

Matthew 21-04-08a

Greetings, welcome to the Thursday night Bible study at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 8th of April, 2021. And we're going to continue and conclude our study that we launched in honor of the season with the arrest, trial, crucifixion, burial, resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the events of that week.

What did Jesus emphasize, knowing that these were his final days of ministry, his final days of training for the disciples? What did he endeavor to impress on their hearts and on ours in those last days? And I think I could probably do this special every year for several years and never hit the same thing twice. I've had to force myself to be selective. So we're just going to look at one final thing tonight, but it's a very powerful piece of that week's sequence of events.

And so we will be tonight in Matthew chapter 21. Actually, we're going to be in chapter 20, but the chapter on my page is 21. So if you get anywhere in that vicinity, you'll be within a page of the target.

Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and we'll begin. Father, we are so grateful for the privileges, the opportunities, the salvation that we enjoy because of the faithfulness of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a privilege for us to look at everything that he said and did, but particularly these final days and final thoughts that he shared and emphasized in fulfilling your plan and purpose on our behalf.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word this evening, that your Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart, help us to see how pertinent it is and how applicable it is for our own lives and motivation and encouragement as we seek to redeem the time and to prepare ourselves for future service and function. We ask these things in Jesus' name, amen. The emphasis that we had last Sunday was on faith that moves mountains.

There's a lot of ways you can cover the withering of the fig tree. It's sort of a discouragement to talk about the withering and the failure and the leaving behind and the discarding of people who in name belong to God, but in function do not. And Jesus tells the parable that very same week of the man who had two sons.

And he asks the first to go to the field and he says he will, but then he does not. And that is a picture of the religious establishment. The Pharisees and the scribes and chief priests and the Sadducees know that Jesus is talking about them once he finishes this story.

And then there is a second son that the father approaches and says, go work in my field. And he says, I won't. But later on he has a change of heart and he goes.

And so then Jesus' question was, which son did the will of the father? Which son is

approved? And of course, with initial resistance, but then change of mind, this is pretty much our experience as we come to Christ by faith. And then in many cases, we don't always take off at a sprint from the point of our faith. It is sometimes a significant period of time later before we catch fire, become motivated and really pursue our walk with the Lord.

It can be gradual. It can be almost an overnight thing. I know someone who was strung out on drugs, walking in the desert and having wasted many opportunities and destroyed many relationships and whatnot.

And in one moment just said, this is ridiculous. I need God. I need him now.

And I need a massive change in my life. And it was an enormous turning point. And from that point forward, God began to work and to bless and to utterly transform.

Most of us don't have quite the Damascus Road experience or the Flagstaff Road experience. It's more of a re-emphasis of the experience and a re-prioritizing of our spiritual life. However it happens, the goal is to be the son that does the will of the father.

Well, doing the will of the father is our subject. And to do a thing, you have to know a thing. You buy one of these desk or entertainment center kits that comes all flat packed and you start taking it open and laying out the sides and the pegs and the screws and the little plastic connectors and the feet and the pegs for the shelves and all the rest of it.

And it's bewildering. How does this go together? What should I do first? And if you do not follow the instruction manual and put tab A into slot B and follow those numbered steps, it's virtually impossible to get one of those things together. In the same way, to do the will of God, we have to know the will of God.

And to know the will of God, we have to read the instructions. And these instructions are given to us in a form where they were first communicated to others and we are listening in. Several of us have undertaken the ham radio hobby and it's a bit daunting.

It's a little bit, they call it, what is it? Mic fright or something like that. People don't wanna start and embarrass yourself. So what most of us have done is we tune in to the channels where people are talking and we listen.

And other people make mistakes and forget to identify themselves every 10 minutes or they don't give their call sign phonetically. They'll just say, I'm KO5NRO. Somebody says, what was that again? KO5NRO.

Or maybe they don't key their mic fast enough and the first part's cut off. And so you learn by listening to the instruction and the helpful encouragement that is given by those

who know to those who don't know. But if you want to minimize your own flailing, you listen.

And we have the privilege of listening to the Lord Jesus, teaching his disciples in this particular case. And by listening to that, we can take those lessons on board and not make the same mistakes. We benefit from that word.

And this is why the word of God is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. We can follow the steps. We can be the son who may not have started out doing the will of the father, but the son that the father is pleased with is the one who has that change of mind, reshuffles his priorities and gets with the program.

Well, we've seen in these last several sessions in Passion Week, Jesus is not talking about redemption and reconciliation and propitiation and atonement and the forensic nature of satisfaction of the righteousness and justice of God. And well, do you realize that I'm going to be able to do this and the other in the theological realm? He is emphasizing and reemphasizing attitude, motivation, perspective. We're going to see when we resume our Gospel of Matthew study in chapter 17, Peter giving the great confession.

Who do men say that I am? Who do you say that I am? Peter gives the right answer. Jesus says, that's the rock I'm going to build my assembly on. But within a very short span of time, Jesus is saying to that same Peter, get thee behind me, Satan.

You have your mind on the things of men and not on the things of God. So what we're going to look at tonight is another example. This is the problem Jesus was working right up to the time he was arrested and even during the arrest.

Have to cover that in another year's study if we're still here next resurrection Sunday. But for now, turn to Matthew chapter 20. And you know that in these chapters, we've seen what is labeled in your Bible, the triumphal entry in chapter 21, right? Look at the top of 21 in any annotated Bible.

What does it say? Mine is a New King James and it says, the triumphal entry. And it's in Mark 11 and it's in Luke 19 and it's in John 12. This is Jesus' approach to the city.

This is the last and final exam. Will they pass or will they not? And when you go to Mark 11, you see that after Jesus enters to great acclaim and hosannas and throwing of clothes and branches and great huzzahs in all directions, he goes down and looks at the temple and the hour is late. It's no accident.

It says the hour was late, too late. It is too late, too late for Jerusalem. Jesus is going to weep and say, how often I would have gathered you under my wings like a hen gathers her chicks, but you would have none of me.

And the same occasion, the same collection of days, Jesus is going to stand and look at Jerusalem and cry. The Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, the Lord of glory is going to weep, looking at God's people failing. I am sure you share my fervent ambition to not be someone over whom Jesus is going to weep.

I don't want to be that guy. I don't want to be in that group and you don't either. How did this happen? Despite repeated parables, examples, teaching occasions, and even Jesus' own disciples get caught up in the popular momentum.

If there had been social media, this would have been the trending topic. Jesus, he's the trending topic. He's got his own hashtag.

He's, everybody's talking about him. Well, that's chapter 21. We're going to look tonight at chapter 20.

So you remember, we looked at some of the references earlier on, Jesus has been telling his disciples for weeks and months that there is something that comes before the kingdom. Dr. Criswell, I've told you this before, had a sermon that he preached a few times called the cross and the crown. There is no crown without the cross.

There is no kingdom without the problem of sin first being solved, without salvation for fallen and helpless mankind being achieved. So Jesus has been telling his disciples over and over and over again. You have it again here.

Look at chapter 20, verse 17. Jesus going up to Jerusalem. He is on the way to the quote unquote, triumphal entry.

Took the 12 disciples aside on the road and said to them, now notice, they have been traveling for three and a half years. They've traveled North, they've traveled South. They've traveled to the regions of Tyre and Sidon.

They've traveled in Samaria. They've traveled to Transjordan. They've traveled by boat.

They've traveled by foot. They've been traveling all the time. So to make a point and to emphasize and underscore what he's about to say, Jesus says, 12, we're stopping.

We're pulling off the road. Did you ever get in trouble when you were a little kid? We used to ride in the station wagon. There were four of us.

We'd start fighting and pinching and poking and somebody would get upset and start crying. You know you're in trouble when your dad or your mom pulls the car off the road and stops. We're stopping the trip and they either turn around and read you the riot act or one or more miscreants gets pulled out and in those days, you know, corporal punishment would ensue.

But it's very memorable. Jesus stops the journey. Look at it.

Took the 12 disciples aside on the road. He's not as they traveled talking. Remember the road to Emmaus? They're talking as they travel.

Not here. This is such an important point. Jesus does not want them to miss it.

He stops them. He pulls them off the road. He sits them down and he says, now look, that's what behold means.

Look, people, pay attention. Behold. Behold sounds like such a glorious churchy word.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive. No, this is look. Hey, you pay attention.

We are going up to Jerusalem and the son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes and they will condemn him to death. Deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, to scourge and to crucify. And the third day he will rise again.

Now Jesus has told them this in scripture four or five times before this. I think he probably emphasized it on a weekly basis. And he pulls them aside right before they go to the town.

Now let's stop right here. If you and I are disciples and we have received this word, and then Jesus says, hey, a couple of you go in and get this donkey with the full and I'm gonna ride into Jerusalem in fulfillment of Zachariah. Behold, your king comes riding on the full of donkey and so on.

If you're an A student, what should your first thought be? Haven't you been telling us for weeks that the king cannot get his crown without this cross, this crucifixion, this trial and arrest and death and resurrection. You're gonna have to be raised. What a theological bonanza.

You go back to Isaiah and you think about he is wounded for our transgressions. He's bruised for our iniquities. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all and by his stripes we are healed.

Lord, can you tell me more about this? Is that the reason? Is this a tie back to Isaiah? So explain, no questions, no commentary. It's kind of like, well, you know, it's a hot day. Maybe the Lord should have been wearing a hat.

I don't know what they thought, but there are no questions. There's no discussion. There's no inquiry.

This seems dissonant and incoherent compared to the notion that we're going up to Jerusalem. It's an assembly feast time. It's the days of Passover.

Everybody's gonna be there. There's been this popular momentum building and the disciples are well aware of it. They know what happened.

That's how they could write it down in the scriptures. After Jesus fed the 5,000 and sent his disciples on the boat, they tried to make him king back then. Well, at this feast, the whole nation and Jesus has been all over.

He knows people from all of these villages. They're gonna try to make him king. And the disciples think this is great.

You know how I know this? How do I know this? Am I just speculating? Keep reading here. Verse 20, then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to him with her sons. Who are the sons of Zebedee? Jacob and John.

I don't know why they turned Jacob into James. Even in Greek, it's Jacobos. Jacob, Jacob and John are the two sons of Zebedee.

If you went up to Zebedee in the resurrection and said, hey, I've really had a good time reading about your son, James. He's gonna say, who? James? I had no son named James. I had a Jacob and I had a Yohanan.

Yohanan, Yahweh is Hanan, gracious. Yahweh is gracious. Yohanan, Yaakov, supplanter.

But it's a wordplay because Jacob is going to be supplanted for 2000 years plus by the church. He supplanted Esau for the birthright and the blessing. But in the long run, he himself, you know, what goes around comes around.

He supplanted Esau and then his descendants wind up getting supplanted. And this is the final nail in that coffin. So the mother of Zebedee's sons came to him with who? Jacob and John, Yaakov and Yohanan.

Even though you get supplanted, the Lord is still gracious. Asking something from him, they kneel down. So Jesus says to her, this is Mrs. Zebedee.

What do you wish? She said to him, now, what is on their minds? What did Jesus just say in the preceding three verses? But Mrs. Zebedee comes with James, with John. We'll call him James just for tradition's sake. It's the same reason we call Jesus by that name instead of Yeshua.

He said to her, what do you wish? She said to him, grant that these two sons of mine may sit one on your right hand and the other on your left in your kingdom. This is tragic. I would not be surprised at all if tears did not well up in the Lord Jesus' eyes at this point.

The advanced class in the disciples is composed of whom? Who are the three furthest along disciples out of the whole group? Peter, James and John. Peter, he's had to say, get thee behind me, Satan. The other two are here wanting a good seat for the kingdom.

I want power, I want authority, I want to be privileged. I want to be one of the top dogs in your kingdom. The highest place of privilege is at the right hand.

That's where Jesus is sitting right now, at the right hand of the Father. Listen, behold, this is tragic. This is extremely consequential.

Can you imagine Jesus has spent three and a half years plowing himself into his disciples, preparing them for his departure and his work, and they need to understand this. And here it is just a couple of days before he's going to be crucified and the advanced class is falling all over themselves. Lacking viewpoint, lacking perspective, lacking understanding.

You notice they didn't say, Lord, we understand that you're going to be crucified. And you know, to speak loosely, there's going to be a cross on each side of you. Grant that we may, one of us be on the right hand cross and the other on the left.

Isn't it interesting that the cross didn't have three thieves. He wasn't crucified in a group of seven or eight guys. There's one at his right hand and one in his left.

What should they have been thinking about? Am I worthy to be crucified with Christ? What does Paul say? I am crucified with Christ. And now it is not I live, but Christ lives in me, through me, right? You think about what this did to the Lord Jesus. And of course you get the mother involved, get the sympathy vote, you know, and well, he's not going to refuse, you know, Mrs. Zebedee.

You just, the more you think about this, the more you paint this picture in your mind, the more awful it would be to replicate this mistake ourselves. There is a kingdom coming. We have spent months looking at the future, the new Jerusalem, the opportunity to have the citizen pass that gets you through those angel guarded gates to your dwelling in the new Jerusalem in the kingdom of the father.

What a privilege, what an opportunity. What do you think the Lord would think if we just started praying, oh Lord, grant that I may live in your city. Oh, heavenly father, even if it's just inside the wall, could you please just let me have a, you know, even a modest, maybe just seven rooms instead of 10, maybe just two stories instead of four, just an upright piano instead of a, you know, 11 foot grand.

This is like so many things. It is not something that comes by request. You don't get it just because you want it.

And we all look forward with great enthusiasm. It is our hope, faith, hope, and love. Our hope is the glory of God, service and function and blessing and opportunity being somewhere in the group of overcomers that Jesus talks to in Revelation chapter two and three.

But you cannot have this mindset and be thinking, well, what's it going to be like over there and who will I see? How will I live? What will I do? You can't do that. This is what James and John and their mother are doing. And it's just awful.

It's awful. But the Lord Jesus is gracious. So Jesus answered and said, notice it says, but Jesus answered and said, because there's already going to be an adversarial response to this request.

Jesus answered and said, you do not know what you ask. You don't know what you're talking about. You have no clue.

And you know what's sad? They should. They should know. Jesus has been teaching for three plus years.

You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. Now, I would submit, if they don't know what they're asking about the seat at the right hand and the left, they don't understand.

If they don't understand the destination, they're certainly not going to understand the journey, the path, the means of getting there. And so Jesus asks them, I'm going to tell you upfront, you really don't know what you're talking about here. There is a cup involved.

Can you drink it? There is a baptism involved. Can you undertake it? Can you undergo this baptism? Well, if you don't know what you're talking about, you say, sure, we are able. So he said to them, you will indeed drink my cup and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.

But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared by my father. Jesus always takes us to himself, through himself and beyond himself to the father. 14.6, no one comes to the father, but by me.

If I could invent a new description for Christians, as great as it is to be called Christian, I'd rather be called a fatherian or a patrion perhaps. Had a pastor who named his church patrion because he understood this principle. The reason patrion church in Tulsa was named that is patros, it's pater, paternal, dedicated to getting to the father.

I'm not sure that's the only reason, but I like to think that was the reason. Now, when the 10 heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. Notice it doesn't say they were displeased with Mrs. Zebedee whom they knew very well.

So evidently James and John recruited mom to make a threesome and add the weight of her request to theirs and because Jesus was so respectful and kind and compassionate toward the ladies in his periphery. And they figured, Jesus is a softy when it comes to the ladies. So let's take mom and we'll get her to be a part of this as well.

But the 10 know who engineered this. Peter knows who engineered it. Keep your finger here and turn over to Mark chapter 11 and then go back to 10.

10.35, Mark 10.35. James and John, Jacob and Yohanan, the sons of Zebedee came to him. Peter doesn't, when Mark sets down what the stories Peter told, Mrs. Zebedee is not even mentioned because she's not really implicated in this. James and John came to him saying, teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask.

Now, where did they get this idea? Remember what we covered? I think it was session before last. Whatsoever you ask in my name, it will be done for you. Say to this mountain, be plucked up and be thrown into the sea.

Whatever you ask. So which part of Jesus' teaching did they latch onto? Well, whatever you ask in my name, it will be done. Well, Lord, we're gonna make that request right now.

Do for us whatever we ask. Misapplication of a valid doctrinal truth. So Jesus said to them, and you get the, I would love to see the expression on the Lord's face when he said this, what do you want me to do for you? They said to him, grant us that we may sit one on your right hand and the other on your left in your glory.

Glory equals kingdom, kingdom equals glory. That's why the tact on ending to the Lord's prayer, thine be the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Well, the kingdom and the glory, what did they not mention? The power.

If you're sitting at the right hand and the left, you're as high as you can get without being the king himself. But Jesus said to them, same adversative conjunction. You do not know what you ask.

Are you able to drink the cup? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism? They said, we are able. And Jesus says exactly what he says in Matthew. And then just as in Matthew verse 41, when the 10 heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John, probably not half as displeased as the Lord himself is.

And disappointed and sorrowful. So before we even get to the second half of this, remember as we approach the end of our own dispensation and the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are many things that rush into our expectation and our hope. Great things.

See our departed loved ones, see the Lord Jesus who redeemed us and purchased us with his own blood. Enter into that new and living way beyond the veil in a much greater and grander sense than we do here. Leave this mortal body, leave this fallen world behind and enter into these wonderful blessings that Jesus secured for us on the cross.

What a great expectation. Resurrection and ascension and entering into glory. That's what the Lord Jesus did.

And God will bring with him those who sleep, we who are alive and remain caught up. It's

all upward. It's going to be great, especially if we have done what we're supposed to.

However, in our perambulations and our spiritual expectations, have we left out the cup and the baptism? There is no crown without the cross. There is no overcomer blessing. You don't collect the white stone and the new name and the hidden manna and walking with Jesus in white and sitting with him on his throne and the other overcomer blessings without the understanding and the commitment that takes us to the cup and to the baptism, to drink the cup and to undergo the baptism.

It's not just these two guys. All these things were written for our instruction. So taking nothing away from our anticipation and our expectation and our hope of glory, that glory and that expectation and that potential is fulfilled when we understand the path, when we know what we are asking, when we know what we are expecting and we know what it takes to get there.

We don't need to be afraid. We don't need to be discouraged or disheartened. The Lord Jesus was not banging a timbrel and singing the song of Miriam on his way to the cross, but he was reconciled for the hope that was set before him.

He endured the cross and he refused to let the shame be a lever to pry him off of his path. Endured the cross, despising the shame. Where is he now? Where did James and John want to sit? The right hand of the Lord? Jesus, because he drank the cup, because he underwent the baptism, where is he now? If you really want the privilege of serving at the right hand of the Lord, there is a way to get there and we have to understand it.

We have to know what we are asking for and be committed to walking that path, undertaking that baptism, draining that cup. This is what the disciples missed in Passion Week, though Jesus hammered on it over and over and over. We cannot afford to miss this point.

There is not much time left. There wasn't much time left here. What a perfect lesson for us in these last days and in these final times to not make the mistake.

You know, the author of Hebrews says, look at the people who were delivered from Egypt and went to the wilderness and then dropped and never entered into that rest. That rest remains. Let us fear lest that promise be left unclaimed and we fail the way they failed.

And we dispute and we complain the way they disputed and complained. And we drop in the wilderness short of the promise because we forget that there is intervening territory between deliverance and promise. There is the wilderness of training, the wilderness of testing.

Israel was there 40 years. Jesus was there 40 days, tested by Satan. The Lord Jesus himself was ready, willing, and able to undergo that testing for the prize that was set before him.

We should have that same. Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. Just read Philippians chapter two.

Well, it's an important thing to remind ourselves of. It's not the first direction our instinctive mind wants to turn. I want to think about happy things.

I want to think about glorious things. I want to think about, you know, what a lot of the church is thinking about today, kingdom now, and if we build it, he will come. And we're doing kingdom work and we're marching to Zion and everybody will be happy over there.

Jesus, I don't know what more the Lord could have done to emphasize this point. And we've seen half of it right now. We're gonna see the other half when we come back from the break.