Sermon: **“they will not be convinced even if someone were to rise from death”** (Luke 16.31)

There are folk out there who believe the earth is flat, that man never set foot on the moon, that JFK was murdered by the CIA, that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, that the MMR vaccine produces autism, etc.

All this despite either lack of evidence, or even proof of the opposite. Proponents twist evidence to suit.

Take climate change. Overwhelming scientific evidence, yet some refuse to believe. To do so would force uncomfortable change, yet young people fear their future - eg Greta Thunberg, Student climate strikes.

The alarm bells are ringing – can we hear them?

All this might seem a far cry from our reading, but it is not. Reading at first glance is about the gap between rich and poor. Usually a parable’s end shows its meaning, TEXT. It is about rejecting convincing evidence.

Of course it is possible to say that we are the ones denying the evidence; that there is no scientific proof of God’s existence, let alone God’s involvement in life. Is belief a way of soothing the pain of an otherwise painful and meaningless existence? Are we merely naïve optimists, blinkered to the real evidence? Possibly!

What evidence do we need to believe? What evidence do we have?

The evidence of [1] creation, [2] Bible, [3] God’s people, [4] love in the community, [5] our own hearts.

This is evidence but not proof. It does not mean we know everything about God (that’s OK, by the way).

As in Jesus’ day we say there is an emergency for humanity, not just climate change, but a faith emergency.

This church building has been asked to become a Community Emergency Hub in any major emergency.

What alarms do people need to wake up to the faith emergency? Are we not called to be the ones who ensure the alarm is set off and heard? But note TEXT. Our task is to set off the alarm, and be the Community Emergency Hub for Invercargill, not to be responsible for those who still deny the evidence.