like the good and righteous and holy men of old. He even gladly listens to John the Baptist, wheeling him in and out of prison to tell him more times that his marriage is wrong.
[31:31] What a strange situation. What is the one thing, though, that Herod will not do? Well, he won't repent. No matter how many times he hears, at no point does he turn around and go, no, John, you're right, this marriage is totally illegitimate, I'm a horrible king, let's reset.

It doesn't happen. And so, because he will not listen to the message of John the Baptist, he stays confused, perplexed.
And then the story speaks for itself. The party comes round, a flashy banquet for all of his nobles. Herodias sends her daughter to dance for her stepfather's dinner guests.

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Herod makes a truly stupid vow to give her up to half of his entire kingdom, flashing the cash to impress his mates. Again, it's not hard to imagine. And then Herodias strikes.
You can imagine, Herod, darling, what do you want? And his stepdaughter saying, I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter. You wonder if the dinner guests are kind of sitting there going, whoa, what just happened?
[32:45] But now think. Herod could just say no. No, this has gone too far. This party is a sham. This marriage is a sham.

We're not beheading a holy and righteous prophet just for a vow. That's stupid. I'm not doing it. I'm sorry. He could have repented of his stupidity and his sin.
But verse 26, the king was exceedingly sorry. But because of his oaths and his guests, he did not want to break his word to her.
Regret, yes, but repentance, absolutely not. He is sorry, but he will not change. His pride keeps him moving from one sin to another, having to take one and build a sin on top of it to cover it in another and another.
And he's such a coward. What really gets Herod here? Of all things, peer pressure.
[33:44] I wouldn't look good in front of my mates, so I won't do it. How painfully relatable is that? I won't do the right thing because I don't want people to think I'm uncool.

How astonishingly rubbish for a king. regret, but no repentance. He would have had wounded pride alone if he'd repented, but instead, John gets a wounded neck.
Herod saving his face costs John his head. And in one of the saddest moments in the entire gospel, verse 29, when his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb, taking the headless body of your brother and friend and burying it because a king has killed him.
But brothers and sisters, remember the reality of this story in eternity, that John, though beheaded here, would be in eternity with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, forever.
And Herod on that day would face his maker in judgment, saying that he had to face the king of the universe that he'd rejected. did. Sorry now, far more sorry then, and then too late for regret and nothing they can do.
[35:11] But it is a simple and sobering fact for the church that sometimes rejection will come with sharp edges. It's interesting, isn't it almost contemporary that the reason that John loses his head here is actually for criticizing the sexual sin of someone in society?

That feels, well, probably quite familiar. Even that it was something that Shores prayed for. Now again, we're not John, but we do speak for Jesus.
And we should be ready to speak hard truths to those who are listening and don't want to hear them. Because if we go out with the message of repentance, people will reject that.
They may be interested, they may even be sorry, they may even have deep regrets, but if they do not repent to the Lord from their heart, they will not be saved.
And we should have deep compassion for those who Shores again mentioned in his prayers, those who do face attack and death for speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ.
[36:23] Thousands into millions of our brothers and sisters around the world face that day in, day out. We must continue to pray for them. Not just to be relieved from persecution, but to stand firm in the mission.

Because in the end, whenever someone who has put their faith in Christ dies at the edge of persecution, their eternity is sure and they will never be lost. And still the most important thing is that the mission goes on and even the persecutors have an opportunity to repent and follow Christ.
Whatever form that rejection takes to the gospel, you must understand from Herod that regret and repentance are different. not like the consequences of sin are very different from actual heartfelt repentance to the Lord.
And so as we bring all of this together, well what do we make of this really sobering passage? I think I want to give us two things to walk away with and it kind of depends on who you are in this room.
First, let me come to the kind of people like Chris and Sarah that I mentioned at the start. Chris, familiarity but no faith. Sarah, regret but no repentance.
[37:40] Look, if you're here today and if you're honest with yourself, you're a bit of a Chris or a bit of a Sarah. Do hear that knowing about Jesus and believing in him are different things.

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Knowing the facts about him alone and not putting your faith in him is not enough and never will be. Even regretting your sin about actually repenting before the Lord isn't enough because the Lord doesn't want your intellect and your mind alone.
They don't impress him. He wants you. He wants your heart. He wants you to believe in the son that he has sent for you that you might know him.
The cost paid on the cross for you that you might be with him and eternal life and the resurrection of Christ. All is open to you. But only if your faith is in Christ and you are repenting of your sin.
If that is you, don't leave this building about coming to talk to one of us. Don't faff about of all the information and not believe. It is of no worth to you.
[38:47] Let me say, if you are here and you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have put your faith in him and you are repenting daily and trusting in the Lord Jesus for your salvation.

And I think the question for us is, what do we take away from this passage? Optimism or pessimism about the mission? I think the answer is simply that we don't want either.
We just want realism about the mission. We want to know that in the midst of all the rejection that the world will have to the Lord Jesus Christ, the mission will continue and it will grow and it will flourish and people will come to faith and Jesus will save them.
And no amount of rejection will ever get in the way of the Lord building his kingdom, which is why Jesus can say that the gates of hell will not prevail against the church.
Whatever we might lose, whatever the cost is in the mission. Ultimately, we are safe in heaven with Christ already in our spirits and one day we will see him in full.
[39:53] Brothers and sisters, whatever you lose in this life now for speaking about Christ will absolutely in every way be worth it on that day. Do not forget his faithfulness and love for us.

And may the mission continue as we go out of his authority and help. Lord Jesus Christ, you have sent your people out with your authority to speak the truth about you.
A message that divides, that saves and ultimately, Lord, is the one through which you are worked by your spirit to bring people to life, or ultimately, Lord, to a fair and righteous judgment.
We ask, Lord, that you keep us from familiarity without faith, from regret without repentance. Lord, keep us believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repenting daily, joyfully knowing our future hope in him. And thus help us, Lord, to stand firm in our faith, speaking the truth about Jesus to those who don't yet know him. And we ask that through us, you may bring many more into your kingdom. And we ask these things in Jesus' name and for your glory.
[41:12] Amen.

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