

Matthew 21-04-01b

Let's return now to our study, and we have a lot to cover. I was thinking in preparation and trying to divide up the material here for Sunday and tonight and then this coming Sunday, there was an occasion back in 1961, I think it was, where Dr. W. A. Criswell decided he was going to go through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. He started at 7 p.m. on New Year's Eve, and he preached all the way through without stopping until after midnight.

It's about total, it's a little over, what, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, yeah, it's a little over five hours. We had to break it into three pieces just so we could put it on the website, and it was later transcribed and published as a book. But I think he was always really pleased that he was able to pull that off and go 7 p.m. to midnight.

In looking at the events of the week that is under our purview, beginning with the meal at the house of Lazarus and Mary and Martha and Bethany and continuing through Sunday and then Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday, the Thursday crucifixion and so on, there is so much here. I really, truly believe that I could have started last Sunday at 7 p.m. and gone till midnight, done the same Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and tonight and tomorrow and Saturday and again on Sunday morning, and not be able to cover everything that is here. So I'm going to tell you in advance that we're sort of touching the hem of the garment, so to speak, compared to everything that is here.

But having said that, I'm going to pick up my pace a little bit. We saw that Jesus warned his disciples about what would happen when they got to Jerusalem. Now how counterintuitive is it that when they get near the city, he says, go get the donkey and the colt.

I'm going to ride into town on those. And as he does so, everybody is busting out in jubilation and hosannas and hail the son of David and all the rest of it. So imagine the contrast.

If they had remembered at all what Jesus said, you say, well, it was one quick thing that he said, you know, before they went to Zacchaeus' house, maybe they had a little wine with dinner and they forgot it. No. Turn with me in Luke, back to chapter 9, verse 22.

We're going back nine chapters. Luke chapter 9, verse 22. This is right after the great confession of Peter.

This is what we're coming up to in Matthew chapter 16 in our Matthew study. Chapter 16 is the great confession. This is where it is in Luke.

Look at verse 18 and 19. Who do the crowds say that I am? Who do you say that I am? Peter says, you're the Christ of God. As soon as these words escape Peter's lips, what

does Jesus say? Jesus strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one.

You are the anointed one. The Christ is the Mashiach, the anointed king. The suffering servant, the lamb of God, is not anointed.

If you go back and look at the Passover lamb, the lamb is not anointed. Who is anointed? What does anointing do? Who is the anointing for? How did Saul become king of Israel? Samuel did what? Got a horn of oil and poured it over his curly locks or his bald head, depending. How did David become king of Israel? How did every king in Judah become king? They were anointed.

All of the good early ones were. Later on, who knows, you know, Athaliah and her brood of vipers. But in the early days, the prophet came and anointed.

We just saw Sunday, Elisha sending a son of the prophets to anoint Jehu. And that's the other occasion where you have to close under the feet, right? Look at this. He strictly warned and commanded them to tell the great confession to no one.

You're the Christ. Tell no one. The son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised the third day.

Don't be exciting messianic expectations. Something else has to come first. Couldn't be any clearer.

You're the Christ. Tell no one. He strictly warned and commanded.

You can't get any more emphatic, strictly warned, commanded. Tell no one about this Christ of God business. Many things have to happen first, including.

Suffering being rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, the chief priests and elders, this is the Sanhedrin. The chief, the priestly family, the priests, that group, they're Sadducees. The scribes, they are Pharisees.

The Democrats and Republicans, as it were, are going to unite. The conservatives and the liberals are going to unite to destroy the son of man. He's going to suffer and be rejected at their hands and be killed and be raised the third day.

They should have remembered. Flip down the page here to verse 43. Jesus has just been on the Mount of Transfiguration.

He's come down. He's cast the demon out of a little boy that the disciples couldn't do. They were all amazed, verse 43 of this chapter 9 of Luke.

They were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, he said to his disciples, let these words sink into your ears. They are the same words that he strictly warned and commanded them with earlier in the

chapter.

The son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men. Look at verse 45. But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it.

The very same phraseology we just saw in Luke 19, right? It just does not process. What was the point of application from our first study tonight, our first session? What's the takeaway? What is the point of that material? What should we do that the disciples did not do? Don't miss the point. Don't overlook the issue, right? Jesus has now told them this twice, and it's hidden from their eyes.

Why? How can you find? How can you have it given to you to understand? How can you have the door opened to your understanding? What does it require? What do you do so that it's given? Ask. How do you find? You seek. How is the door opened? You go to the Lord God and knock.

Don't wait for Him to come knocking on your door like Revelation 3.20. We go and knock on the door. Ask. Seek.

Knock. Why is it hidden from their eyes? They are not doing what you and I absolutely must do. If you want to understand the signs of the times today, if you want to be ready for the return of the Lord Jesus and ready for service and function and potential and opportunity, reward, blessing, residence in the New Jerusalem, all of that which constitutes eternal life, do not be these guys.

The Lord Jesus in the flesh, in person. They look at Him and say, you're the Christ, the Son of the living God. Well done.

If I am the Christ, listen to what I'm telling you. Let these words sink into your ears. I almost feel like stopping right now, just ending the second session.

Let's all go home and just stare at this page for the next 20 minutes. Let these words sink into your ears. Reflect on what the Word of God says.

After Bible class, don't put away the notebook and try to find the place the next time we have Bible class. This has to do with Sabbath time. Sabbath time.

Why did Jesus enter the city on the first day of the week? They had had the entire previous day to stop everything they were doing and think about the Word of God. That's what the Sabbath is for. They are anticipating the first of the great assembly feasts of the year.

This is one of the biggest Sabbaths of the year, is the one preceding Passover, preceding the four days that you keep up the lamb and examine it and ensure that it is without

blemish. Now, what is everybody actually thinking about? It's kind of like Christmas time. Patty was talking to somebody about pianos and all the churches needing to get them tuned before Christmas this morning, and she meant Easter, Resurrection Sunday.

But there is so much preparation. There's so much anticipation. There's visitors.

There's activities. There's, you know, unusual preparations going on. And it's easy to lose sight of what counts.

One of the reasons Jesus goes in on Sunday, right after the Sabbath, if there was ever a time when the Word of God should have been fresh in everyone's mind, it's on Sunday, right after the Sabbath, right after spending the day at the temple or in synagogue or whatever. And they do not remember. They're quoting Scripture.

Well, Jesus is going to quote some Scripture, and they're going to miss that as well. We're going to look at it. But we saw what He said in 1831 through 1834.

The Son of Man is going to be delivered and crucified. We've seen it here in 922 of Luke, and we've seen it in 944 of Luke. Flip over to Luke chapter 17, first part of the chapter.

Luke 17, well, it's not the first part. It's 24 and 25. Luke, the middle of Luke 17 is kind of like Matthew 24, 25.

It's prophetic. The kingdom of God does not come with observation. The day is going to come.

You'll desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man. You will not see it. Verse 23, this is Luke 17, 23.

They will say to you, look here or look there. Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning flashes out of one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in his day.

But first, verse 25, but first. He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. He must first suffer.

He told them in the early part of chapter nine. He told them later in chapter nine. He tells them here in chapter 17.

He's going to tell them again in chapter 18. And by the time of the triumphal entry, it's gone. It's gone.

Where is it? Shouldn't one disciple, John, Peter, somebody come up to the Lord and say, but Lord, this donkey and colt thing seems to be a harbinger. You know, behold your king in the positive sense. What about the words you gave us earlier? Wouldn't it be great if there had been a disciple who obeyed the Lord Jesus command? Let these words sink

down into your ears.

I am strictly warning you. I am commanding you to remember this. And don't be thinking in terms of the anointed Mashiach Christ king at this point.

Other things must take place first. The son of man must suffer many things. Completely spaced it.

They're ready to bring out the throne of David, put Jesus on it. Give us this bread always. Let's make him king.

It is going to happen. It is a truth. And this is what's so difficult.

Is we can latch on to truths of Scripture the way Calvinists lapse onto, not lapse. They grasp onto, lay hold of the sovereignty of God. Is the sovereignty of God a true thing? Does God ordain? Does he decree and those things come to pass? Absolutely, yes.

But if you stack your truths incorrectly, if you do not lay line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little, check, double check, check your measurements. I saw a video on YouTube. I didn't watch it.

It was labeled brick laying is easy. And the little teaser picture is a guy laying his own brick wall and he's got a string stretched across. You know, that's how you keep your, keep your lines straight.

I don't think brick laying is that easy, but he thinks it is. And listen, laying a straight course in the word of God isn't always easy. It requires dedication.

It requires faithfulness. It requires consistency and it requires time. Now, before I run myself out of time, turn to Luke chapter 19.

After the parable of the nobleman, after the quote unquote triumphal entry, look at the Pharisees in verse 39, calling out teacher, rebuke your disciples. Notice there is division in Jerusalem. It's one of the themes in Luke that builds and becomes more and more evident through the intermediate chapters of the gospel is that there are those who recognize the Lord Jesus, who accept him, who benefit and are healed by faith, who recognize who he is by faith.

And there are an increasing resistance, increasing opposition, so much so that the scribes and Pharisees are plotting to kill him. So the Pharisees, teacher, rebuke your disciples. Notice they can't get the disciples to quit.

And this is one of the reasons they're so angry. Their Pharisaic authority, the Pharisees are not going through the crowd of disciples, wagging their finger and saying, blasphemy, blasphemy, shut up, and cowing them into obedience. They're not browbeating them.

They're not cancel culturing them. They're not threatening them with mayhem. The people are way too enthusiastic about this.

The Pharisees can't shut them up. So they say, well, if anybody's going to get this nonsense to cease, Jesus is going to have to do it. So they come to Jesus and say, tell these people to quit saying this.

The implication is it's blasphemy. Jesus says, if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out. You can go to the parallel that says, out of the mouth of babes and suckling infants, God has ordained praise slash strength.

Both of those were said on this occasion at this point. But look at verse 41. We did not see this in Matthew.

We see it here as he drew near, he saw the city and wept over it saying, if you had known even you, especially in this, your day, this is the day of opportunity. Now is the appointed hour. Now is the day of deliverance.

If you had known, let me just pause there. You know what he's going to say, but look at that word. If you had known, not if you had felt, not if you had sung, not if you had scattered clothes and branches, if you had known what you are supposed to know in this day, the things that make for your peace.

Well, having you for our King that will make peace. No, the suffering servant, atoning for our sins creates peace. Read Paul talking about reconciliation.

He is our peace. He is our peace because he has reconciled us to God in whom we have redemption. Ephesians one seven in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

If you knew what makes for peace, peace with God comes first. Then you are going to have peace with the rest of the world because God is going to set a hedge about you. God is going to establish his King in Jerusalem who will rule with a rod of iron and shatter the rest of them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

But these things are hidden from your eyes. We've seen it twice in the preceding context in Luke, what is hidden from the eyes, even of Jesus closest disciples. Why is it hidden? Let me ask you a question.

Do you want the truth of the word of God and its pertinence and applicability in your life right now hidden from your eyes? Is that what you want? That's what happened to these. These are the closest disciples that Jesus has. And this truth is hidden from their eyes.

The entire city of Jerusalem with the approaching incarnate son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ on a donkey identifiable from Zachariah. The truth is hidden from their eyes even

as they are looking at it. This is scary.

It ought to be a nightmare for us to think that this could in any way, in any shape, in any form happen to us. How do you avoid it? We're going to see it. Why are they hidden? Because they are not using their Sabbath for its purpose.

What happened to them in the last time? They didn't allow the land its Sabbaths, not using the Sabbath for its appointed purpose. Yesterday was Sabbath. These things are hidden from your eyes because you did not do what you're supposed to do on the Sabbath.

And it's not how many times did you brush your robe or how far did you walk or did you light a fire? Did you pull a donkey out of a ditch or not? All of the pharisaical nonsense isn't what you should be thinking about. The people spent their whole day trying not to annoy a Pharisee by doing too much instead of using the Sabbath to reflect and meditate on the law of the Lord. Look at verse 43.

Days are coming upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side and level you and your children within you to the ground. They will not leave in you one stone upon another. Why? You did not know the time of your visitation.

Why did they not know the time? They are not asking. They are not seeking. They are not knocking.

They are not spending the time that God ordained in the law. Every seventh day is a day of rest to reflect on God and His mighty works of deliverance and provision and blessing. The law, the prophets, the writings, you've got one day out of seven to do nothing but fellowship together and discuss and think about and try to look at the pertinence and application of those things.

Not doing it. And they miss the Lord of glory. Even as they celebrate Him, they're missing Him.

How many churches today, look around in modern Christianity today, how many Christians are celebrating the Lord Jesus and in the very act, missing Him? And He, in effect, is on the brow of the hill weeping over us as His body, His church. Because even in the act of celebrating His name, we're missing it. Missing it because we do not take time to do Psalm 1. Well, as you know, from the gospel of Mark chapter 11, Jesus goes in after this great entry, He looks at the temple and He leaves.

What happens next in both Matthew and Luke is on Monday, about which we have much to say. I'm going to hope to cover some of Monday. I'd hope to get all the way to Tuesday tonight.

We'll look at Monday on Sunday, but we're looking at Sunday on Thursday. This now is Monday. Verse 45 is the next day.

Then on Monday, after looking at the fig tree on the way into the city, He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, it is written, my house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. Oh my goodness. I could literally keep going from now till midnight.

And you know I could. I'm tempted to. There is so much here, you can't believe it.

Let me just dip my finger in the water and put it on your tongue here and wet your appetite for everything that is here. You cannot believe what's here. It has just exploded before my very eyes.

Let me say just in passing, and I could talk about this for at least half an hour. This is not the same as the first cleansing of the temple that's recorded in John chapter two. John chapter two, verse 13.

Notice John two, Jesus cleanses the temple. It's completely different. Here are just some of the differences.

This is like the difference between the rapture and the second coming. One is in the air, the other is on the ground, et cetera. Cleansing the temple, this episode here that Matthew, Mark, and Luke record is not the same as the one John records in John chapter two.

That is at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Hence, it's in all authorities in John chapter two. How dare you do this thing? Here, he is not confronted.

Read the account in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He is not confronted. They don't dare because he is so popular with the crowds.

They can't even get the crowds to listen to them. Teacher, make your people be quiet. They're helpless.

In John chapter two, Jesus not only rebukes those who are in the temple precincts, but he issues them a challenge. Look at it. You can see it for yourself.

This time, it is rebuke only. He no longer challenges them because the window of opportunity to respond to his challenge is closed. The first time, Jesus speaks them in his own words.

This time, he doesn't speak in his own words. He gives them two Old Testament quotes, which we are gonna look at in just a moment. But in John two, Jesus speaks out of his own heart, out of his own mind.

Here, he says, it is written, and he gives them two separate Old Testament quotes. That is different than John chapter two. In the first episode, in John chapter two, John says, the disciples remembered Psalm 69.9 that says, zeal for your house has eaten me up.

They were actually more scripturally minded in John chapter two than they are here. Here, neither Matthew, Mark, or Luke says the disciples remembered anything. John chapter two, they remember Psalm 69.9. Here, they don't remember anything.

But Jesus gives them two quotes. What is our universal, constant, inviolable rule about Old Testament quotes in the New Testament? What are they? These are links. These are hot links.

Click the link and go back and get the whole story. The first one here, and you probably have it in your New King James, my house is a house of prayer, is from Isaiah 56.7. You have made it a den of thieves, is from Jeremiah 7.11. We need to quickly take a look at these. I've got about five minutes to do it.

Turn back first to Isaiah chapter 56. Now, this is Monday. After the facepalm tragic events of the previous day, Jesus came to this temple, looked around and left.

He has come back. He has passed and cursed the fig tree. He's in Jerusalem.

He's at the temple and he's going to drive out the money changers. He's going to overturn. He's going to drive out the sellers and the buyers.

Drives them all out. And he quotes this. This is Isaiah 56.

Look at this chapter. Just scan chapter 56. Thus says the Lord, keep justice and do righteousness.

You know, the Jews in these days would memorize. They didn't have chapters and verses. They would memorize sections and they would remember it by the first words of that section.

What are the first words of this section? This is a good chapter break. Keep justice and do righteousness, says the Lord. Justice and righteousness.

For my deliverance is about to come. What a more appropriate occasion for Jesus to reference this chapter. My salvation is about to come and my righteousness is about to be revealed.

Blessed is the man who does this and the son of man who lays hold of it. Grasps it. Sees its import and its meaning.

Thinks, reflects, meditates on the law of the Lord day and night. Tree by the rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season. Leaf not withering.

Whatsoever he does will prosper. Psalm 1. Who does what? What's the very next phrase? Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath. Screwing up the Sabbath.

Wasting the Sabbath. Not using it for its intended purpose. And keeps his hand from doing any evil.

Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord speak, saying the Lord has separated me from his people. Don't let the eunuch say, here I am a dry tree. Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths.

Look at how eunuchs, who the law says cannot approach because they're maimed, they're not complete and not whole. What does Isaiah say? Here is the word of the Lord to the eunuchs and to the foreigners. Eunuchs and foreigners could not come in and worship at the tabernacle or the temple.

It's forbidden in the law. What does the prophet Isaiah say? What does the Lord say through this prophet? Don't let the foreigners and the eunuchs say, I can't approach. To the eunuchs who do what? Keep my Sabbaths and choose what pleases me and hold fast my covenant.

To them I will give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters. All you have to do is be faithful and obedient and keep my Sabbaths. How important is the Sabbath to God? When we say all of the 10 commandments still pertain even in the age of the church, what's the one we generally leave out? Well, love the Lord your God.

Don't take the Lord's name in vain. Have no other gods before me. That's not an order.

What's the fourth commandment that we typically say? Well, that doesn't apply to the church. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. God cares about his Sabbath, why? Because God cares about us digesting, metabolizing, understanding, knowing his word.

Not just hearing it, knowing it, and then doing it. That's what this is. The eunuchs who have my word and keep it, who know it, are going to have a heritage better than sons and daughters.

I will give them an everlasting name, eternal life. They will never be cut off. Also, verse 6, the son of the foreigner joins himself to the Lord to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants.

Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath holds fast my covenant. To them I will bring to my holy mountain. I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar. These are foreigners. This would have been shocking to Israelites to hear that God would accept

the sacrifices and the offerings and the presence of the goyim.

Why? My house shall be called a house of prayer. What's the part Jesus did not quote that they should have immediately filled in from memory? My house should be called a house of prayer for all nations. They had foreigner police, eunuch police, thought police outside.

And by the way, they also policed who could actually bring sacrifices. If you didn't buy your sacrifice at the temple, they would find a reason that it was blemished and they wouldn't let you in. If you didn't exchange your money for temple money at the exchange at the temple, they would find a way to reject you.

You had to do business at the temple to worship at the temple. They had the monopoly. They would shut down anybody else that tried to exchange money for foreigners or offer animals for purchase as sacrifices.

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. The Lord God who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, not the elite, not the highfalutin, high priest scribes and Pharisees and chief priests. The Lord who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him.

A thoughtful Israelite would say, why is God going to do that? There's a reason. What is the second quote? Real quickly now, just flip over to Jeremiah 7. And by the way, that becomes us. We are those who were formerly considered eunuchs with no heritage in the plan and purpose of God and no future in it.

And we are the foreigners. And yet we can be brought closer than the sons of God. Jeremiah chapter seven.

Again, it's the whole chapter. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, stand in the gate of the Lord's house. Stand in the gate of the Lord's house.

Say this word, hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, amend your ways and your doings and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words.

Those who say the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. If you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, do not shed innocent blood in this place or walk after other gods to your hurt. Then I will cause you to dwell in this place in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

Behold, you trust in lying words that cannot profit. What are the lying words? Well, but we're at the temple. Look, we've got the temple.

We're at the temple. It's okay because it's the temple. Money changing is okay because we're doing it at the temple.

We're doing it in the Lord's name and for the Lord's work and it's the Lord's worship. We're buying and selling and cheating people on these sacrifices because we're at the temple. We're in the shadow of the temple.

The temple sanctifies us and we cannot be doing any wrong because look, we're at the temple. It's approved by the temple. It's sanctioned by the temple.

You trust in lying words, verse 8, that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal and walk after other gods whom you do not know? Then come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name and say, we are delivered. And so we can do all these abominations.

Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, says the Lord. Now, here's the thing. What is a den of thieves? The answer to the question lies in where do thieves do their thieving? Do they do it in their den or they do it elsewhere? The den of the thieves, this is their hideout.

This is their safe place. This is where they think they can't be caught. They can't be found.

They can't be arrested. They can't be outed. They're going to go somewhere else and steal and then they're going to take refuge in their den.

Thieves don't rob in a thieves' den. They go out on the road or the highway or a bank or some other place. Have you made the house of the Lord a safe place, a refuge, where thieves feel like they can't be caught and arrested and tried and convicted and sentenced? Can't touch me here.

This is my den. And people who take refuge today in their church or church life or religious practice or Bible-related habits and say, well, because I do this, I can't be touched. You're just like the people in Jeremiah who said, well, but we're at the temple, the temple, the temple.

Look, it's the temple. Don't look at me and what I'm doing. Look at this temple.

Ain't this a great temple? Look at my den. It's safe and secure. I'm in my den.

Can't touch me here. It is the idea of security from observation and judgment. You have made the house that is supposed to be a house of prayer, a house that is focused on coming to God, worshiping God, appealing to God in prayer.

And you've turned it into a self-serving place of refuge. It isn't focused on God. You've turned God's house into your house.

You feel good there. You feel safe there. You feel like everything is okay there.

And this is what Christianity has become for so many Christians. It's our safe place. It isn't training and covenant and faith and obedience to approach God, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God so that he can exalt us in due time.

We're exalted enough just being at the house. It's our refuge. And we rob God of his own house and of the purpose for his house and the glory and the worship and the prayer that should be offered to him in that place.

Where is the temple of God today? There is one in heaven. Moses got a copy that he fashioned the tabernacle after. There is an ark in heaven.

There's a holy of holies in heaven. But where is the temple on earth today? We're looking at it when we look at each other. We have met the enemy and he is us.

Well, we've met the temple and it's supposed to be us. Have we turned the temple? By the way, it's an interesting thing. When you look at this in Matthew and it says the temple of God, scratch out of God.

It's not there. Nowhere in the New Testament does the phrase, the temple of God never occurs. You never find temple with the genitive from theos, the temple of God.

It's never called the temple of God because God's not there. Never call that anywhere in the New Testament, the temple of God. That phrase is not found.

They tried to put it into Matthew because temple is used again in the same sentence and they said, well, it needs some poetic variation. It's not there. Best texts don't have it.

We are the temple of God now and what are we doing with it? Have we turned it into a refuge for robbers? It's not a place we can say, I'm not stealing anybody. I'm not robbing anybody. We're robbing God by taking refuge in his house for our own purposes and our own interests and our own benefit instead of having it be a place of prayer.

Read Isaiah chapter 56. Read Jeremiah chapter seven. It is so convicting, especially in Isaiah 56, talking about the Sabbath.

If you observe the Sabbath, God says, that's all I'm looking for. Spend some time reflecting on me. If his house is a house of prayer, if our soul is a house of prayer, we will spend a goodly amount of time reflecting on God's word and praying it back to him in prayer, honoring him for what he has done, remembering his great and mighty works on our behalf, remembering his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the incredible gift of the Holy Spirit.

If there is a lesson for this Resurrection Sunday week, this Passion week, don't be the disciples. All of these momentous things preceding the greatest event in human history

are hidden from their eyes and they've been taught by the Lord Jesus himself. He adjured them.

He warned them. He commanded them. He said, let these words sink down in your ears, and they missed it.

We cannot do that and expect anything in this life or the next. And rightfully not. What's the holdup? What's the obstacle? There is no reason.

These things are not so far in heaven that we have to climb. They're not so deep that we have to dig. They are near.

They're in our hearts and on our lips. The word of truth has been communicated to us. It's just a matter of spending that Sabbath time.

That's all it takes. We can do this. And it's a wonderful reminder, especially this week.

Let's carve out a little time between the bunnies and the eggs and the Easter grass and all the rest of it to think about what the disciples missed and what we don't want to miss. What the crowds missed. Even as they were praising Hosanna on high to the Son of David, they completely missed their salvation and their peace.

And in less than a century, their temple and their town were utterly destroyed and in ruins because they missed this. Jesus wept as he was entering. That's why it is tragic.

It is facepalm. How can you miss this? Being told time after time after time. Well, we don't want to miss that.

I've run a little over time tonight, but hopefully it'll give us a little additional food for thought between now and Sunday morning. And I will see you then. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the wonderful truth of your word and how it resonates through the years and the centuries just as vigorously, just as fresh as the day that these prophecies and these words were delivered. We pray that they will strike our ears and our hearts with renewed divine power to transform us, to renew our minds so that we can understand what your good and acceptable and perfect will is in our individual and collective lives. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.