

## The Lamentation of the King

Luke 19:41-44

May 28, 2023

I would like to invite you to turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 19. In the section we're in this morning, Luke 19:41-44, this is the end of the travel section. It does wrap up this section that began back in Luke 9:51, and the next section, starting in verse 45 of chapter 19, even though it's not quite the end of the chapter, that is actually the beginning of a new section in Luke's Gospel. So this is the perfect breaking point right in between.

Hopefully, you're in Luke 19, and as I said, this week we're wrapping up the travel section of Luke's Gospel, and we're entering into the final week of Jesus' earthly life, his life before the cross. And in Luke 19:45, as you see there in your Bibles, Jesus enters the temple. He enters into the heart of the city of Jerusalem, and that introduces the final section of this Gospel in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

But before we get there, we must pass through some of the most poignant and heart-wrenching portrayals of our Lord as he weeps over Jerusalem, as he's heartbroken over the fate of the nation that rejects the gift of God to them, of the chosen Messiah.

The procession that we have been studying, this procession of Jesus into Jerusalem, should have ended in a joyful coronation, should have been a crowning ceremony, a, an enthronement ceremony, a, some kind of a recession, some proceeding back to his home, but great festivities and rejoicing, loud, resounding "hallelujahs" filling the skies.

But instead, from this highest of highs in the procession, it's going to become the lowest of lows that we'll see to date. There are more low times coming, more difficult times coming, but this is the lowest of lows as Jesus looks ahead to the massacre of Jerusalem, to the total destruction of the city, a city that he dearly loves.

So as we've seen so far, verses 28-34, we see Jesus' preparation for his procession into Jerusalem. And then we saw

the procession itself last week, verses 35-40, and today the lamentation, lamenting as Jesus weeps over the city in verses 41-44. So let's read that section, but backing up to verse 37. We'll start there, Luke 19:37-44.

"And as he was drawing near, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the King, who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.' Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.'

"And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace. Now they are hidden from your eyes, for the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children with you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.'"

Somber text. That text that we'll cover this morning, verses 41-44, divides neatly into two sections. This means we'll have two main points. We'll look at the text, work our way through it, and then we'll come back to think through a couple of implications for ourselves, what we can learn from what Jesus does here.

And I want to get your mind moving in the right direction in that regard, start thinking about the implications of a text like this because there's a sense in which what we're seeing here in the text before us, it's absolutely unique in the life and ministry of Jesus. This is a, a non-repeatable event. He only does this once. This is something that's peculiar to Jesus as the Messiah. It's not something that's reproducible in any of us in any of our life in some particular way of mimicking him or something like that. He and he alone is the Christ. He is the Messiah. He weeps over the fate of his nation, and that's a burden that he bears, and we don't bear it along with him. That burden cannot be shared.

But there's another sense in which we as Christians, in a way that's maybe similar to our Lord, we, too, have knowledge about future events, knowledge that's been revealed to us by God on the pages of Scripture. We also, like him, we also know that there is a judgment coming.

In fact, we covered that a few chapters ago. Turn back to Luke 17, Luke chapter 17, and look at verse 26. Remember, he's speaking about the days of the coming of the Son of Man, and he says in Luke 17:26 and following, ``Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

``Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all. So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let the one who is on the housetop with his goods in the house not come down to take them away. Likewise, let the one who's in the field not

turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it.'"

You can turn back now to Luke 19. That's a warning: "Remember Lot's wife." I don't know if you remember back when we covered that section of Scripture, but it was a powerful warning to all of us that we don't get caught up in the things of this world, the things of this life, like Lot's wife did. And even though she was able to make it part way out of the city, her heart was still back in Sodom. Her heart was back there with her family and her stuff and her life, and she didn't want to leave it behind. I wonder how many of those who profess to be Christians are a lot like her, many of those who profess to be religious, a lot like Lot's wife, many of those who attend church every Sunday, a lot like that worldly soul.

But that's the message that we have, that there is judgment coming, isn't there? We're promised such on the pages of Scripture. So the question really is, is do we care for the people around us? Do we care for those who will suffer that fate of judgment: family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors, many who believe that they're fine with God, that they've dealt with

that issue? They've taken care of their salvation. They prayed the prayer, they walked an aisle, they were baptized at some point, they, religion is very meaningful to them, faith is very special to them. And yet their lives manifest no true transformation, no change. There's no fruit of spiritual regeneration.

When we know people like that, when we see people like that, do we share the heart of concern that we see in our Lord in this text, in Luke 19? Do we share his heart? And if not, why not? If we don't share that heart, if we don't care about the people around us who may be dying a horrible death, what is the problem? What's wrong with us? If we do share that heart of concern, what does that heart of concern in us compel us to do? What does it compel us to say? How does it compel us to live before the ungodly and the worldly?

So with that in mind, let's turn to our text and consider a first point. If you'd like to write this down, number one, a heart-wrenching lamentation, a heart-wrenching lamentation. Jesus has come to Bethany as we've seen. He's come from Jericho. He's surrounded by his disciples, and his disciples are filled

with excited anticipation about this time that they're living in, about this messianic age. They know change is in the wind, kind of like we know something's changing in our country, too, changes in the wind. Some of us sense, "Is the Lord returning soon? Wouldn't that be exciting?"

The disciples are thinking that, but with less information. They had, didn't have the printed New Testament as we have. And Jesus told them in Luke 19:11-27, he told them the parable that would mitigate their excitement, or redirect their excitement in order to set realistic expectations. But that didn't seem to matter, did it?

They, together, enjoyed a Sabbath day's rest, and then the next day, Palm Sunday, they set Jesus on a donkey's colt. They saddled the donkey with their own cloaks. They made their way from Bethany toward the Mount of Olives, and they carpeted the road in front of that donkey with more of their cloaks laid on the road in front of him. And so as the multitude of disciples, verse 37 says, heads down from the Mount of Olives and into the Kidron Valley and then up into Jerusalem, "they began to



rejoice," it says, "and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen."

They would meet other disciples accompanied by a larger crowd who's coming from the other direction, coming from Jerusalem, and they're carrying with them palm branches that they've cut from the trees, and they've been whipped into a frenzy, also with messianic expectation. One group of disciples meets another group of disciples, and each one adds fuel to their already burning fire of zeal, and joy stokes the flames into this bonfire of religious zeal in Jerusalem.

As much excitement and joy and praising and loud shouts of celebration are happening all around and filling the air, filling the entire valley, it wasn't Jesus' experience. "As he was drawing near," verse 37 says, already on the way down the Mount of Olives, he is looking on that city with some amount of grief. He's got sorrow in his heart. He's got a, a heartbreak happening right within his chest as he's looking at this city. A profound sense of sadness is coming over him, which is such a discordant contradiction to everything happening around him.

While the crowd is there, rejoicing, praising God, shouting "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" verse 38, there is this, he can see it, there's this dark, nefarious spirit that lurks in the midst of the crowd's joyful praise. And that spirit shows itself in the reaction of the Pharisees in verse 39: "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." "Shut them up." And Jesus says in verse 40, he says, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

Listen, he's not responding, there, from the excitement of the moment. He's not saying, "Listen, you got to get in line. Everybody's joy, everybody's joyful. Everybody's dancing. Why aren't you? Come on!" He's not caught up, here, in the crowd's zeal. He's not carried away with their enthusiasm. He is, as he says that, he's sober, he's somber, he's pensive, he's thinking.

At the same time that he's answering the Pharisees, the sight that hits his eyes in front of him, it's this panoramic view of Jerusalem, and he sees a city that's in mortal danger, and it's sleepwalking. They have no idea of what's about to hit them, and Jesus can't not see this, which is why, amplified above the noise of the praise of the crowd, there's this

rejection that's foreshadowed in the censure of the Pharisees. It's a harbinger of doom.

His point in verse 40, it's not that the stones would cry out if the praises go silent. He's not using a subjunctive mood there. He's using a future tense and an indicative mood that is to present what he's saying as reality. "This is what's going to happen. The stones will cry out. These inanimate objects, the stones symbolizing durability and immutability, they will cry out. They will testify against this people that their fate is just."

And so we come to verse 41, that says, "And when he drew near." Notice, we're still not at the city. "When he drew near," "When he drew near." The way Luke is narrating the final approach, he's taking it very, very slow. And as he takes it slow, he's really heightening the dramatic tension for us as we read. And that's because Luke is wanting us to see, here, that not all is well. He's not rushing into the city giddy with joy. The apparent widespread enthusiasm of the crowds, it's masking something deep within, something dark and insidious and menacing.

And the dam breaks when Jesus sees the city. "When he drew near, he saw the city, he wept over it." You need to picture, if you do this, imagining this in your mind's eye, Jesus is there, bursting out with tears. He bursts forth with tears, and he's sobbing violently. That's a better way to picture what's happening here. This is not quiet weeping. This is a loud sobbing. If any of us did this in public, we'd be embarrassed, not want to show our face for weeks. This is what he's doing.

Aorist tense, there; it's an aggressive aorist and emphasizes the suddenness of this outburst. "He erupted into tears," you could say. It seems abrupt, maybe, to us, but this emotion, you have to understand, has been welling up within him and building up within him, and now it breaks forth.

Remember I told you that in Bethany, he had a stopover in Bethany. He's at the house of Simon the leper, a former leper that he'd healed, and remember what had happened there? Mary took out a alabaster flask of expensive nard and broke it and anointed him. Remember what he said there? He said, "'She's anointing me for my burial.'"

He's known. He's known from way back that the final approach into Jerusalem means rejection, betrayal, death. And he's not even weeping for himself. He knows all of this is prophesied. He knows that all of this will result in the salvation of his people. That's what he came to do. What he's weeping over is these people. They're going to die. And so all this emotion that's been welling up within him as he's been making his way to Jerusalem, it's been building up and building up, and now it bursts forth.

I don't know if it's still this way, but if you ask any kid, young guy, maybe going through AWANA or Truth Trackers or some Bible memory program in their church, you ask him, "What is your favorite Bible verse?" Do you know what they say? "John 11:35," right? Why? Shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept." It was my favorite growing up. Shortest verse in the Bible: "Jesus wept." And that verb, there, is *dakryo*, which means "to weep, shed tears." It can be a quiet crying. It can be a silent weeping. It can also be loud, depending on the context, but you can picture, there, just some tears coming down.

This is not that verb. This is the verb *klaio, klaio*, which means "a violent sobbing, wailing out loud." Whenever there would be a death and the Jews would hire public mourners, as it was common to their culture, this is the verb that's used of the public mourners. They are shrieking and crying. You can even see this still in the Middle East as public professional mourners will follow along with a funeral procession, and they will wail and shriek and weep loud sobbing, and get really good at it. That's this verb here.

Just some examples of this: When Peter denied the Lord, and the rooster crowed the third time, he heard that; it says in Luke 22:62 that "he went out and wept bitterly." That's this word here. When the woman in Luke 7, when she crashed the luncheon at the home of Simon the Pharisee, remember how she stood at Jesus' feet to anoint him? And she was weeping so much, that's this verb, she was weeping so much, shed enough tears that his dirty feet, that Simon didn't offer any water to wash, any bowl of water to wash. She had enough tears flowing from her *klaio*, crying, sobbing, that she was able to wash his feet with her tears, and then she dried them with her hair.

More examples: In the context of death, the widow of Nain sobbed violently over the death of her one and only son. You don't imagine she was quiet about it. Mourners at the home of Jairus, remember when he lost his daughter, who'd been sick, and he requested Jesus, "Can you come and heal her?" And then they came and said, "Don't bother the teacher anymore; your little girl's dead." Then they went there to the house, and there was this again, professional mourners there crying loudly, putting on a scene and a show to identify with the grief and the suffering.

That's the kind of weeping, that's the kind of wailing and sobbing that's pictured, here, by this verb: a deep, deep crying that comes from deep within the soul, grips the heart. It causes the entire body to convulse and to heave and tremble with a profound loss and grief. No doubt at this point, as they see Jesus break forth in tears, his disciples, probably, surely some of the Twelve, it would immediately come over to him wondering what's wrong here, to help him. Such a sudden, heart-wrenching expression of grief. It was unexpected, had to be shocking to the disciples and those around him, those around the donkey's colt as he's riding down.

In the exact moment that Jesus burst into tears was when "he drew near," it says. "When he drew near and saw the city." That's when it happened, the sight of the city. Whatever he could see by physical sight, his sight was informed by a much deeper spiritual perception. "And when he drew near, he saw the city, burst out in tears. He wept over it and saying, 'Would that you, even you, on this day, had known the things that make for peace, but now they're hidden from your eyes.'"

In other words, he says, "'I'm seeing something here that you cannot see.'" English translations smooth out the language, there, but in the original, Jesus' words are coming out in, like, broken syntax, the way you'd imagine when someone's crying. It's exactly what you'd expect, someone trying to talk, but because of the heavy sobs and the violent heaving, and due to the rivers of tears flowing from the eyes, he can't get the words out in any kind of fluency. Doesn't have perfect syntax, grammar.

Literally says, "If you knew this, in this day, even you, the things toward peace." It's just like bursting out in phrases. And then after that he doesn't even really finish the



sentence. It's broken off. It's a conditional sentence, here, which means, you know, you know what a conditional sentence is, like an if-then statement. If this happens, then this will happen. That's what's here, a conditional sentence. We can see the "if" part of the conditional sentence, but there's no "then" part of the sentence to follow. He just breaks it off mid-sentence, again an expression of deep, deep emotion.

Wherever we see that in Scripture, it's portraying that depth of emotion, great sorrow, sadness. He doesn't even finish his sentence. But it is a conditional sentence, and even though he didn't finish the sentence, we know what he was saying, we know what he was getting at.

The particular kind of conditional sentence here is called a contrary-to-the-fact conditional, second-class conditional. It means that Jesus is saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace, but you didn't, did you? If you had known, that's contrary to the fact that you know, you don't know." Long way of saying, "You failed. Even you, you failed to recognize on this day that make for peace."

So through heaving sobs we discern, here, by what Luke has written, what Luke has recorded, we discern what arrested our Lord's concern, what evoked from him such strong emotion. I'm going to give you three sub-points here, basically. First, Jesus weeps over the bitter irony. He weeps over the bitter irony, and you can see it, there, in that little phrase, "even you," "would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace."

The "even you," that's emphatic, there. He's drawing attention to the city and the bitter irony that a city named "Jerusalem" would be unable to recognize the things that make for peace. Why? Because the Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*, and *shalom* is embedded in the name of the city. *Yeru salam*, or *salem*. "City of peace." "Place of peace." "How ironic that you don't know what peace is."

"City of peace," we can see from our biblical history, we can even see from secular history, "city of peace" has historically been characterized not by peace at all, right, but by violence, by bloodshed. Even today, bombs going off, some

thousands, right now, of rockets pointed directly at Israel and Jerusalem, the "city of peace." There's no peace over there.

Jesus lamented back in Luke 13:34, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it." There's no peace when they kill the prophets and stone God's messengers. Jerusalem, the city of David, the city of peace, rather than receiving the son of David in peace, they're about to kill him, too. Such bitter, bitter irony.

Second reason Jesus weeps, he weeps over the missed opportunity. He weeps over the bitter irony, but his, second, he weeps over the missed opportunity. "Would that you, even you, had known on this day." Again, that's an emphasis too. "On this day the things that make for peace." The city of Jerusalem, taken over by David, built up by David, David being the sweet psalmist of Israel, the one who loved God's Word. This city is beautified by Solomon, his son. Solomon's been recognized the world over for his God-given wisdom. No one like him until Jesus came.

But this city, it was a treasure trove, wasn't it, of divine revelation, a treasury of spiritual knowledge and wisdom. And yet here it's being characterized as being a city of such ignorance, failing to know, failing to recognize this day, this particular day, this particular time, which is the day of God's grace and God's favor. They should have known.

End of verse 44, Jesus expands on the nature of this day, as he calls it "the time of your visitation," "the time of your visitation." Visitation could be either negative, like visitation for judgment, but in this context, it's clearly visitation for favor, kindness, mercy, compassion, grace.

Jesus identified that at the beginning of his ministry back in Nazareth. Remember Luke chapter 4:18 and following. He was quoting from Isaiah; he quoted it as "the year of the Lord's favor." Jesus said back then, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he's anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to pro, proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Had he not done that for three years, three years of Jesus' teaching, three years of his doing miracles, healing people of illnesses, diseases, opening blind eyes, making lame, paralyzed people to walk, delivering people from demonic possession, even raising the dead to life? All these years of divine favor, and they fail to know, they fail to realize, they fail to recognize this day of God's favor. What a missed opportunity!

Third thing in Jesus weeps over is over their weak theology. Jesus weeps over their weak theology. "Would that you, even you, had known on this day," and then that phrase, "the things that make for peace." "The things that make for peace," that is just a summary statement of Gospel truth. That's basically what he's saying. "Would that you, even you, had known this day Gospel truth."

What are "the things that make for peace"? I mean, this is Passover, after all. This is Passover. So it's so ironic. The city of Jerusalem, home of the temple, central location of Israel's worship, and at the heart of the worship is, what, sacrifice of lambs for atonement, for individual atonement and national atonement. One lamb every morning, one lamb every

evening, every single day of the year, sacrificed for the sins of the people, sacrificed to reconcile the people to their God, sacrificed so that the people can come near to God and come to the temple, to come near and pray and worship.

So what a tragedy it is that in this city, of all cities on the earth, the place that Solomon said when he dedicated the temple, "the place of which God said, 'My name shall be there,'" what a tragedy that the people of that place would fail to recognize this sacrificial Lamb in their midst, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, that would fail to understand the things that make for peace. Them?

So because of the bitter irony, because of the missed opportunity, because of the weak theology, the city spread out before him as he makes his final approach, Jesus sees the city and bursts into tears. He laments over its spiritual condition.

Now you might say, "Well, how can he tell that? I mean, I mean, there's a lot of people there. You don't want him to be judgmental, you know. Jesus being judgmental, once again, criticizing people he doesn't really know. I mean, he hasn't

been in all those homes, right? There's probably some really good people there, especially in the presence of such effusive praise. I mean, they're, they're singing, they're quoting Scripture, they're rejoicing. How does he know the Pharisees' rejection is going to spread into the crowd like contagion?

"How could he discern the hearts of these people? Is he just being somewhat cynical at this point? Is he just jaded? Maybe it's been a long trip. He's tired. He's been walking a long way, and he's judging their praise as superficial, less than genuine. Shouldn't he have a little bit more faith in humanity, faith in people, confidence in the ability of the human spirit to triumph and overcome the odds, and come right in the end?"

Very early on in Jesus' ministry, we read this in John 2:23: "Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast," that's three Passovers ago, "Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name." Believing. They believed in his name, oh, "when they saw the signs that he was doing." This is the kind of faith that is dependent on physical sight. "Many believed in his name when they saw the signs that

he was doing, but Jesus, on his part, didn't entrust himself to them." That's actually the same word, *pisteuo*.

He, he didn't believe in them because he knew all people. He needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man. They're not good with great potential. There's not a triumph of the human spirit coming through, here, that's going to rescue them in the end. He knows exactly what they are, that they're sinners before a holy God, that they're corrupt through and through, that they need regeneration and salvation.

That text, what I just quoted, John 2:23-25, that comes right before "he himself knew what was in a man," and this next verse says, "There came a man, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Pharisees." And Jesus gives that eloquent statement about regeneration, the need for the new birth, because Nicodemus, teaching Israel all of his life, and yet he was not born again. He was not a regenerate teacher.

So even three Passovers earlier, seeing the signs the people in Jerusalem believed, but again their faith was superficial. It was based only on what their eyes could see, not



based on what they understood, not based on what they became convinced of. It wasn't based and embraced in whole-hearted trust. There was no repentance. In a word, their faith was not true, saving faith, so it was very short-lived.

James chides those kinds of people, people with superficial faith. In Ju, James 2:19, he said, "You believe that God is one," that is, "You confess the *shema* of Israel." "Well done. You believe in divine simplicity, great doctrines about God that were understood by Moses and taught by Him. Fantastic. You do well. Oh, but let me remind you, even the demons believe. They know all that too, and they shudder. In other words, the demons understand just like you do." They understand intellectually. They could grasp the concept. They can assent to the truthfulness of what they understand, but it doesn't turn them from their evil. Their affections remain twisted against God. Their wills rebel against him.

Same for human beings as well, religious people who believe based on what their eyes see, but their hearts remain completely unchanged. They're just doing the religious things, which is why even though many are believing in him, Jesus was not believing

in them. Why? Because he knew what was in man. He knew about the presence or absence of true, saving faith. He could clearly perceive it.

This is why Jesus spoke to the unbelieving crowds in the medium of parables. He spoke to them in parables, masking the truth in common language in order to winnow them, in order to separate the wheat from the chaff, in order to separate the spiritual from the unspiritual. "This is why I speak to them in parables," Matthew 13:13, "because seeing they do not see, hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says, "You will indeed hear, but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive, for this people's heart has grown dull. With their ears they can barely hear; with their eyes they have closed."

So though the people praised Jesus as he is on that donkey's colt, as he makes his procession to Jerusalem, as they clamor to hear his teaching all through his ministry, all through his ministry as he performs miracles, they want to see another one and another one and another one. And they spread the

word. They're evangelists for this Messiah figure. And yet he called them hypocrites, Matthew 15:7: "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.'" Beloved, let that not be you. Let that not be you.

He called his own people, people he loved, people he looked at, he called them a "faithless and twisted generation," Luke 9:41. He called it "an evil generation," according to Luke 11:29. He talked about them in these terms in Luke 7:31, picturing them this way. He said, "So to what, to what then shall I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They're like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another, 'We played the flute for you, but you didn't dance. We sang a dirge, you didn't weep. You didn't dance to our tune, played happy notes, you didn't join in the happiness; played sad notes, and you didn't mourn with us. We don't accept you.'" In other words, they're like a bunch of ungrateful brats in the city streets. They refused to be satisfied by anything.

He goes on to say, "For John the Baptist has come, eating no bread, drinking no wine; you say, 'He's got a demon,' not

satisfied with him. Oh, but the Son of Man has come eating and drinking; you say, 'Oh, look at him, a glutton and a drunkard. He's a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'" Okay, where's that language coming from, that particular criticism: Jesus, "a friend of tax collectors and sinners"? That comes directly from the Pharisees. Directly from the Pharisees. This is how Jesus knew that the spirit of the Pharisees and this attitude of rejection and censure is going to spread like a virus to the crowd and result in his betrayal, arrest and death.

So in all this, Jesus sees the evidence of divine judgment that's fallen on this generation. He sees the blindness is not going to lift; their eyes are not going to open. He says, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace, but now they're hidden from your eyes." "But now." "But now." He knows the nation has crossed the point of no return. The passive voice: "They are hidden from you." Passive voice, divine passive, which is to say, it's God himself who's at work to hide this. He's hiding from the nation the things that make for peace, the things that would awaken them.

It's a judicial blindness that's fallen over the nation. It's the judgment of God that's fallen on them, to blind them so they won't see the things that make for peace. They've had three years to see his ministry, three years to repent. They've ignored it. They won't see the things that make for peace.

So having rejected Jesus ministry, they cannot see now what's going to bring eternal, lasting peace. Sadly, the opportunity for spiritual awakening has come and it's gone for this generation. The spiritual perception that these people so desperately needed, now they can't have it. They cannot have it. They will not have it. The opportunity has passed them by, and God has sealed and fixed this generation, its unbelief, and they are marching inexorably toward that fate that's ordained for them. It's tragic. Don't let that be any of you.

Brings us to a second point. We've seen a heart-wrenching lamentation; number two, a heartbreaking prediction. A heartbreaking prediction. The heart-wrenching lamentation of Jesus, his weeping, his crying, his mourning, it's informed by this heartbreaking prediction in verses 43 and 44. "For days will come upon you when your enemies will set up a barricade

around you and surround you and hem you in on every side, and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

But no wonder he burst into tears. No wonder he sobbed violently. He could see this. Not at all with the crowds of Jewish pilgrims. Not at all with any of the disciples. Not it, not at all with even any of the twelve apostles, for that matter. None of them foresaw this. This is not on their itinerary. This is not in their program. It's not even conceptualized. Messiah's here. They expected Jesus to come to power and lead the revolt against the Romans, restore Israel to its proper place in the world.

These Jews wanted a political messiah. They wanted him to come with a plan to make Israel great again, pass out the red MAGA hats. They wanted a military commander. They wanted a, someone to lead them into battle, lead the righteous nation into victory. In fact, they didn't want him on a donkey's colt at all. They wanted him on a, a war stallion to represent exactly what he came to do: elevate the nation to its rightful place.

On the other hand, I can tell you what they didn't want. They did not want the Messiah who actually came to them. They didn't want him. They didn't want this one who kept on insisting on saving them from their sins. They didn't like that language at all. The Jews, especially the Pharisees, they're offended at any notion that they required salvation from any sins. For those who believe they're fine, those who believe they're already saved, that they prayed that prayer, walked that aisle, got baptized, they become very impatient with Jesus preaching the kingdom of God. They become very impatient with his insisting on spiritual salvation as the necessary prerequisite to enter into the kingdom.

They're Jews, after all. These are sons of Abraham. They are members of the covenant by circumcision. They're citizens of the chosen nation. They're good to go. "Don't lead me into doubt over my salvation. How dare you!" They want a Messiah. They just don't want this Messiah.

Sadly, Jesus predicts that this city of Jerusalem is in for a very rude awakening. And what stands out in the vivid, very

graphic depiction of a siege, here, is how Jesus repeats the second-person singular pronoun in verses 43-44: "You, you, you, you." He says it ten times in just two verses. This is very personal. This is Jesus putting his finger on their chests and pounding the finger into their chest with every "you, you, you, you."

He's saying, "Listen to me." He's trying to warn them. He's personifying the city here, and he's speaking to it as if it were a single person, and he's pronouncing this "woe." "Your enemies" refers to the enemies of Jerusalem, the enemies of the nation of Israel. In this case, it'll be the Romans, those whose yoke they had hoped to throw off in this Messiah, but won't.

The barricade, here, pictures a siege attack from a visiting army that comes up against the challenge of a walled city, in this case Jerusalem. And Jesus is using, here, a very technical term for military preparations for besieging a city. This barricade that's set up around the city, it provides cover for the attacking army. It turns a circumference around the city into something of a forward operating base.



By stating here that "the enemy is going to surround you," Jesus is referring, here, to total operational control of the battle space. No one gets in and no one gets out because the enemy has the entire circumference of the city under its control. No one passes through one way or the other, going in or out, without their permission, without their say-so.

The reference to "hem you in on every side," this means putting the squeeze on the city. Once the enemy has total operational control, the enemy starts applying pressure, using tactics to oppress the residents of the city, to make them suffer within the city, to make them wish they could get out.

And once they've applied enough pressure, basically softening the target adequately, Jesus describes the carnage that ensues. Verse 44 comes across as, I think very mild in the ESV: "tear you down to the ground." I mean, that's really not that mild, but it's mild compared to the better rendering here. "Dash you to the ground," is what Jesus says. "They'll dash you to the ground, you and your children within you." This is describing merciless, violent bloodshed.

In other words, it's not just tearing down of walls and smashing physical structures. This is dashing people, bashing them. Picture hard steel smashing into soft tissue, soft human bodies that are dashed against cold, hard stone. Same word, by the way, in the Septuagint translation of Psalm 137:9 that describes what Babylonian soldiers did: *edaphizo*. They dashed the babies against the rocks, and the psalmist was saying, "May that be done to you." And then when it says, "They will not leave one stone upon another," that refers to the utter destruction of the walls, of the structures of the city. This is total desolation. It's a ruination to such a scale that commerce: done. Worship: over. Means of sustaining life and sustaining a family: They're gone. It's not going to happen in that place for a long, long time to come.

It's so interesting that, according to Josephus, who was there, he was there, he's an eyewitness, all this happened exactly as Jesus predicted, in the siege of the Roman general Titus in AD 66-70. There's a campaign against Jerusalem because of all the rebellion against Rome, trying to throw off Rome, AD 66-70, and it was, the full-on siege started in April 9 of AD 70.

It was during the time of Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So again, remember, as we've been saying, when Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, one of the three feasts of the Jews, where all the males of Israel are supposed to show up in the city, the city's swollen with people, right? Massive, hundreds of thousands of additional Jewish pilgrims, all visiting Jerusalem for the feast. Numbers are million, two million people. It's a city swollen, packed with visitors, stuffed.

So Titus deployed his soldiers to go and cut down the trees and build these siege works, build machines that would assault the city, battering rams that they could use to bash against the gates and bash against the wall and try to penetrate. Josephus says that Titus cut down trees for 90 furlongs all around the entire city. Now a furlong is 220 yards, so think more than two football fields. Ravaging the landscape, just tore down everything.

Josephus writes, "The very view itself of the country was a melancholy thing, for those places which were before adorned with trees and pleasant gardens were now become a desolate

country every way. Its trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that have formerly seen Judea in the most beautiful suburbs of the city and now saw it as a desert, they couldn't but lament and mourn. Sadly, it's so great a change, for the war had laid all the signs of beauty quite waste."

So Romans raped the land, destroyed the land, surrounded the city with these siege works, hemmed it in on every side, hemmed it in. Josephus describes this titanic effort that Titus exerted in constructing these ramparts and siege works in order to surround the city. He says this: "When Titus had therefore encompassed the city with this wall, he put garrisons into proper places," "garrisons" meaning watchtowers, strongholds.

"And he went around the wall at the first watch of the night." This is Titus himself, the general. "He went around the wall the first watch of the night, observed how the guard was kept, and the second watch he allotted to Alexander. The commanders of the legions took the third watch." So throughout the night you've got the most important men keeping watch. "They also cast lots among themselves, who should be on the watch in

the night time, and who should go all night or all around the spaces that were interposed between the garrisons."

So you've got Jerusalem completely surrounded, and that is when the tactics of oppression started. This is when they start to pummel and really eat the heart out of the city with oppression, soften the target. Because Titus, very intelligent here in kind of a twisted way, but he allowed the Jewish pilgrims to enter into the city so they can go and celebrate their feasts. "Go ahead. Oh, you've come from another land. You've come from far away. Come on in, come on in. Go into the city."

You know what that does? Elevates the numbers, and with limited resource, no water, no food coming into the city, less to go around, right? It speeds up their starvation. He wouldn't let them leave, so he intends to deplete the city of its food and its water more quickly, starve the people into submission. Take the fight out of them. Would you rather fight a starving warrior or one that's been well fed?

Josephus writes this: "So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. And then did the famine widen its progress. It devoured people by whole houses and families. The upper rooms were full of women and children that were dying by famine, and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged." They had no place to bury their dead; just stack up the bodies. "The children also and the young men wandered about the marketplaces like shadows, all swelled with the famine." You've seen those pictures of people starving, and their bellies are eating their insides out. That's what he's describing here: "All swelled with famine and fell down dead wheresoever their misery seized them."

So as starvation is doing its work, as it's decimating the population, survivors were driven mad. They committed abominable acts. Josephus describes the starving as "mad dogs. They're reeling against the doors, the houses, like drunken men bumping into things and tearing at things." He says, "Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable, it obliged them to chew everything while they gathered such things as the most, the most sordid animals wouldn't touch, and endured to eat them. Nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes. The very leather which

belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed. The very wisps of old hay became food."

He goes on to describe unspeakable acts of atrocity: cannibalism, mothers who gave up their children, participating in that act, mad with hunger. If they'd come through this, even if they'd survived, do you think, is there any coming back from that? In addition to the famine, the Jews were committing atrocities upon one another. They're starting to rob one another, plunder the starving, plunder the sick and the wounded. Fires started in the city, and the weak and the starving had no energy at all to fight the fires, so people died by fire, too.

Eventually the Romans breached the walls. They entered the city, slaughtered everyone without mercy, without remorse. Josephus writes this: "While the holy house was on fire," he's talking about the temple, "everything was plundered that came to hand, and 10,000 of those who were caught were slain. Nor was there a commiseration of any age or any reverence or gravity, but children and old men, profane persons and priests, all slain in the same manner, so that this war went round all sorts of men and brought them to destruction. Those that made supplication

for their lives, and those who defended themselves by fighting, didn't make a difference.

Reports from history are that the Romans killed more than 1.1 million Jews during the siege. Unknown numbers of Jews after the siege ended also died, along with armed rebels still fighting, also the elderly as well, those who were completely unable to fight. Merciless bloodshed ensued, but 97,000 able-bodied were captured and enslaved from the city. Thousands were to be used in the gladiatorial games around the empire, also in Rome. Many of those were put to forced labor to build forums and colosseums in Rome and other places. Those who were 17 years old or younger, they were sold in all the territories of the empire. Slaves.

Oh, and verse 44 says, "They will not leave one stone upon another," and you, that happened literally as well. The soldiers greedy for plunder, they've been waiting for this opportunity, hearing about the gold. So while the city and the temple were burning, that's where the gold was. Though Titus tried to restrain his soldiers from entering into the blaze, Josephus says this: "The hope of plunder induced many to go on, to go



into the flames. So having this opinion that all the places were full of money, seeing that all around was, about, was made of gold, they tore the city apart. They tore it apart, not leaving one stone upon another." That's an interesting remark, because normally in some kind of a siege, once you kill the people, you leave the buildings intact. You don't go out of your way when you're exhausted to take one stone and not let it be on top of the other. Why did they do it? Greed drove them.

And all that happened, end of verse 44, "because you did not know the time of your visitation." It's sobering when you realize that many who were there when Jesus predicted this in AD 33, they would be there 37 years later to experience all the atrocities that Jesus foretold.

Now, what did Jesus do about this? What did the knowledge that he had of this horrible future, what did that compel him to do? His first thought, verse 45, his first thought is to go into the heart of what was offending God, that which was bringing about his judgment. His first thought is to go there and do it, please God by cleansing the temple. Verse 45: "He entered the temple, began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, 'It

is written, "My house shall be a house of prayer, but you've made it into a den of robbers."" This is an atrocity. This is something that God hates.

So Jesus goes, cleanses the temple, and after pleasing God after cleansing the temple, he turns his attention to doing what? Look, verse 47: He turns to teach the people. He teaches them. "He was teaching daily in the temple." Then, end of verse 48, "all the people are hanging on his words." He knows what's going to happen to them. He knows they're blind. They're hard-hearted by choice, by their will. They've set their wills against him, against God. And yet he graciously gives them more truth. He pleads with them. He warns them. With what Jesus knew about the future, you know what he did? He loved God and he loved people, quite the example he leaves for us. Amen?

What are we to take out of a passage like this? What are the implications for you and me? How do we apply this? I asked you at the beginning to imagine you've got some knowledge of future events about the severity of coming judgment, which you do. What are you going to do with what you know? Will you warn

others, or will you let them die without even knowing that their house is on fire?

Since I don't believe any of you would be that heartless and uncaring and just content to live your life, pursue your goals, take your vacations, let your neighbors die without warning them about coming judgment, let me suggest a few things. We've seen in the Lord a heart-wrenching lamentation. It's based on a heartbreaking prediction. For us, let's add a third point to this outline and consider how to apply this, number three, a stout-hearted and a soft-hearted application. A stout-hearted and soft-hearted application.

Let me give you several ways that you could be stout-hearted and soft-hearted at the same time, and apply this by what we observe in our Lord. Let me give you several ways to prepare yourself to love God, to love your neighbors because you can warn them of the coming judgment, because you can introduce them to the saving Gospel. Stop living for yourself, living for your comfort, living for your ease, and give your attention to people who are lost and dying. Warn them of coming judgment, and tell them about the hope that's found in the Gospel.

First, number one suggestion here, I got, just got three of them. Number one, you've got to know sound doctrine. You've got to know sound doctrine. We could see here, clearly, Jesus knew his eschatology. He knew what was coming, and for him, to know and understand and speak about what's coming up, is, it's not for grabs. It's not a matter of "agree to disagree." It's not an issue of slight significance to know the future, to speak about coming judgment, to speak about the end of the world, to speak about eschatology.

He didn't have, like, a, a "four views" book and just said, "Ah, take whatever you want, whatever you want to. You know, I don't, I don't care. It's not that big a deal." No, it's a big deal. It's the conviction that he has about the truth; it's driving his compassion and his concern. The deeper you understand the truth, beloved, the more deeply you'll be convicted of the truth, and the more it will drive your speech, your concern, and your love for other people.

So crucial for all of us to know and understand what happens in the end, what's happened in the past, what's

happening now. So crucial for all of us to make sure what we actually believe really does line up with what the Word says. Why? Because all of us live in light of future realities. We all look to see what is unseen. We pursue invisible truths yet to be fulfilled. We need to know those truths, be convinced of them, convicted about them, so that we can speak to others and help them. You get to set a good foundation for your feet so you can stand and move and move out.

Second thing I'd suggest: You've not only got to know sound doctrine, let me put it this way intentionally, you've got to feel sound doctrine. You've got to feel sound doctrine. I know, feeling, feeling, schmeeling, it's a big bad word in our evangelical time, you know, because so many people are guided and controlled by their feelings. Their feelings are out in front, and their feelings lead them into all kinds of chaos and mess.

And that's not what I'm advocating. What I am advocating is that your intellect and your understanding is out in front so that you know sound doctrine. But then you let that wash over all your affections, so you actually feel like Jesus felt. Do

not allow yourself to become cold and unaffected by truth. Follow the example of our Lord, here, and let truth grip your heart.

As I said, Jesus lived in light of these future realities. He treated all these things he spoke about in the future as if they're present realities. Why? Because it doesn't matter for time. All of it's true now. He's not cold or aloof. He's deeply engaged. He's passionately concerned. Even when he can see judicial blindness fall upon the people, still he goes into the temple, still he cleanses the temple, and still he teaches those hard-hearted people. He loves them. He didn't hand them over. He didn't dismiss them.

This lament while he's on the procession toward Jerusalem, this shows that Jesus knew what he believed. He's deeply convinced, and he is emotionally affected. Are you emotionally affected, or are you cold and indifferent? Truth gripped him, gripped his heart, grabbed ahold of his passions and wouldn't let go. We cannot, beloved, we cannot be dispassionate about what we believe because if we are, the world around us is right to write us off, not listen to us. Because if it's not the

controlling factor in our lives, our priorities, our thinking, the way we live, you know what they have a right to say? "You don't believe that. You believe something else. You say you believe this, but you live this way. You're a hypocrite." Let us not be hypocrites, beloved. Let us not be hypocrites.

Jesus understood. He acknowledged the sovereignty of God in salvation. He acknowledged the responsibility of man, of these people, in salvation. But you still do not detect in him a hint of any cold indifference. He felt deep emotion. He cared profoundly. He expressed loud weeping in public, uninhibited emotion, violence, sobbing over the city.

And it's not that he had to consciously think about that. "Hey, I should, as I'm talking about this, I should really show some more emotion here. You know, they should know I'm feeling this." He just gave no thought about it at all. He just did what was appropriate. He didn't care about the estimation of others. He didn't care about their opinion of him, didn't care about decorum, propriety. He wept. He wept violently. He bursts out into tears because he's feeling the weight of the truths that he

knows and believes and he's convinced of. He cares deeply for the souls of those who don't believe.

And so let me give you the third suggestion about how to apply this, following his example. You've got to know sound doctrine. You've got to feel sound doctrine. And the third thing is, you've got to open your mouth. You've got to proclaim sound doctrine. Hide it under a bushel? No, "I'm going to let it shine," right? Proclaim it. When it comes to future accountability, future judgment, are we warning people like Jesus did, or do we love them too little and love ourselves too much?

I hear people today speaking about the culture wars. "Culture wars." I think it's actually too light of a way to speak about what's going on out there, "culture wars." It's not "culture wars." These are battles of ideology right now in America: ideology, ideological battles, warfare, . are going on. Stakes are high. The lines have been drawn. The myth of neutrality has been exposed as the fiction that it is. No one's neutral anymore, are they?



People are polarizing into their different sides and their different camps, and one side in particular has given up on being polite and civil. They've been sneering at the other side for a long, long time now, but the other side is quickly catching up, both sides willing to offend the other, setting civility aside. And it's not because we just see an end of civility for impoliteness's sake. It's because people sense that this country is at stake; its future is at stake.

They're not wrong about that. But let's transcend the national, transcend the international, and let's think from a heavenly perspective. Beloved, are we willing to offend people? Are we willing to shock their sensibilities, trouble their peace, ruffle their feathers, trouble their consciences, maybe even hurt people's feelings a bit? Are we willing to do that because we really believe they're going to die in judgment, and hurting their feelings now might be worth it if it saves them from eternal hell later?

Trust me, I know how uncomfortable this can be. Years ago, Melinda and I were with some of my old military buddies and their wives and their girlfriends. We're all sitting around a

very nice restaurant and enjoying food together, and we're all going around talking about what we're doing now after the military. And I start to say, "Well, this is my chance for the Gospel."

So I get into the Gospel, and as I'm talking about the Gospel, they're all kind of looking at me uncomfortably, looking like, "What? How long is this going to take?" and "I think I do need to go to the bathroom now," and that kind of thing is going on, and you can see it in their eyes. And I'm speaking to them very clearly about coming judgment, about the end of the world, about Christ returning, about their accountability, about the Great White Throne, about hell and fire. And, and they're all looking at me like, "Man, we thought he was pretty cool, but he's lost his mind."

I know the discomfort. I know you won't be invited back. I care for those guys. I love them. I care for their wives, their girlfriends, their families. Do we wish, rather, keep inviting us over for dinner, having us come to their birthday parties so we can socialize and chat about trivial, passing matters of a dying age?

Beloved, let us be stout-hearted, courageous Christians. Let us be those who know what we believe and why we believe it. Let us understand and know it to a deep conviction. Then let's be soft-hearted, compassionate evangelists of the truth, weeping over their souls, pleading with them not to keep on moving on the conveyor belt toward the fire, but to pull them off, rescue souls that are perishing. "He who wins souls is wise." Let's warn them. Let's tell them the truth. Amen? You with me? That's the way we want to pray right now.

Father, thank you so much for a church that is with the truth, desiring to know the truth, feel the truth, and proclaim it to a lost and dying world. And we just pray, Father, that you would stir up that passion and zeal and fire within our hearts, that we would mimic and follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let him by the Spirit and by the Word grow within us a fire that cannot be put out. Your Word, that is like a fire within our bones. We must let it out in evangelism, discipleship. Father, let us be students of the truth, understanding the, the Bible, understanding its doctrines, understanding the, the theology, how it all fits together. Let us rejoice in understanding truth, and then let us take that

truth and have it wash over our minds and our affections and our wills, and let it drive us forward, so that we live our lives in a transformed way of living, one that's been transformed and affected deeply by the Gospel. And let us be bold- and soft-hearted evangelists. And we proclaim the glory and the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's in his name we pray. Amen.