

Miracles of Jesus 12-11-25b

We pick up our study now in John chapter 11, the Lord Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. What we've seen so far is that in the context, there is a great conflict between the Lord Jesus and those who oppose him. Sadly, these are the people of God.

This isn't the Romans. This is not the surrounding nations. These are people who claim to be God's own, who claim to know the scriptures, who claim to be religious leaders, and they are the most dangerous.

The Romans aren't a threat to the Lord Jesus. It's the Pharisees. And it is a caution to us, even expressed in the Old Testament, that it is one's familiar friend who can lift up his heel against us.

Sometimes, Jesus said, the enemies are not on the outside, but in the house. There will come a day when a man's own children will rise up against him in the days of persecution. And so we have to be alert and be aware that our confidence is in God, our security is in the Lord Jesus, and it should not be a total surprise when even in the household of faith or alleged faith, even within the realm of the community of God's people, there can be betrayal, there can be opposition, there can be great sin that we commit against each other.

And there is no truer saying, and I think I mentioned this even on Friday night, my dad reminded me that, you haven't really been attacked until you've been attacked by a Christian. His vocabulary was much more colorful. But I'll leave you to go back to the original.

But you have not had it taken to you. You've not been undermined. You haven't been taken to the cleaners until it has happened from a Christian.

Because it is a worse thing, because we know better and because we have the power to be better and to do better. And to go in the other direction is a double wrong. And this is what the Pharisees have done.

But Jesus brought up the issue of belief back in chapter 10. They treat His word as a blasphemy. They find fault with it.

They don't think that it's Scripture. This is happening, by the way, in our modern day. You look at some social issues where the church is trying to operate in love.

There are very well-meaning people who want to soft pedal the main components of the Holy Spirit's testimony, which is sin, righteousness, and judgment. It is a distortion of the gospel to only present God so loved the world. God so loved the world, He wants you to be saved.

That's not what John 3.16 says. God had to sacrifice His Son so that whoever believes would not perish. There is a death sentence.

There is the danger of death. And it is the Lord Jesus Christ who has overcome that, who has paid that cost. But if you don't recognize the judgment, if you don't recognize the sin and the righteousness, how can you appreciate the price that was paid? We saw this in our study of Peter, where he said, you've been redeemed not with silver and gold that perish, but with the precious blood of Christ.

That makes us valuable. Look at the price that was paid. If a thousand talents of silver or a thousand shekels of gold could buy your salvation, we would know exactly what we're worth, wouldn't we? Well, I'm worth, you know, a small pot of gold or a slightly larger pot of silver.

We weren't redeemed with those things. We were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. Its value is incalculable.

And so is the value of every human soul. And this is why it is important that Christians not compromise on the message in Scripture. There is such a thing as sin.

And you cannot shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation if you don't define sin. And there can be sin in the camp just as much as there is sin outside the camp. Just because you're in the camp doesn't mean there's no sin.

If that were the case, if just being in the camp sanctified you, there would have been no regulation in Israel that said, when you're defiled, you've got to go outside. When you're defiled, you've got to separate. There would be no injunction from the Apostle Paul or from the Lord Jesus to separate from those who will not separate themselves from their sin.

Those who willingly sin after they've received a knowledge of their truth, there is no more sacrifice but a certain fearful expectation of judgment. This is the Word of God. And we are not doing our job.

We are not valid ambassadors and this is what Scripture says. And there's a great pressure and it may come to law in our lifetime where there are certain things in the Word of God that you will not be able to publicly express. It will be against the law to point out sin of certain types and in certain ways.

And we will have to make a decision. Are we going to stand for truth? Where is this line of discretion that we've seen in John 11 where because someone is out to arrest, we take steps so that they don't find us before our time? We've still got some daylight to operate in, and Jesus took steps to not be found until He was ready to be found. But the issue is belief, not circumstance.

The issue is belief. 10, 37, and 38, if I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me. But if I do, though you do not believe me, though you do not believe my words, in other words, believe the works.

There is a second witness. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, a thing is established. We see this in the realm of creation.

There is Genesis and the account of Scripture that God created the heavens and the earth. God hung the stars in the firmament. God is responsible for the design and the order and the existence of nature.

And then we have confirmation of that in the undeniable evidence of design and thought and sophistication in the realm of science and observation. Well, there are three witnesses for us. There is the witness of God the Holy Spirit in the heart of every man.

There is the testimony of Scripture, and there is the internal observation that we have of the work of God. We know what God does in our hearts. We can see His power and work in us.

So we have those witnesses. And if one of them is insufficient, if we are not convinced just by the simple promise, review history. Jesus' works at this point are history, aren't they? He is not in the middle of doing one when He says, watch this and believe.

He says, you already know My works. You've heard them even if you haven't seen them. Believe the testimony of the works.

Believe, believe, believe. This is all about faith. What do you believe? What do you put credence in? What do you rely upon? What defines your reality? Is reality circumstance? Is reality people? Is reality opinion? Or is reality the Word and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ? This is happening so that you may believe for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

Same thing we saw in John chapter 9 with the blind man. Who sinned? The issue is not sin. This man is blind so that the glory of God may be revealed in him.

Lazarus is dead so that the glory of God may be revealed in him. It is absolutely possible that we could receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and just walk around a corner and never be seen again. Like Enoch.

Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him. We remain in this earth and in this life and then we die. Why? It doesn't have to be that way.

Ride up in a flaming chariot. It could be just a regular round of flaming chariots going around the nursing homes and the accident sites. They had this horrible 140 car pile up down there in Beaumont and 80 people were injured and two at least died.

Why wait for accident? Why wait for old age? Why wait for disease to get saved? Just be translated to glory. God could do it but there is this delay. There is this intermission between the giving of the promise and the fulfillment of the promise and this is the arena for faith.

God does His works for us to observe, to build our faith. So Jesus meets with Martha in a secret place. She doesn't even tell her sister that she is going there.

Point of application. There are times when we are wrestling with an issue when we need to be one-on-one with the Lord and it is just between the two of us. It is between you and the Lord and it may not yet be the right time to share this with someone else.

It may cause them to stumble. What do you think would have happened if Martha had whispered, the Lord is over in the ravine behind the edge of town. The whole game is given away.

Mary can't contain herself. She is in the grip of her emotions. She loves the Lord and wants to sit at His feet even when the dishes need doing.

She rushes out and all these Jews follow her. It would be an entirely different story, wouldn't it? Martha is wise. She is thinking.

She is that kind of woman. She meets the Lord and it is a one-on-one conversation. The Lord Jesus cultivates her faith in a one-on-one encounter.

This is our opportunity as well to think through what the Lord Jesus has said, to think through the promises of Scripture, to run our applications and our understanding of God's Word by the Lord in prayer and He will refine it. We saw on Friday night, Nathan the prophet, David says, Hey, I would like to build a temple for the Lord. Nathan says, Go and do all that is in your heart.

Well, Nathan gets a correction. The Lord comes to Nathan in the night and says, Look, you didn't get that quite right. Go back to David and tell him he is not going to build the temple.

It is going to be his son. There is this back and forth, but Nathan is on good terms with the Lord and when he gets it wrong in the daytime, God corrects him in the night. He goes back to David and says, Well, I've got an update on what I said yesterday.

Don't do all that is in your heart. Your son is going to accomplish all that is in your heart. It is going to be the second Davidic king that is going to fulfill in a time of peace what you, the first Davidic king, can only anticipate because you are in the time of conflict and warfare and bloodshed.

You are driving the enemy out of the land so that that dwelling place of God can be

established. We will be seeing more about that this coming Friday night. But Martha says, I know He will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus says, You are right about that, but let me give you a more immediate hope. I am the resurrection and the life and I am standing right here. I am in the situation right now.

She said, Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God who is to come into the world. There are three great statements about the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament as the one who is to come. You may remember these from some of our previous studies.

We have done the book of Hebrews in the past. But turn back to, in this case, Matthew 11. Keep your finger in John 11 and go back to Matthew 11.

If you have headings in your Bible, it says, John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus. It came to pass when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John heard in prison about the works of Christ, what did he hear about? The works of Christ, that form of testimony.

He sent two of His disciples and said to Him, Are you the coming one? Are you He that shall come? Or do we look for another? You remember we have talked about this in the past. There was a theological debate that had gone on for centuries based on Isaiah and other passages of the Old Testament. There were pictures of the suffering servant of God, the one who had no form or comeliness.

By His stripes we are healed. And then there is the conquering king, the Davidic ruler who would come and establish the kingdom and justify and vindicate all of Israel. Oftentimes John is pictured as having doubts in prison, but we know that he had plenty of time to think.

He said, I have a theological nut that I have never quite cracked in my mind. I know that Jesus is the Lamb of God. He is the guy at the Jordan that said, Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

John knew for certain that Jesus was the suffering servant. His question was, Are you also the conquering king? And the technical phrase for that was the coming one. Are you the coming one? Or do we look for another? Some scholars thought that there were actually two messiahs.

One would die and pay for sin. They didn't know about the resurrection. They said, Well, for there to be a conquering king, there will have to be another one to come and set up the kingdom.

Others thought, No, I think it's the same guy, and hence resurrection. Hence Pharisees versus Sadducees. The Sadducees thought there had to be two different messiahs

because there is no such thing as a resurrection.

So if they had any thoughts at all about the coming one, they would figure him to be a different guy. Those who did believe in the resurrection could say, Well, he's going to suffer, then he's going to reign. So John sends a couple of guys and says, Hey, ask the Lord.

I've heard what he's doing. And the reason that causes the question, as we saw in Isaiah, Isaiah says that the coming king, the deaf will hear, the blind will see, the lame will walk, and the gospel will be preached to the poor, all of which Jesus is doing. So John knows he's the Lamb of God and he says, You're doing the things associated with the coming one, so are you him or is there going to be a different guy? Because I know that you're not long for this earth.

You are going to be the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world. And so Jesus sends back and tells John what he already knows. John had heard of Jesus' works.

What's Jesus' reply? Go back and tell John what you have seen. And what is it they have seen? The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who does not stumble because of me.

Well, we don't have time to do that passage, but John says, The coming one, are you the coming one? Are you the conquering king, the kingdom establisher? Martha says, I believe you are the coming one because it is at the establishment of the kingdom they knew that this is when the dead would be raised. Well, now keep your finger in John and go the other direction in the New Testament over to the book of Hebrews. Hebrews 10.

Lots of debate about who wrote Hebrews. Somebody put a gun to my head. I would say the apostle Paul.

I think it's anonymous for some of the same reasons that Jesus is being careful. Paul could not get a hearing as a former Pharisee who was on the outs with Israel now as a Christian apostle. But by writing anonymously and appealing to Old Testament Scripture and couching the message in these terms, he hoped, as he says in Romans 9, 10, and 11, his heart and his desire was that Israel would hear the message.

So he may have taken his name off of this to try to get it heard. In any case, 10.37, yet a little while, and he who is coming will come and will not tarry. He who is coming will come.

He who shall come. This is a reference to the Messiah, the conquering king of Israel. What's the context here? Look at verse 35.

Do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of

endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. Talking about that delay, that interim period.

There is a challenge, there is a conflict, there is an issue, there is a test. You have need of endurance. Do not cast away your confidence.

Hang in there. Hold fast. In this time where it seems that things are going from bad to worse, not only is he sick, but now he's died.

Not only has he died, but he's getting real cold. Not only is he cold, but now he's been in there four days. And yet Martha says, I know what you ask of God, and as was pointed out during the break, Martha seems to be a pretty type A personality.

You have to be on good terms with the Lord to be this pushy. But she's an organizer. She's a person who gets things done.

We know this about her. She's almost challenging the Lord based on her knowledge of Him. Wouldn't it be wonderful to know the Lord well enough to be Moses when God says, Stand back Moses, I'm going to wipe out the nation and start over with you.

And he says, Not so Lord. If you're going to do that, then blot me out of your book, which you have written. This takes some brass to stand up to the Lord and say, Lord, here's what I think you ought to do.

You've got to know the Lord to stand on that kind of ground. And Martha does, and it's a great credit. You can see why Jesus loved her, why He loved Martha and Lazarus.

These are people who understand Him well enough to draw conclusions and to make applications. And this is our challenge, to know the Lord that well. So this is no accident that this is what she says in 27.

I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world. This is the time of fulfillment of promise. When she had said these things, now notice Jesus sort of indirectly challenges her.

She says, I know He'll be raised at the last. He says, I'm the resurrection and the life. The one who lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this? And she goes back to the coming. She says, Well, I know that you're the Messiah and you are the coming one. And she's really back.

I know that He will rise again at the resurrection at the last day. So she's thinking, Well, are you telling me the last day is real soon? She's the one that said, Whatever you ask of God, God will give you. But she's kind of on the fence here.

Well, I know that it's at the last day, but are you saying that you're going to do it now?

And so this question still kind of hangs in the air. When she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary, her sister, saying, The Teacher has come. Notice no names.

The Teacher has come and is calling for you. As soon as Mary heard that, she arose quickly and came to Him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him.

Then the Jews who were with her in the house, comforting her, they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, She is going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Her favorite spot is at the feet of Jesus.

She was there when Martha was doing the dishes earlier. She falls at His feet now. And you get the idea that Mary and Martha are almost two sides of a wonderful coin where you have the emotion and the worship and the reverence and the dedication and the willingness to listen at almost any cost, and you have the business like there are things that need to be done, thinking through the implications of what has been taught, and Martha and Mary together make a wonderful pair.

If my brother would not have died, Jesus already addressed this with the disciples, I am not going in order that you may believe, and I am glad that I wasn't there. Therefore when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, he groaned in the Spirit and was troubled. Now this is kind of the duality of these Jews.

They are dangerous because some of them are liable to go and inform on where Jesus is, maybe even inadvertently so, but they are the Jews. But they are weeping. They are sympathizing.

And you wonder, well, is this just the traditional morning? There were three days where they thought the Spirit hovered over the body, and they are there doing this traditional thing. It is difficult to know. But we know that they are cautious, but the Jews follow Mary, and they are not in on the earlier conversation.

That is reserved for those who are thinking a little further ahead. So Jesus groaned in the Spirit and was troubled. This is a great mystery to me.

We tend to picture the Lord Jesus, he is the God-man, he knows the Father's will, he literally walks on water, he is in control of every situation, and yet he is human. He is made of the same stuff that we are, yet without sin. And when Jesus sees Mary weeping and all the rest of this great consternation, he groaned in the Spirit and was troubled.

Why would he be troubled? He knows he is going to raise Lazarus from the dead. It is not Lazarus that he is groaning about, is it? He is not troubled about Lazarus and about the

death. What is he troubled about? What is he groaning about? This weeping seems to indicate a sorrow different than what Paul talks about.

We grieve, but not as those who have no hope. And you get the idea that this level of grief is too great for someone with faith. Mary is a great woman of faith, Jesus loves her, but something about this sorrow, he doesn't groan beforehand, he groans and is troubled when he sees her weeping.

Apparently her emotions have gotten the better of her faith, have overcome her hope. And this happens to us and it is something we need to try to resist. We want to be Martha, but Jesus didn't groan and be troubled when he was talking to Martha, but he does when he sees Mary.

And she has fallen at his feet, it is not a lack of reverence, it is not a lack of recognition, but there is something about this weeping that grieves the Lord Jesus. And he groans in his spirit. This is a deep disappointment.

He is troubled at her sense of calamity. He said, Where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept.

There aren't many times when you see the Lord Jesus weeping. There is another time when he is looking at Jerusalem and weeps. Why is he weeping? How often would I have gathered you under my wings as a hen gathers her chicks? But you would have none of me.

You did not believe, you did not accept, you did not trust, you didn't put it together. You had all of the evidence, you had the words and the works, and you would have no part of me. And it caused Jesus to weep.

And I have to think that this weeping, it isn't, look at what it says, oh, the Jews said, see how he loved him. Well, they got it wrong. Of course Jesus loved him, but that is not why he is crying.

Why would he be crying when he says, I am going to see him in a few minutes? And Jesus knows he is going to raise Lazarus. That is the reason he has come. That is not why he is weeping.

He is weeping at the reaction. He is weeping at the response. Do you want the Lord Jesus Christ to look down on you and me when we are in the midst of down circumstances and see us lose our faith and lose our hope? Not believe, not trust, not claim the promises.

This is what brings tears to Jesus' eyes, I think. It doesn't specifically state what he is crying about, but what else could it be? What is the alternative? Can he be sorrowing at Lazarus when in literally minutes Lazarus is going to be coming out and it is going to be one of the greatest things Jesus has ever done? Why is he crying? Well, look at the

opportunity for faith. He didn't weep with Martha.

He didn't groan with Martha. He wasn't troubled with Martha. Why? She is processing.

She is not quite there, but she is way ahead of this group. And they even misconstrue the Lord Jesus weeping. They don't even understand why he is sorrowing, much less what ought to be the response here.

Then the Jews said, see how he loved him. And some of them said, could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind also have kept this man from dying? And the answer is, yes. We often have this thought.

Lord, couldn't you have done this differently? Couldn't you have organized it in a way that would have avoided my tribulation here? Well, of course he could have. And so hard on the heels of that thought ought to be, well, then why did he allow it? Obviously this is for my benefit in some way. But of course they don't close that loop, and we often fail to close that loop.

There is a reason for this. Jesus has known the purpose since the beginning of the chapter. Then Jesus again, groaning in himself.

Now, why is he groaning? Well, read verse 37 again. He sees the weeping, and he groans. He hears this, couldn't this man have done something about this? And he groans again.

It's all about, Jesus has got this situation well in hand. The Lord God in heaven has all of our circumstances in hand. His disappointment isn't with the way circumstances are turning out.

It's with how we handle them. Jesus came to the tomb, groaning in himself. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

Jesus said, take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, practical as always, Lord, by this time, four days. This is what is interesting to me.

Obviously, and I've got to speed up here a little bit, but think about this timing. How many days did Jesus wait before he responded to the appeal that he'd come? There were those who were waiting for him and hoping for him and thought he would be the answer to Israel's problems, and he waited how long? Two days. When do you think the message first came to Jesus that Lazarus was sick? Well, four days ago.

Four days, two days. What is the biblical span of time from Adam to Christ? Four thousand years from the coming of Christ the first time until the coming of Christ the second time. Two thousand years.

You've got this sort of six thousand year picture of history, right? When is it that the

revelation of the Lord Jesus really solidifies? When is it that you really begin to see the seed promises and the revelation of the Lord Jesus? When does Israel come into existence? It's in the loins of Abraham, isn't it? When is that? Two thousand B.C. You've got two thousand years of Israel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then the captivity, the deliverance, going into the land, time of the judges. David is circa 1,000 B.C., so Abraham to David is 850, 900 years. Abraham leaves Ur of the Chaldees even before that.

You've got basically a thousand years from Abraham to David, a thousand years from David to Christ, two thousand years. But Israel is sick. They fail.

Gilgal, Gilgal, Gilgal, discipline, judgment, discipline, judgment, judgment, captivity, loss of the ten tribes, and so on. Jesus comes and there is the appeal, fix it, bring in the kingdom, but it's not the time. And Jesus waits two more days before he comes to raise Lazarus.

That's our two days, I would suggest. That's the two thousand years of the church age. Somebody five hundred years from now, if you're still listening to this recording, well, then I got it wrong.

I think the Lord Jesus is coming back soon. I think he's coming back soon. I think he could easily be in our lifetime, certainly the lifetime of our young ones.

So you have this picture, and I always thought, why wasn't Lazarus in the tomb three days? That would be a great thing, you know, Jesus and Jonah and all the rest of it. Four days, why? Well, Jesus waits two days. He purposely ensures that the total period of time is four days, because that's the four thousand years of the people of God.

But the two-day wait is in there as well. So this issue is brought to our attention again in verse 39, He has been dead four days. Jesus said, Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying.

Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me, and I know that you always hear me. Notice Jesus has already had the conversation with God about raising Lazarus. He's not praying for God to raise Lazarus.

He says, Father, I thank you that you heard me when we had the conversation. You always hear me. I know that you hear me, but because of the people who are standing by, I say this, that they may believe that you sent me, that they may believe.

Chapter 10, Believe, believe the words, believe the works. This delay is so that you may believe. Martha, do you believe? Father, I'm praying this prayer out loud so that they may believe.

Why are we here? Why are we challenged? Why is prayer not immediately answered? So that we may believe. Why do bad things happen and they're not fixed? So that we may believe. Now when he had said these things, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

And he who had died came out, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. I don't think this was probably as dramatic as it has been made in the movies. If he's bound hand and foot, he's kind of hopping like a, you know, very short steps.

He's bound hand and foot. They rolled away the stone, but they didn't go in and get him. And so his feet are bound.

So he's walking like a geisha, you know, little tiny steps. Woman with one of those sheath skirts on. Any gals that ever worn those little skinny skirts and try to walk in high heels, like six inch steps.

Well, Lazarus, it would almost be anticlimactic because he's trying not to fall over as he's coming out totally wrapped in these bandages. I'm just saying, that's what's in the Scripture. Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in him.

Believed. The Jews who had not formerly believed. They're there commiserating, but they're not believers.

Now some of the others have already run to Jerusalem, but these who see this believe. Some of them went away to the Pharisees, told them the things that Jesus did. That was the problem from the beginning.

Chief priests and Pharisees, now, what did they say? Believe what I do. Here is incontrovertible proof. The Jews who the Pharisees trust have been there.

They know about the grave. They know about the four days. And they go back and tell the Pharisees, what is the reaction? Look at verse 53, from that day on they plotted to put him to death.

Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there to the country near the wilderness to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with his disciples. And the Passover of the Jews was near. Remember that three-something month gap.

Look at chapter 12, verse 1. Six days beforehand, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had been dead, whom he had raised from the dead. Look at verse 9. A great many of the Jews knew that he was there, and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. Testimony, witness, believe the works.

Look at verse 10. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. Believed, believed, believed.

There is belief. What's the other reaction? Well, this Jesus raises people from the dead. We're going to kill him, and we're going to wipe out the evidence.

Raise him from the dead, we'll kill him again. What kind of a reaction is this? That when the works happen, we've got to try to undo the work. We've got to make the work go away.

The work is incontrovertible testimony, so we've got to make it go away. A dead man raised. You would think, what did Abraham tell the rich man? They have Moses and the prophets.

Let them hear them. If they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe even if one were to rise from the dead. And one has risen from the dead with Lazarus, and it foreshadows what's going to happen when the Lord Jesus rises from the dead.

There are those who will not believe, and who will attack anything that promotes belief. The issue is belief. What think ye of Christ? That's what you can expect as a believer.

You are testimony. You are witness of the Lord Jesus Christ and his power. Do not be surprised when even within the alleged household of faith, there is attack.

There is dismissive pushing away and abuse. The Lord said, they hate me, they're going to hate you. The more Christ-like you are, the more hate you're going to engender.

Praise God that you are a work worthy of opposition. You're a Lazarus. You are evidence that people find so uncomfortable they've got to try to do away with you.

That means you're doing it right. Praise God. Pray for wisdom.

Pray for strength. Endure, so that after you have suffered, you receive the promise. It is this time of interim where we believe.

We don't lose our hope. Don't weep. Don't fall apart.

It's not enough to fall at Jesus' feet. Think. Claim the promise.

Recognize that he is the coming one. Well, it's a wonderful, wonderful miracle. You could spend weeks and weeks, months, looking at all of the details.

But these are a few observations on the value of the work of the Lord Jesus, the work of God in our lives. It means something. Your life counts.

The things that God has done count. Don't worry about what people say. Don't worry about how it is construed.

Don't worry if it is perverted and converted into something with which you are attacked. God is in his heaven, and it is for a purpose. And the purpose is that we learn to trust, that we learn to believe.

This equips us for good works. It secures our treasure in heaven, with which we are going to invest in future things we know not of. But it is a wonderful privilege to be loved by the Lord Jesus, and be in this position to trust him, and to see his mighty works on our behalf.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for your love for us, in sending the Lord Jesus to die for us. We know that you will send him again to collect us, and to bring us to himself.

We know that in that day there will be vindication, there will be justification, there will be a wonderful transfer into eternal things, and into your very presence. We thank you for this interim time where you challenge us, and teach us, and enable us to grow, begin to bear fruit. You prune us so that we can bear more fruit.

We pray that we can take the message of this passage to heart, and be those who do not simply fall at your feet in sorrow, but stand in your presence, and claim your promises, and receive the blessings that come through the person and work of our Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name. Amen.