

Fear and Fears - Part 10

The Fear of Bad News

Luke 12:54-56

I'm going to go down to Guatemala City to preach in our Compass Bible Church down there in Guatemala and so my assistant said your passport is about to expire, so I had to run, go get my passport updated. Ten years ago last time I got my picture taken I took it at Costco so I thought, you know, are they still doing that? Yes, so I go down to Costco to get my picture taken to update my passport and they get me in there and then they said it'll take 15 to 20 minutes to develop it. So, okay so I'm stuck there now at Costco not enough time to leave and come back and I needed it that day so I sat there wandering aimlessly in the aisles of our local Costco. (00:39)

And of course that dangerous because you run into all kinds of things you like and then a couple things that I needed. And I saw the things that I needed and I knew I needed them and I had them on my long term list to do that and I came across those, you know, signs that, and I've been taught how to read those signs although I don't remember the formula, I look them up, but you know if the number ends in whatever it's on a clearance and I mean clearly I was like wow that price is too good to believe, of course I shop like you do, I pull my phone out and punch in Amazon and all these other places to see if the deal is a good deal. And this was like a killer deal, it was like I got to get this, this is such a good deal. But I'm here to spend \$5 on a passport picture; I don't want to spend you know \$80 on this thing I got to have. So, I sat there debating, I even had people coming up to me, you know, do you need help sir? I guess I looked like I was lost in thought and you know debating and I'm not real good with buying things. I have a lot of buyers remorse so I was just there struggling and two things I saw that I needed. One of them was big, you know like big physically and I thought this is going to be hard to get this home so I wrestled with it, my little alarm goes off on my watch, it's time to go get my pictures so I sat there and had that thought that, you've had too, and that is you know what, I just get it later. (01:58)

Now when you shop at Costco and you say, "I just get it later", later is usually too late because they clear that stuff out there and so you know it didn't take but 10 minutes till it was gone and I had missed out on the deal. You know when you see a good deal at a place like that you better grab it because it might not be there tomorrow and so that's what happen and of course it's minor inconvenience I suppose you're going to pay a little more you're going to have to go get it some where else, so that's the reality for those two things. But sometimes there's not somewhere else. There is no somewhere else. At least temporally speaking you're on a trip and this happened me I'm sure it's happened to you, you sit there and think well I need gas at some point and you're going through this city and you see the signs, you might even look at the price and think I can do better and you know I'm not quite hungry enough yet, I might stop and get a microwavable burrito, I can do that in three stops and you know you just keep going looking at the gas stations and then the off-ramps get less and less and then you end up there is no somewhere else. There's no where else to get gas and then it says next gas station, you know, 400 miles or whatever. I don't know they're not that far apart but you don't have enough gas to get to the next gas station. You recognize that you better get the deal when you see it because sometimes you may get stranded without it. (03:13)

Now certainly when I thought of the reality of seeing a deal that you better get, of course as Christians we should be thinking in these terms all the time, the best deal in the universe that we're trying to get out to a lost world is the deal that you can get your sins completely forgiven because of Christ's work on the cross. The best deal going in the universe is the grace of Jesus Christ found in our salvation. No better deal than that. And we're out there trying to tell people you know you need to grab this deal or maybe you're sitting here this morning knowing that you should grab that deal and all I've got to say that is you don't get it, it may be gone. And there is a point when you get to a place where you got to recognize the offer will no longer be on the table. And I can only imagine what it must be like when you pass the last off-ramp and you recognize that you are stranded now because you've just crossed from the threshold of this life into the next life and you didn't take the opportunity to put your trust in Christ and get your sins forgiven. What kind of regret you people feel a minute after they die that they did not avail themselves to the grace of Jesus Christ. That's got to be big regret. (04:21)

Now when they pass that last off-ramp to grab salvation before they cross into the next life it's not like that's any



surprise to God. The triune God knows that was their last chance and while they still exist in the timeline of this life you've got to recognize that Christ is grieving when you pass that last exit. You know what I'm saying? He knows you've missed your last opportunity. (04:44)

We've been studying through the gospel of Luke, and we've reached Luke chapter 12 verses 54 through 56 but before I make you look at that text as you'll see in a minute we've got to have context for this so let me move you ahead to chapter 19 and let's make a quick stop in chapter 19 to get a little historical context on what this could possibly mean in Luke chapter 12 verse 54 through 56. So turn with me to Luke chapter 19 drop all the way down in that text to verse number 41 and let me give you a biblical picture of what I've just analogized. (05:18)

Christ is grieving because these folks had passed their last opportunity to grab the grace that is available in Christ and he is grieving before they do. Now they would grieve, they were going to face the consequences of their sin and rejection of Christ but right here Christ knows they've past their last opportunity and he says this verse 41. Luke chapter 19 look at verse number 41, we'll start there. And when he drew near and saw the city – he of course is Christ, the city is the city of Jerusalem – he wept over it, saying, "Would that you, even you – he says even you because he's already talked about this city a few chapters earlier as the kind that always stones the prophets, kills those sent to them and even you – you've had a terrible track record of rejecting the truth but had you know on this day the things that make for peace!" If you just had known, if you just would have seen it. "But now they're hidden from your eyes." You've past the last exit it's done. No more opportunities for you. (06:24)

Now, you got to understand when you talk about making peace, you think and I think in terms of our current existence on the timeline that the peace we're most concerned about is peace with God. And you're right that's certainly true but there was something unique about that first century context that they had an opportunity not only to make peace with God by seeing Christ as their Messiah and embracing him as King and Lord but they had a great political benefit that came with that. Theoretically and hypothetically speaking had the nation of Israel accepted their Jewish Messiah you would not have what was about to happen to that nation, happen. Titus the Roman emperor would not march in on 70AD and conquer them and destroy it and as he said many times take that beautiful edifice of the temple, the center of their worship, and not leave one stone upon the other. That wouldn't have happened theoretically and hypothetically speaking, of course in God's providence that was the plan but here he says you didn't know that it was time for you to grab, oh that you would have known that on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Verse 43 for the days will come upon you, – just a short couple decades from the time he said this – when your enemies will set up a barricade around you – that's exactly what Titus and his armies did – and they will hem you in on every side and they will tear you down to the ground and you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone – there it is again – upon another in you, he said that multiple times, why? Underline this, because you did not know the time of your visitation. The time of your visitation, (08:02)

From the very beginning the angels said to the shepherds in Bethlehem for unto you this day in the city of David is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord and in that context when you have that great statement about David the King of the Old Testament being perfectly idealized as the one who now is born to Israel the King Jesus who would sit on the throne of his father David and rule and reign. And here was this offer the King coming to present himself to his people but it says in John chapter 1 he came unto his own but his own did not receive him. They received him not. The idea of Christ coming and visiting his people Emmanuel, God with us, in Jesus, here he offers himself and they reject him. And he says you know if only you knew, the opportunity that was right there and you passed on it. Now that's the historical context we need. It has a two level application for them it had political ramifications which of course was founded on the spiritual opportunity they had which still remains for us. And that is that he is visiting us as it says in the New Testament, offering us salvation and how long is that on the table? Well for you and me I don't know, but it's always exhorting us, today if you hear his voice don't harden your hearts. Today as Paul said to the Corinthians is the day of salvation. Today is the day, the offer is there but you know what? That offer won't always be there. (9:30)

Now to our text, I've got to take you to that, I don't normally do that because you can see all the explanation within the text that we're studying today we don't have it. Look at it with me, Luke chapter 12 verses 54 through 56 printed there on your worksheet and you need to understand we've got to go outside of the text to understand what's happening here because basically all he does it talk about weather forecasting, calls them hypocrites and says it would be good if you could interpret the present time so we need explanation. I painted a little of the framework of



what we need to understand of it. But let's read it, verses 54 through 56 follow along as I read it for you. (10:02)

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.'" Off the Mediterranean that moist moisture would come in, that wind would come in and they would know, hey it's going to rain today. "And so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing off the desert, you see that happening you say 'cool air now but I know it's coming from the south and it's going to be a scorching heat,' and it happens. You hypocrites!" This is a strange response after saying you're good at forecasting the weather. They're a bunch of hypocrites, why? He's going to tell them. "Because you know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" That's a rhetorical question, in other words you know how to look at simple things like what direction is the wind coming from and you can know whether it's going to be a rain storm or a scorching heat, you know that and you take preparation and you do things that prepare for that but here why is it you don't know how to interpret the time? And the point is rhetorically you do know how, this is not a "not able to", it's a "not willing to". This is not "you can't", this is a "you won't". That's why they are hypocrites. You have the discerning faculties to look at things and connect the dots and say if this is true and this is true well then that's going to happen and you make preparation for that but not when it comes to the times, the present time. Now what is the present time? I gave you a little picture of that in Luke 19, Christ was coming visiting his people offering them terms of peace, not only with God but he would establish himself as king and deliver them from all their political enemies. But they didn't accept it. Now what were they doing? They were being hypocritical. What does that mean? They were saying, well you know I'm not sure I'm totally convinced, I need more evidence, we saw that in context in Luke 12. I need more evidence, show me this, give me a sign, do more for me, do a healing, give me more wisdom and he says, listen you've got plenty of information, you make preparations about the future on a whole lot less evidence than what I've given you. (12:02)

Now even explaining this text the way I just have you might say well it would be great if I were just in the first century then I could just apply this passage but I can't apply it because I'm not in the first century and I'm not listening to Jesus preach sermons to me and I'm not watching him heal people. You're right, we're not. But we got to make application of this text in our own lives by thinking about what witness he has left us. What prognostications and predictions we should have about the future based on the evidence that lays before us that is presently available for you and for me. So we've got to read the signs like they had to read the signs and while our signs are a little different because first century presentation of the gospel included some physical and political overtones that may not be present for us now, because the opportunity to establish the kingdom in the first century has now been postponed it's no longer an offer it's going to be something that is imposed upon the world when Christ comes back in Revelation 19 when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Do you follow me on that? But right now I do have an offer on the table, terms that will make peace and the availability of those terms right now are on the table and I should respond. It's the best offer I'm ever going to get (13:11)

Now just like me you may look at a great deal and still say well, I'm still going to have to outlay some cash, it's going to be inconvenient, it's going to cost me something. Same goes for the gospel, sure it will. But we got to look at the evidence and we've got to consider the signs. Now I'm going to have to go outside of this text to round out what the Bible says regarding the signs but let's start with what he's saying, what Jesus is saying to the first century by putting this point down on the worksheet, number 1, we need to read the signs.

1. Read the Signs

They had to read the signs; they're being rebuked for not reading the signs. Let's start with a very simple observation that for you and for me, whatever signs remain for us, whatever signs are present in vogue for us, those are the signs we need to be reading. Are you reading the signs? Well, what are they? Let's go outside of this text and think this through. Turn with me to Romans chapter 1. (13:54)

Romans chapter 1, this is nothing new, the Bible has been saying this from the very beginning and that is that you can look at something called creation or nature and you should be able to see, as Paul put it, to those in Lystra, God has not left himself without a testimony, without a witness, he has given some signs that should point to some things, and one of the things should be observed from looking at nature is something about God. Romans chapter 1, if you turn there, drop down to verse number 20. For his invisible attributes, God we're speaking of, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, - now you can read the sign but you're just not doing



anything about it – ever since the creation of the world, in the things that he has made. Now the signs are so clear pointing to this thing whatever it is about God that they are without excuse. Now there's a component of putting together the pieces that should lead you to Christ where you should say, "I need to submit my life to Jesus Christ." And the first thing that we think about is the way God speaks in nature; we call it in theological terms, general revelation in nature. And that picture from God, should lead us to conclude some thing and I want to point out and tease out one thing from that simple observation of knowing of the glory of God is declared in the heavens and the skies pouring forth knowledge everyday about God. What do I learn about that? I learn about God's power, I learn about his divine nature, I see some things about God, but here's the thing that I think that is often underscored when it comes to our lesson this morning I want us to think about what nature should be saying to us and what we ought to be reading and concluding from that. So letter A, you got the letter A under number 1? Let's jot this down. When nature - here's something about it - keeps laws, see the standard. (15:53)

A. When Nature Keeps Laws, See the Standard

When nature keeps laws, see the standard. Okay, I'm going to make a leap from nature to my own life. I'm going to start with the fact that one of the things that's often described in nature is not just it's beauty or it's grandeur or it's majesty but it's symmetry, it's organization, it's adherence to the proper boundaries that it's been given, as it says in Psalm 19, which I just quoted, that the heavens declare the glory of God, it then begins to speak of the sun like a bridegroom going out of it's chamber and running its circuit in the sky and doing it very consistently. Matter of fact, you count on that. You got things on your calendar, on your phone that you expect to do this week and one thing you're expecting is that big ball of fusion is going to crest over the horizon every single day on time and you're going to have another day tomorrow. That's what you're expecting because that's what the sun was designed to do. (16:44)

And it keeps laws; we call them the laws of nature. And when the laws of nature some how break down or things don't work the way they're suppose to, we start getting really frustrated and if you think about it in terms of the glory of God seen in nature in the cosmos, you start to say, well those are very important, I expect that to work the way it's designed. Like this 6 septillion ton rock you sit on called the planet Earth. Spinning through the cold vacuum of interplanetary space at a thousand miles in its rotation, a thousand miles on the equator, that's faster than your car can go, a thousand miles. Now we don't feel it, right? That's the rotation of the planet and it's on a circuit. Think about the circuit, 60 trillion miles [sound effect] around this planet, I'm sorry, 600 million miles - some of you astronomers, 6 trillion – 600 million miles, that's more than the track in high school, although it felt like that. 600 million mile circuit and it's moving around that circuit every 365 and a quarter days. Think about this now, at a thousand miles per second, a thousand miles per second. So a thousand miles an hour in a circle, a thousand miles per second making this course in a 600 million mile track that it makes every single year. Tilted at just the right axis to create the seasons, we've got this ball of fusion 93 million miles away called the Sun. It happens to be at just the perfect distance from the sun so we don't burn up, right? Not too far away so we don't freeze to death. You've got all the gravitational aspects of this life if it weren't exactly the way that it is on this planet, we're dust. You've got everything in terms of the atmosphere doing exactly what it ought to do to help us survive here. And without that, if anything changes in this, including that thing that orbits around this earth, this satellite called the Moon, that if it were any bigger, right? Would produce the kinds of tides that wouldn't allow our lands to be habitable, if it were any smaller our oceans would be stagnant and dead and we wouldn't survive, you've got every, not to mention the way it keeps astral junk and comets and all the things that come around that could and should bombard this planet, it's like a big protection for us. That thing there, 400 times smaller from the planet surface looking up in the sky than the sun creating this perfect two cylinders. One that very soft with a reflectivity that gives us a nice nightlight at night verses the cosmic ball of fusion in the day time. I mean if you really looked at everything you'd say, "Wow, everything is created and in such an amazing way, such an amazing way. (19:21)

Oh, but you know what? I hear a lot of Christians talk that way, but there's a lot of things wrong. I mean you're right, there is and it started in Genesis 3 when God cursed the ground. And there is a lot of things that are wrong, and when they're wrong you don't sit around going "oh man [clapping] fantastic, I'm so glad, you know, the planet is doing its own thing." No, you say wow it's been in bondage to corruption and there are things about this planet that we don't like. There are weather patterns about this planet that we don't like, it ends up on the news and we hate it, just like your body. Think about your body, there's the 60 trillion, 60 trillion cells, little tiny factories in your body doing its work every single day to make you what you are and that you remain what you are. Sixty thousand miles of blood vessels in your body bringing nutrients and oxygen to every part of your body, lungs that oxygenate

your blood every time you breathe, thousands of miles of nerve fibers firing electricity, hundreds of miles an hour from your brain all through out your body, all of that happening and when something goes wrong, when those things that are designed to do something with a purpose have rules and they're suppose to keep those rules to make your life habitable, once something goes wrong you don't sit there and think of yourselves and go, [fingers snap] you go girl, you be your own kind of cell, you know. That's awesome. You stand up for yourself, don't let anyone squeeze you into its mold. That's awesome that you're standing up, you're doing great. You don't want your cells to make YouTube videos and you go I really like it when you're bucking the system. No, see when our bodies or the universe does not do what it's designed to do and it doesn't go in keeping with its designed purpose and it doesn't keep the rules, we call that disease, we call that illness, we call that cancer. We don't celebrate that, we don't say, "That's great man, be your own person." No, we say do what you're designed to do. Nature keeps laws, we want it to keep laws and the Bible says you ought to learn something about the power and majesty of God and his attributes. You ought to see nature doing what it does and you ought to say that should teach me something about myself. My moral life when things get out of whack, I shouldn't be going on YouTube looking for affirmation from non-Christians saying, "It's great that you're standing up to do what ever you want if it feels good, do it." That's not how we want anything else in creation to work. You want them to do exactly what they're designed to do, you want cells in your body that are designed to do this, to do exactly what it's designed to do. If not, we create hospitals and research labs, we have tests and we try to restore it and correct it. It's funny how when we get out of sync with what God has designed us to do, with the things that he's taught us to do, the things that he's purposed for us to do, not only in written revelation but in natural revelation we sit there and say, "Do whatever you want." That's the world we live in. (22:04)

As a matter of fact drop down in this passage it says here in Romans chapter 1 verse 32, though they know God's righteous decree – this is Romans chapter 1 verse 32 – that those who practice such things deserve to die, they know that, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. That is the world we live in and it's happening at an unprecedented rate in the United States of America. People are going to give you hardy approval for doing things that are not in keeping with what God designed you to do and everything that he's architected for our lives they're willing to applaud you. As a matter of fact if you criticize someone who steps out and does whatever they want that's not in keeping with God's principles, plan and revealed will, you are going to be shouted down as a hater and a bigot. You need to understand the world we're living in and you need to learn something about how God expects us to discern what we expect from the created order and say we should expect the same things from our lives. When you see nature keeping laws, you ought to see the standard. (23:06)

Something else there in the verse we just read. Look at verse 32, they know God's righteous decree and that those who practice such things deserve to die. See when we abandon what God has asked us to do there's something internal within us, that gives us a sense that we know that's bad and we deserve bad because we've done bad. That's called conscience. Conscience is something that gives us that pang of bad feeling that should lead us to recognize that we are doing wrong. We feel guilty because we are guilty and feelings of guilt should not be resolved with some psychiatrist's prescription pad or by some yoga workout or by some run in the park or some kind of you know, self help book. Feelings of guilt should lead us to recognize we've got a problem that needs to be remedied. We need to see our problem and except it for what it is. Letter B, let's put it down this way, when conscience convicts, you need to see your sin. (24:03)

B. When Conscience Convicts, See Your Sin

When you look at the created order and natural revelation see the standard, and now you look at your life and you're going to feel an internal barometer called your conscience that will make you feel bad. Think back to the first time you stole something, think about the first time you said that profane word, first time you cursed, think of that time you looked at someone you love and you yelled in anger and you lost your temper and you said those horrible things, how did you feel when it was all done? When you cheated, when you broke the rules, no one knew it, you weren't caught, how did you feel? You felt a lot like David who said I was like the fever heat of summer through my groaning all day long, you feel bad. Why? Because of this, the next line says, because your hand was heavy upon me. You got away with it, but you didn't because there's something inside of you making you feel that sense that you know God's righteous decrees and you didn't do them and you deserve to die. You don't need to go church to figure that out. Look at the next chapter, chapter 2, it says in verse 15 that people that don't even have a Sabbath school graduation certificate they show that the work of the law, they never sat under and studied verse 15 of Romans 2 is written on their hearts, while their conscience – there's our word – bears witness, and their conflicting

thoughts accuse or excuse them. I love the way that the Old Testament Hebrew depicts in a phrase what we translate into English conscience in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word is a sharp pain, that's the literal Hebrew word, in my heart, in my leb, sharp pain in my heart. That's the picture of a violated conscience. We feel that. And what people do when they feel bad feeling is they say I don't want to feel bad and they do something that makes them feel better. That's not why bad feelings are given to you and your conscience. Bad feelings are given to you in your conscience when you do wrong things so that you will admit that you are someone who's done the wrong thing. When you feel like you've sinned that's so that you can see yourself as a sinner, when you feel feelings of guilt it's so that you can look at yourself and say, "I am guilty." That's the job of your conscience to see sin for what it is in your life. And just like Psalm 32 when David sinned against God by bedding down his neighbor's wife named Bathsheba, he said, "God against you I've sinned. I recognize that and you put your pressure on me through the conscience that I have, certainly aided by the Holy Spirit and I felt terrible until I was honest and I said I'll acknowledge my sin to you. I confess to you – here's the words of Psalm 32 verse 5 – I confess my transgressions to the Lord." That's the goal of us feeling bad, be careful what you do with bad feelings. Feelings are things that God's given us, they're not always reliable, I know you can feel bad when you haven't done bad, but so often we feel bad because we have done bad and what's the point of that? Just to look in the mirror and call ourselves names? No, for us to recognize that we are sinners and we need to acknowledge it, confess it. (27:11)

More than that, this is worth jotting down, 2 Corinthians chapter 7, 2 Corinthians 7 verses 10 and 11 are great places to start. When it comes to our bad feelings of conscience they are to lead us to repentance. It's not just saying, "Yeah I'm a sinner". It's saying I'm a sinner and I'm willing to turn from that behavior. The sign that's left for every human being on the planet, though you can damage and sear and callous your conscience, is for us to see that there's a u-turn sign in front of you that says turn around, stop doing this. That sign God has left for us in creation, he's given us a sense of his standard, in our conscience he's given a sense of our sin and we've got to recognize those pangs of guilt for what they are for us to acknowledge our sin and confession and then to turn from our sin and resolve and repentance. That's a great passage, a godly grief that produces repentance that leads to salvation and that's without regret what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation about the sin, what fear, what longing and what zeal. Those are great words, real repentance leads to that. When conscience convicts you see your sin and everybody in this room has experienced the pang of a guilty conscience. God has not left himself with out testimony, read the signs (28:31)

And lastly and most specifically and most in parallel with that first century generation of Christians that heard Jesus saying these words and even non-Christians that were refusing his words. Number 3, let's think about scripture. When scripture speaks, and it clearly does, letter C, you need to see the savior (28:54)

C. When Scripture Speaks, See the Savior

Notice the profundity of this. When scripture speaks, see the savior. That doesn't sound all that profound Pastor Mike. Well it is, and here's why. Because if you look at the first two things there's a lot of religious that have grown up in this world, that have grown up without the special revelation of scripture. Many of them have even created their own scripture and you know, all they have creation and conscience, which leaves them to affirm two things, God is holy and I'm a sinner. How many world religions will say that? Many of them, many of them. You look at Islam for instance, yeah, God is holy, he's great, he's perfect, none greater, great. And then they look at themselves, I'm a sinner. Well that's good you recognize God's high standard, you recognize your own sin, but when I preach to Muslims or any other world religion for that sake, some of them don't even have those two elements in palace. But you know what they're missing? A payment for sin. What's the solution, where's the savior? Every time I share the gospel with a Muslim I say what is your mechanism for forgiveness and all they can say is the mercy of God. I believe God is merciful but I've said it a million times from this platform, if God is not just, God cannot be good, and if he is not good, he is not God. You cannot have a God who does not deal with sin justly, just like my old, you know, humorous slogan, if I were going to run for the judge in this county, I can't say, 'Vote for me, I'm going to set everyone free.' And that's exactly what people in other religions want. A God that simply let's people go free. He can't, there has to be a just payment for sin. (30:24)

So when we open up the scripture we realize well wait a minute here, you've got a bruised heel and a crushed head of the enemy by the third chapter of Genesis, what's going on? God says, "You know they're going to need a savior; you're going to need a deliverer." You're going to need someone who gets punished and gets hurt so that the guilty will be released so that the guilty will go free, so the transgressor can be treated as innocent and then we have this

whole elaborate system of barbequing burgers at worship in the temple mount, why? So that you can realize that an innocent spotless lamb, it doesn't know his right hoof from his left hoof, he's going to go and be slaughtered in some ceremony so that we can see that our sin should lead us to death, but there's going to be a provision that's going to happen that's going to come not in some furry little animal, but in a person, the perfect person who's going to fulfill all righteousness that's why John when he saw Jesus walking on the horizon looked at him and said, "Look, behold the blank of God that takes away, the what of God? The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The lamb is going to suffer the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. Isaiah 53 says, here he is he'll be crushed as a guilt offering. What does that mean? I'm guilty, I need God to somehow look past my guilt, but he can't just look past my guilt, he has to pay for my guilt, how's that going to happen? Christ is going to come as predicted from the very beginning in Genesis 3 and he's going to solve the problem, and he's going to do it by dying in your place and in my place. That's the only way. You can look at every other religious system that talks about a holy God and sinful man but you do not have a solution until you have Christianity providing that solution that was looked forward to from the very beginning of creation to the place where Jesus shows up and solves the problem. (32:21)

You do understand this comes from the beginning. Put yourself back in the sandals of the first century people who were being chided for being able to predict the weather but they can't predict what's right in front of them. You think well, maybe Jesus is being a little hard on them. No, no, no, they were learning the scriptures from the time they were kids, not to mention if all they had was creation and conscience they should know they need a savior. But the Bible has been saying it from Genesis 3. Can't even get out of the book of Genesis until you have very specific promises and prophesies we call them that are showing up in the text saying things like this. Well, you've got twelve tribes of Israel, twelve sons of Israel, and one of them is going to be the one through whom this ultimate leader is going to come, through the tribe of Judah, the scepter shall not depart from his feet, that is the tribe. Now that's like playing double Russian roulette I suppose and saying well I just got it lucky. Jesus came from Judah. Well if that's the only prophesy I had well I guess you're going to say, lucky guess. But man, on and on the scripture goes speaking of this one that would come, not just from Judah but from, here it is in Isaiah, from the stump of Jesse, Isaiah 11. The stump of Jesse? What does that mean? A stump is when you have a tree and you cut it off and all that's left is the stump and out of that stump grows this little sapling and it grows into this ultimate king. How is that? Well, Isaiah is writing at a time when the Davidic dynasty is just about done. Zedekiah is just about to get his eyes gouged out they're going to go off to Babylon you're going to have a governor, the governor Zedekiah, is going to reign interim period and then you got four hundred years and then you're thinking where is David's line. Well then the angels show up and say, "Born on this day in the city of David is a Savior who is Christ the Lord" Now, where did that come from? Where are all the kings that come from the line of David? That's why Luke and Matthew want to say, please, the lineage goes right from David through Mary and right from David through the Jews in their thinking about paternal legal rights from father to son, even through Joseph even though he did not provide the biologic material for that child, both lines come from David, one through Solomon and one through Nathan. And what's the point? He fulfills that promise in Isaiah of coming from this all but dead dynasty of David, not only that speaking of where he was born. If you want to pick a city where, I mean you could think of Shiloh you could think of a lot of places, Jerusalem, but now you have in Micah chapter 5 verse 2, the one who's going to be born who's going fourth are from eternity, really? Who's that? This one that's going to come and provide the ultimate sacrifice for sin with ultimate worth because he is the God-man the son of David and not only that as it says in Daniel, the Son of Man who comes from the throne with all authority, he's going to be born in a little tiny village called Bethlehem. Well, good luck with that prediction, you had lots, thousands of opportunities you better pick a well populated place. This was a tiny little village in the first century and Jesus was born right there just as the prophet said. (35:21)

Then you have this weird statement about this kid that's going to be born and you see this early part of Isaiah, you say there is a historical kid born there with that what we're talking about? We're long past that with words like Emmanuel, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor; you know all these passages we quote at Christmas. Here is this one and it says born of a virgin, going to be born in this miraculous way. So here's Jesus, born of a virgin, born from the tribe of Judah, born of the lineage of David and all but dead dynasty of Jesse, that's David's father I should have mentioned. All of these fulfillments born exactly as the scripture says and even when John doubts it because he thinks I don't know, not all the prophecies are being fulfilled, Jesus sends words while he's in prison through the two emissaries and says, tell John this, not only do I meet every biblical messianic prophecy but the blind see, the deaf can hear, the good news is preached to the poor who need it. What's the idea here? Yes, I'm fulfilling biblical prophecy; he says you don't need much forecasting. You don't need Dallas Reins



to figure out to bring your, you know, your umbrella to work, but you can't figure out that I'm the Messiah? Are you kidding me? How is it that you can't do that? You can't see that I'm the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and you don't submit your, how could you not see that? Scripture speaks of the savior. (36:42)

This is all over the Bible, John chapter 5, he turns to the crowds, he says, "If you believed Moses you would believe me for he – that is Moses – wrote of me." Think about that, that's the first five books of the Old Testament. Moses spoke of Christ? Yes, he said you don't believe his writings, how are you going to believe mine? Well, they claim to believe it, what's to think? They said they believe the forecast but when the weather showed up on the horizon, nah, I'm not sure. That's why they're called hypocrites. When scripture speaks see the savior, the scripture is full of this. Evangelists pointed this out through out the book of Acts of David's offspring; I'm quoting Acts 13 verse 26, of David's offspring God has brought to Israel a savior, Jesus just as he promised. I know you think that the Bible has been rewritten a million times; you got a lot of skeptical questions about the Bible. Do your homework. The most well preserved book we have from antiquity, saying things that were clearly said centuries before they happened, all speaking to Christ and fulfilling them in a way that ought to snap your head around to full attention to say this is someone you cannot dismiss as just an old, you know, country preacher in the first century, not just some itinerant rabbi. When scripture speaks see the savior, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Much more we could say on that but let's just start with that, seeing the standard, seeing your sin, seeing the savior. You want the gospel in simple terms, there it is, and all you have to do is recognize creation speaks to the standard, keeps laws, our conscience reminds us that we're sinners, just accept it and admit it and there's a provision which most world religions reject except of course the only one that's got the solution, Christianity, Christ is come to bear your sin, throw yourself on his mercy. That's good news, Pastor Mike, it is. Well then you titled your sermon all wrong this week because you said fear of bad news, I mean I guess you made a mistake, got a little presumptuous, got a little ahead of yourself. (38:47)

Let me tell you why I said this sermon is about the fear of bad news. In both these illustrations you've got pictures of people forecasting a rain storm and a scorching heat. They are willing to take provisions and precautions about the coming weather forecast but they're not willing to accept the Messiah. And you got to ask the theological question why do people reject the message of Christ? Well we already read in Luke 19 because they would not see it. Let me give you one more, as long as you're in Luke go to Luke chapter 13, Luke chapter 13, drop down to verse 34, Luke 13:34. Wasn't the only time Jesus was lamenting over Jerusalem and in this passage in verse 34 notice what he says it couldn't be any more clear. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings – now there's a statement just like in chapter 19, you know what? I would have saved you. If only you knew what leads to peace. Well, what was that? Well, repentance, seeing your sin for what it is in light of the holy standard. Embracing the grace that's available in Christ, but they weren't willing. Matters of fact that's how it ends. Why didn't that happen? – because you were not, it doesn't say able, it says willing. Oh wait a minute Pastor Mike, I've learned the doctrines of grace, I understand something about a high view of God and his sovereignty and that's my problem by the way with this whole discussion about election and predestination, I don't like it because it makes people seem like they can't do it. Well notice this about the Bible, when it comes to people and the call to repentance, see the problem is they're penchant for good forecast leads them to look at their own life and say I am unwilling to accept that diagnosis. That's the problem. Oh they cannot, you're right, but they cannot because they would not and that's important for us to catch. Number 2 we need to make sure on this outline that we are not hypocrites. (40:56)

2. Don't Be a Hypocrite

He says in verse 56 of Luke 12, you hypocrites. I don't want to be a hypocrite. You don't want to be a hypocrite. Well, what do I have to do? I need to make sure that I don't fall into the same problem that first century crowd had and that is their desire and fondness for good forecasts lead them to look at the good new and dismiss it because they weren't willing to embrace the bad news that was there as the foundation for why the good news was necessary. Let me illustrate it. Cloud coming in off the Mediterranean, I see the prediction, I feel the moist wind starting to blow on my face so I say to my friend who feels the same thing. Hey, I've got a nice dry basement over here, I've got an umbrella, so take the umbrella and come into my nice dry basement and we'll weather this storm. Now, I'm not interested in that, I don't see that as good news if I don't accept the bad news of the bad forecast. See I'm not willing. If I say you're feeling that south wind blowing off the desert, hmm you feel that? Yeah, it's going to be a scorcher today, well it's not all that hot now. Look I got good news for you, I've got a barn with a big shadow I've



got a nice cool place and I've got some people that got some palm fronds and they'll fan us this afternoon and I've got a well that can draw some cool water, come behind my barn and sit in the shade I've got good news I've got a solution. Well, I don't see the problem. Just a little breeze from the south I don't think it's going to be that hot. See when you go to your doctor and he gives you some tests and says you've got a bad thing going on in your body, you accept that diagnosis, maybe you question it, maybe you get a second opinion, and then you respond because you're concerned about what happens if you do not heed the signs. Well, think about this the signs are everywhere. High standard don't measure up. All fall short of the glory of God. You're a sinner, repent, confess it, Christ is the savior, he'll forgive you. We see all those signs and we think, nah, I don't know, not convinced. I really checked everything in my own life and can see it's a good deal, grace and all that but it's inconvenient, it's still going to cost something, I don't know, not ready. This is the context of Luke 12, give me more information, show me a sign, convince me more and Christ says you need a whole lot less evidence to take precautions about other things in your life. I guess it's good for us to understand our fondness for good forecast and know that we are able even under a Christian banner to find ourselves gravitating to ministries and groups and preachers and radio broadcasts that are all about telling us the things we want to hear. Did not the Bible predict that in 2 Timothy? There will come a day people will not, here's the word, endure sound doctrine. Why? Because it'll take some endurance, it's going to be hard to hear those things. But instead they're going to gather people around themselves that are going to tell them what their itching ears want to hear. Tell me what I want to hear. I know I quote that one a lot but maybe you're not as familiar with this passage. (45:55)

One more passage I'd like for you to look at today, Isaiah chapter 30, turn back to this Old Testament text and let me remind you of what's going on in 2 Timothy is nothing new, this has been a long standing fondness that people have had when they go to church so to speak they want good news. Don't tell me that I'm a sinner. Don't tell me there's a threat of hell. Don't tell me there's a coming judgment. Well I can't give you good news until you accept the forecast. Here's a bunch of people in the Old Testament, Isaiah chapter 30, that weren't getting it. Matters of fact if you'll read the first 29 chapters you'll recognize they are not buying Isaiah's preaching and so he says this in verse 8. Isaiah chapter 30 verse 8. Now they're not listening to your audible sermons so I want you to go and write it before them on a tablet. This is Isaiah 30 verse 8. And inscribe it in a book. Why? That it may be for the time to come as a witness forever. You need to let them know as they read a book after all the things that were threaten in this book come true, that they could have had God like a hen gathering chicks and protecting them under her wings. You could have had the forgiveness and the grace of God but instead you heard the message of repentance and you said I don't like that it makes me feel like I'm bad. So they rejected the good news because they weren't willing to accept the bad news and their fear of bad news made them miss out on the good news of salvation and he says write it down. I want them to remember that they had the opportunity, there was a turn off that said, "Get gas now" and they didn't take it. (45:32)

Verse 9, why don't they, because they're a rebellious people. They're much like those people in Romans chapter 1, they're rebellious, they want to do their own thing, they don't care what God's word says, they don't care what God has designed us to be or to do, they don't care what the norms are in the Bible. They're lying children they look at each other and they just want to say, "tell me I'm alright" and they sit there and give hearty approval to each other to do what ever it is they want to do. And they really do, tell me lies, tell me lies, tell me sweet little lies, right? That's all I want, is for you to tell me that I'm okay and that God still likes me just the way I am. Lying children, children - here it is, this is the key word - unwilling to hear, remember that, we often like to look at this as a "could not", because we know our theology but in reality it's a "could not" because it's a "would not". The fallen nature of human being they don't want to hear it, they're unwilling to hear the instruction of the Lord, who say to the seers - now the seers where those, another name for prophet who would go and inquire of God and go back to the people and tell them. Now with the scripture you could equate this to the preachers of the day, who go into their study and study the Bible and are suppose to come out now and preach to the people. And they said to the seers, - listen, do not see. Now think about that, just like in today's church I'd like a preacher who doesn't spend a lot of time going and digging through the Bible because he's going to find things in there and tell me those things I don't want to hear. So just give me your five favorite verses and keep preaching sermons that kind of just are new improv on that theme, that'll be great. We can leave church every Sunday feeling great about ourselves. And they said to the prophets, the preachers, "Do not prophesy at least don't prophesy what's right." God gets right through this in an x-ray, what they're really saying when they lie to us, don't tell us the right things. Matters of fact here's a phrase for the modern era, which is just as true as it is now, speak to us, what kind of things? Smooth things, baby, I want Barry White sermons, just give me smooth things, I want it to go in one ear and just be like, just audible chocolate, [slurp] Just let me feel good about it, smooth things. Prophecy illusions, I mean if it's going to be chapter and verse all those



negative things, I don't want, can you just add a little spice, and put your own thoughts. Basically what they're saying is leave the way. That way that all the prophets have walked on, turn aside from the path, let us hear – try and see if you can decipher the key word in this phrase – let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel. What's the word they don't want in that sentence? Holy don't want that. I don't mind God if he's cool, cool, cool as the Lord God of hosts, right? I don't mind if he's happy, happy, happy is the Lord God, I don't mind if he's hip, hip, hip, I mean just don't give me holy, holy, holy. You know what that's going to do? Remind me of the standard, you know what the standard look at the mirror remind me of my sin. What is that going to do? It's going to get you to the place of embracing the good news. I need a savior born this day in the city of David who is Christ the Lord. (48:52)

Don't be a hypocrite, recognize that we like good forecasts and though I can readily admit that, I need the whole of scripture, I need sermons from the scripture that tell me the truth about what is. I need to stop with this dumb thing about not liking biblical theology because it's always talking about the inability of man. I don't like that whole thing about, you know, sin and not making people able and dead to your trespasses. People cannot respond as it says there in the opening reference we gave in Luke 19, now they're blind to it, why? Because they would not, they would not and therefore they could not, that is who we are as individuals. So we need to get ready. (49:40)

I know a lot of people are going to make excuses at least in their mind, not to God, I know, but they're going to say I didn't get it because the forecast wasn't clear enough. There will be people in this auditorium I assume that are going to stand before the living God and they're going to be like those people in Matthew 7, God but, but, but and they've got a lot of excuses but God going to go, "You know what? This was such a clear message and my signs were so clear, even the most pagan idolaters could get it." Think about this from the Old Testament perspective, back in the tenth century before Christ. Nation of Israel we had three kings, Saul, David, Solomon, kingdom split Rehoboam, Jeroboam, we had the northern tribes of Israel and the southern tribes of Israel, call them Judah. Ten tribes in the north. Two tribes in the south. The ten tribes in the north ended the Assyrian king coming in and wiping them out in 721, absconding them taking them off settling the northern tribes, northern properties of Israel. 586 BC you have the Babylonians come in. Now think about this, you have the Babylonians in the south, you have the Assyrians in the north what's interesting and a lot of people missed is that if you look through the Old Testament prophets you find the story of God bringing the same message to the Assyrians and the Babylonians that he brought to Israel and Judah. And even at the top of the food chain where that king that pagan idolater worships idols king was met with that message, first in the book of Jonah to Assyria, and then in the book of Daniel to the Babylonians, both of their kings repented. Think about that. (51:23)

You know the book of Jonah, the reluctant prophet? Took interesting transportation to get to his mission field, he shows up, he preaches, and he doesn't even preach "God loves you, God has a wonderful plan for your life. Just come and hear my preaching" No, he says, "This place is going to be destroyed. God's judgment is coming." And by the third chapter in Jonah the message reaches the king and it says the king of Assyria when he heard that he tore his robes, he put ashes on his head and he sat in a penitent state and called his whole kingdom to repent and to fast. Why? Repentant, why? The standard is high; you don't live up to that standard. I need salvation, that's the king of Assyria. (52:07)

And of course you're more familiar with the book of Daniel who was the king in Babylon who swept through the southern tribes and destroyed the city of Jerusalem? Nebuchadnezzar, takes those slaves with him among them being Daniel who God endows with knowledge and the ability to interpret the dream of the king. The king dreams about this crazy thing that happens and he comes and asks Daniel and Daniel says yup, in your sin and in your pride you're going to be humbled. You're going to live like some crazy man out in the fields eating grass, and it happens. Here's the king of the Babylonians that had done everything he could to take this religious nation and destroy them. He goes out and lives like a crazy man for a while and comes to his senses and then he says this, "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel 4:37 – I extol and I honor the king of heaven for all his works are right, and all his ways are just, and those who walk in pride he is able to humble." That's the king of Babylon. Do you think the people in Judah and Israel are going to have any excuses why they couldn't repent? (53:15)

Speaking of signs don't get me off too far in the book of Daniel, but the next chapter there's a little banquet going on, Nebuchadnezzar has a son name Nebinitus, Nebinitus has a son named Belshazzar. Nebinitus is out campaigning, Belshazzar is there having a big banquet, God had enough of him so he sends a sign, [mouths sounds] do-do-do-do on the wall. Remember the story? Mene, Mene, Tekel, and Parsin. So Mene, Mene means what? Counted, counted assessed, there's been an accounting. Tekel means what? Don't measure up, doesn't work,



accounting doesn't measure up. Parsin, Perez is the singular in Aramaic which he describes in the next verse. That means what? Divided, your kingdom is going to be given to someone else. The Medes and the Persians are going to get it. So on the wall, there it is. Now some of you are thinking of God's signs. That's the sign after you've already driven off the cliff that says you've just driven off the cliff, right? It's not very helpful. And you may think, well that's not good. Right he gets this thing and sure enough that night his kingdom collapses and he's gone. What's with that? Is God unjust? No. Matter of fact in the explanation in Daniel chapter 5 he says man I gave you so many signs, how about grandpa? Do you remember what grandpa went through? Do you remember how grandpa got humbled and there he was, Nebuchadnezzar extolling and praising the king of heaven. You saw his repentance, you heard about it, you heard him tell it with his own mouth through his own bearded face and you didn't repent. Let me quote it for you, Daniel chapter 5 verse 22, you his son, grandson technically, Belshazzar, you have not humbled your heart, though you knew all of this, no excuse. Prepare for judgment day. (55:16)

The only reason you wouldn't embrace the good news is you're not tuned into, you do not except, you do not embrace the bad news. If you sit here today as a Christian, you say I've already done that, great, make sure you've done it, make sure you've repented and thrown yourself on the mercy of God and then as an ambassador of Christ as the discussion questions this week will try to point out be sure you don't twist and distort this message. There's an emphasis here and it's one that we present to the world not with a bad attitude, not as a curmudgeon, not as an angry person, but out of compassion and sympathy. I mean if you can predict the weather, if you can see the stock market starting to tank and you can take precautions and you can see your industry starting to turn left and you make ready precautions, can't you recognize the signs and you don't have to see the miracles of Christ in the first century to know. We've got creation screaming a standard to us that we don't keep, we see a conscience that confirms that we're sinners and we see in the scripture a savior presented to us who is Christ the Lord. Put your trust in him. (56:15)

I came to work early yesterday as I usually do on Saturdays; the light had gone out at Columbia and Aliso Creek, out here. So you know how they do, they go to the battery and they start flashing the red lights, and I got there just at the time early in the morning where the guys in the yellow vests were coming out and putting the Stop signs up in every lane all four directions there at Columbia and Aliso Viejo Parkway. And it was a Stop sign, I wanted a Go sign. I really did because you know a lot of times I catch that light so I just want to zoom on by. But it said stop. Now it wasn't, you've gone over the cliff you're about to die, it was don't die, don't crash into people. And I needed to read the sign, I needed to understand the sign and I needed to heed the sign. Why? Because I recognize this, I've seen enough, you know, red asphalt movies from drivers ed to know when I passed enough crashed cars I don't want to end up like that. I feared with a godly fear, and I wasn't afraid of bad news I was able to use the reality of bad news to look at the sign and say, "Stop your car Mike, so that you don't die." (57:31)

God has sent us plenty of signs and I know you think, well it sounds like a lot of these signs are negative, I feel bad about creation being perfect and I'm not, look at my conscience and it makes me feel bad. I look at the Savior and he's constantly calling me to repent. You know even the good signs I quoted briefly here, Paul going to Lystra that Roman colony in Asia Minor and speaking to them that God has not left himself without a witness. You know what he describes that as in that case? I'll quote it for you, I wrote it down. Acts 14, so we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, in past generations God may have allowed in his patience the nations to walk in their own ways. He's postponed their judgment, but now you need to remember God never left himself without a witness. How did he do that? What was the witness? He gave good things to you. He sent you rains from the sky, fruitful seasons, he's satisfies your heart with food and gladness. You understand the signs for you to repent are not only the signs that hurt you but the signs of you having a great lunch and unbuckling your belt this afternoon and taking a nap and saying life is good in Orange County. According to Romans chapter 2 verse 4, do you think lightly of his forbearance, his kindness, his patience? Not knowing that God's kindness is to lead you to repentance. Everything in the universe is screaming for you and I to see our sins for what it is. Good times and bad times they're all signs for us to decipher. God wants us to put our trust in the only solution, Jesus Christ his son. Let's pray. (58:55)

God help us to be honest enough about our own sin by looking at our lives and recognizing there's no possible way we measure up even if we can compare ourselves to all the people that we know in this life. And we may think we're better than every last one of them but we will not measure up to the holy standard that we see and expect in the cosmos and in our bodies. You have a standard that we long for when things go wrong in our bodies, man, we rush to the doctor, we go to the pharmacy, we hope there's been a lab and a research study and there are things that



will help correct and reform and realign these things in our body. Why? Because we should learn from nature if we learn anything that you're a God that designs things to do what they're designed and programmed to do and we look at our own lives and we go that's not what we're doing. Matter of fact in our culture we're just working so hard, patting ourselves on the back and clapping at each other for being rebels. Forgive us God. This day we live in that is so rebellious. Let us recognize our own sin especially when that pang of conscience pricks our heart and we feel that. Let us own it with admission and confession. Let us turn from it with resolve and repentance and then God let us recognize that there's a savior that's provided for us in Christ. There's no need for us to have sin born on that day when we die. Christ has paid the penalty before us. So God give us faith to trust your son, to know there's ample evidence provided for us and that we do a lot more with a lot less in our everyday lives, so don't let us be hypocrites God, let us trust your son fully, in Jesus Name, Amen. (1:00:45)