

Matthew 22-03-20b

We are ready now to continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew. And we have the Lord Jesus speaking and presenting this expression of compassion, of desire, of will, to have gathered together in his presence, the children of Jerusalem. And yet, although he has that will, it is not fulfilled.

I want to show you this in Greek because of a connection and you'll forgive me for inflicting the Greek on you, but I think it's really powerful here. In this verse, you have Jerusalem and you can see the spelling I gave you here in the upper left, Yerushalayim, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those having been sent. Remember, your aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb, killing and stoning those having been sent.

To her, how often I would have gathered. And here on the left, you can see it's in blue, if you don't read Greek, ethelesa. But right in the middle of that, you see the T-H-E-L, this is a form of fellow, which is to will, to desire a thing.

Most of the time when we have a will, it is not the will of God that any should perish. It is not the desire, it's not the decision of God. It's not his choosing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

It's fellow. And how often I willed, and this is the aorist active indicative. Often, in the past, I have willed to gather together, tatechna, the children of you, in which way an ornis, you can see O-R-N-I-S there, ornis, the bird, the mother bird, gathers together, same thing, epi sunagogos, or epi sunago, gather together in a presence.

Notice the hen is gathering the chicks, but the hen doesn't just gather them and leave. The hen gathers them with her and under her, or this mother bird, epi sunago. The nasia, this is just the brood.

This is the hatchlings, if you will. Under her wings, we saw these wings in Psalm 17, but notice, and not were you willing. Look at the word for willing.

Do you see the T-H-E-L-O element in the middle of that? The very same verb, how often I willed to gather you and you did not will. You willed not. This is the will of the Lord Jesus, who is God, and this is the will of Jerusalem and her children.

And what you can notice here is, right in the middle of this, when Jesus says your children, the way a hen gathers her brood under the wings, but you, plural, were not willing. This is Jerusalem and her children. If it was just Jerusalem, like, well, they're victims of the leadership, Jerusalem representing the capital or the government or the oversight, the elders, the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes, and so on, and you, Jerusalem, were not willing, but I wanted to gather your children, i.e. Jerusalem's children would be

in Jerusalem and the whole shooting match would be gathered to the Lord Jesus, but you, plural, were not willing.

And it's the very same verb for willing. Desiring, choosing. So if God chooses something, if Jesus chooses something, I willed to gather you together, but you willed not to be gathered.

Which one prevailed? This brings us up against something we've seen before, which is the sovereignty of God versus the free will of man. So what are we talking about here? This is a classic example of understanding and comprehending what the Bible says about the will of God versus the will of man. What is God's will and the Lord Jesus' will for Israel in general, Jerusalem and her children, in this context, what is the will of God? Jesus says often, oftentimes, I willed, I desired, I wanted to gather you together in my presence the way a mother bird gathers her brood under her wings, but you willed not.

Here's the best way to think about this. Pick three lines in your notes or three lines in your mind. This is not so hard that you need to write it down, but it might be helpful to write it down.

On the first line, write God's antecedent will. Antecedent means something before, right? Antebellum means before the war. Antecedent, God's antecedent will is to gather Jerusalem's children together.

God's antecedent will is that none perish, right? That's the will that God starts with. On the second line, you have the will of Jerusalem and her children, which is not to be gathered. Don't want to respond.

Don't want to be under the wings of God. The old Anderson commercial back in the 60s where the lady is cranky because she's got a headache and somebody tries to offer some assistance and she says, I'd rather do it myself. You need some Anderson, lady.

Your headache's making you cranky. I don't know why I remember that, but I'd rather do it myself. It's kind of like, where's the B for, you know, some of these other advertising slogans.

But people would rather be captains of their own ship, masters of their own fate. I'd rather do it myself. I don't want to be under the wings of God.

I don't want to take shelter and refuge in the cleft of the rock. I don't have a sense of need for that. I don't want to be beholden to God.

I don't want the concomitant obligations and responsibilities for righteousness and seeking God's will rather than my own. I'd rather do it myself. So God's antecedent will is that no one perish, that everyone come to repentance, that Israel repent and be gathered to him, expressed personally by the Lord Jesus Christ who is the just one, the

coming one.

But Jerusalem's will and the children of Jerusalem's will is not to be gathered. On the third line, you have God's subsequent will. What is the will of God after a decision has been made? For those who respond, God has a will to save, to grant eternal life, to bring into his presence, to enter into his future kingdom into his future heavenly Jerusalem.

For those who have made the opposite choice, who like Jerusalem and her children will have none of this, there is the will to judge. There is the will to separate. There is the will to remove.

When you look at it in this light, God's antecedent will, his ideal desire is that everyone would come, that no one would be lost, no one would be ultimately judged. But he presents the opportunity and he allows the expression of free will on the second line. And based on that, God will sovereignly will to either bless or judge, to either be in the presence or remove from his presence.

Make sense? There is no conflict between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man. We just have to distinguish between what God wills in the ideal, in the antecedent, and what he wills based on human reaction or response. And that's what you see in our passage.

How often I willed to gather you, but you willed not. Euk aethelesate. And notice on the right-hand lower corner there, this is an aorist indicative active second plural.

You all were not willing. It's unfortunate that we've lost, as I've said many times in the King James, thee and thou is singular and you is plural. But now we've sort of blended everything together into you and your, and we've lost thee and thou.

And it is helpful to distinguish singulars and plurals because Jerusalem as the capital city, as the idealization of God's people, is her, is the one, is singular. But she and her children have resisted the will of God, have rejected the plan and purpose of God to gather them under God's wings. And therefore we have Matthew chapter 24 coming up.

So this is helpful in understanding why God is patient, why the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah to give opportunity for human will to express itself, to make its decision. God's will is then going to function based on that choice. God is absolutely sovereign.

No one tells God what to do. No one manipulates God. And it's tragic that there is so little understanding of that point.

So as a result in verse 38, Jesus says, look, your house is left to you desolate. He says, look, your house is left to you desolate. Some have thought that this is the temple because he's about to talk about the temple a few verses hence in chapter 24.

But whose house is the temple? It's the house of the Lord. That's God's house. So what house is this? The house is, remember, Paul is gonna talk about just as Moses was faithful in all his house, his dispensation, his time, the structure of God's plan and purpose in the days of Moses under the law.

Jesus is faithful in his house, the program, if you will. And the program for Israel to be the residents of God's glory, to be a light to the Gentiles, to be the place of God's presence is all desolate. That house is left desolate.

What Jesus is saying here is the age of Israel is going to come to a close. Their opportunity to be the expression, the witness of God's plan and purpose is desolate. There is a wonderful metaphor here because Jerusalem is pictured as a mother who has children.

And when the Lord calls to gather those children to himself, Jerusalem says, no, I don't want them gathered to you. I'm not coming and my children are not coming. And in the effort to preserve the Jerusalem house, the household, the house is gonna be empty.

The children are gonna be gone anyway. Those who have built their own religious structure, their own religious power and presence and mutual admiration society, what Judaism had become in Jesus' day where they were trying to gather the people and keep them sort of in their house, that whole thing is gonna be desolated. You notice there is no Judaistic power structure.

They're not, they've never been like the Catholic church where there's a hierarchical structure and you can actually bring people into submission and tell kings what to do and so on. That house has been left desolate. The word here is Eremos, E-R-E-M-O-S, which is the word translated wilderness or desert.

You're back in the wilderness. Your house has been left to you a wilderness. God brought you through the wilderness into the land of promise under Joshua, the conquest, the settlement, the allotment to the tribes in the time of David, conquering Jebus and making it Yerushalem.

Your house is the wilderness, Eremos. Translated over and over again, desert, wilderness. You're back out, you're back in the 40 years where everybody dropped.

That's your fate, tragic. Why? For I tell you that you will not see me again until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. This is a fascinating statement.

We looked at this concept in the tragic entry, but think about this. You will not see me again until you say. Just as a side note, the word until there is Heos, H-E-O-S, and you will remember my oft repeated reminder that when you get to the Acts 1-8, you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth is how it's translated in your Bible.

But until is not until. It's this very same, it's not unto, it's until. It's translated unto, unto the uttermost parts, but it's this word, it's Heos.

Heos is an adverb of time, just as it is here, and it means until. You will be witnesses to me until the end of the earth. And the witness of the apostles continues forward as it is this very day.

We wouldn't have the gospel of Matthew if we didn't have the apostle Matthew faithfully writing down this witness, which we study. You, 11, and add Paul in, will be witnesses unto me. The 11 he's talking to in Acts 1 will be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria until the end of the earth.

And the witness to the Jews, the witness to Israel continues. And you will not see me again. Jesus came incarnate, came in person, and they could see Him.

They will not see Him again until they say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. What happens when Jews for Jesus, or Jews come to Christ and become Messianic, guess what happens? When they say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, they see Him just as we see Him. It's not entirely a future promise fulfilled at the millennial kingdom, although that is true as well, but it's manifold in its meaning because Jesus says, you will not see me again until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Now, pay attention, coming in the name of the Lord is a phrase that is about to be repeated in Matthew chapter 24. Many will come in my name, saying, I am He. Jesus just speaks so beautifully, and His words are so interesting to look at, so profound in their meaning and the depth with which they speak.

You will not see me until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, and they figure out who it is that said that, that said it truly. Many are gonna come and say, they're gonna come in the name of the Lord. Jesus said, many will come in my name and say, but you will not see me until you recognize me for who I am and fulfill that, which of course is from, is again, a quote from the Psalms.

I think it's in your cross references there. I believe it's Psalm 117, but blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Well, that brings us now to Matthew chapter 24.

And as we begin this wonderful chapter, Jesus left the temple and was walking away. His disciples came up to Him to point out its buildings. And why they did this is a mystery to me.

They'd been to Jerusalem many times and been to the temple many times, but as Jesus leaves the temple and is walking away, His disciples come up to Him to point out its buildings. Maybe there had been some fresh construction since the last time they had come to Jerusalem, but for whatever reason, someone remarks and says, wow, look at

this, look at this new gilding, look at this new enhancement, this new furnishment. Herod had been working on this thing.

The temple itself had been under construction for 50 years by this time. And, but evidently there was some new enhancement. And so they say, hey, look at this.

Jesus says, do you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another. Every one will be thrown down. This is shocking.

We look at things that we think are so permanent, that we think are so immovable, so predictable. They're always gonna be here, but it can happen more quickly than one could imagine. So how should we live? What are the genuinely solid, immovable objects in our universe? It's the rock upon which we build our house.

If you don't want your house left to you desolate, don't build it on sand. Don't think that everything is gonna go on as it has in the past. And well, it's just a momentary trouble.

I can count on the economy. I can count on the government. I can count on society.

I can count on my technology. I can count on the gadgets and the accouterments and the facilities that I have. A better way to think and a better way to live is to look to the rock.

Count on the rock. Be confident that God knows who belongs to him. Jesus knows his sheep and the sheep know the voice of the shepherd.

And that's where we look for our security. Remember our memory verse? You can say it with me. Cursed is the man who trusts in man, who makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.

What's he like? He shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see good when it comes. Cursed is the man who puts his trust in man, who makes flesh his arm, his strength. Shrub in the desert.

Man, I don't like that picture. I lived in the desert. I was born in the desert.

And I don't like the shrub in the desert idea. I want to be the tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season. His leaf doesn't wither.

And whatever he does has a long-term benefit, prosperity, investment in eternity. That's what we want. So, while Jesus was saying this, sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately.

What's interesting is, if you look at the parallel in Mark, this isn't all 12 disciples. It's four of them. And before we turn to Mark, let me ask you if you can guess who these four might have been.

Who do you think these, there's only four disciples that ask us this question. Tell us when these things will happen. What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age? I'm taking nominations.

Who do you think these disciples are? Okay, I've heard James and John, Peter, Andrew, Judas. Anybody for Judas? No? No? Here is the context in Mark chapter 13, verse four. While Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew ask.

So, our interest in the signs of the times, in the alignment of things in the end, this is what the advanced class asks. I've often thought I would do a whole special just on Thaddeus, Bartholomew, James the Less, or one of the, how can you be a disciple of the Lord Jesus? You've got the greatest Bible teacher in human history at hand. You can ask him anything.

Where are these guys? Where are the other eight? I could understand maybe Judas is off doing some nefarious thing, but where's the other eight disciples? I don't want to be those eight disciples. I want to be with this group. I want to be asking questions and getting answers.

The reason we have Matthew chapter 24 and Matthew chapter 25 is because Peter and Andrew and James and John came and asked the question. If you want answers from God, ask the question. We have the privilege.

I started talking about, you know, Philip and Bartholomew and these other guys. Why don't I ask myself the question? Why am I not going to the Lord? Why am I not asking questions and exercising my privilege? Because the Lord is at hand. I have the privilege of entering directly into the throne of God and making my requests known.

I can request wisdom. I can request understanding. I can request practical wisdom.

I have responsibilities. Lord, what is the best way for me to fulfill those responsibilities, to be a good steward of the time and the resources that you've given me? How can I be in, I don't just want to be on the narrow road. I want to be in the middle of the narrow road.

I want to be aimed direct. I don't want to bump into the sides of the narrow gate. I want to sail right through the middle of it.

Give me wisdom. Give me understanding. Help me to remember and apply what I already know.

And if the answers to my questions are to be found in what you've already told me, may the Holy Spirit awaken that knowledge in my heart, bring it to my mind, help me to see it, hit me in the head with a two by four if I'm getting distracted, if I'm getting deflected, if I'm being subjective. Ask the question. If you want a theme, a title, or a summary of

our second session, it is this.

Ask the question. And you can put whatever emphasis and adjectives on that you want. Ask the question.

This is how you get answers. Lord, teach us to pray. We wouldn't have the Lord's prayer if the disciples didn't ask how to pray.

Lord, increase our faith. And does Jesus ever clam up and not answer these questions? He's leaning forward, waiting for somebody to ask these questions. Peter and Andrew.

See, Andrew's there. Andrew wasn't up on the Mount of Transfiguration, was he? It's just Peter, James, and John. But Andrew's like, hey, I'm, I think Andrew is a specimen of growth.

He gets left out of, you know, the Talitha Kumi girl in the upper room. He gets left out. He's down with the disciples who can't cast out the demons in the father's little boy.

But he gets in on this discussion. He comes in there and he's asking this question along with Peter and James and John. And I say, go, Andrew.

I wanna be Andrew. I wanna be getting more interested and learning more things. So, on the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple, looking at these buildings that Jesus just said, these are soon gonna be knocked down.

There won't be one stone on another. Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately. This is just the advanced class.

It's a private communication from Jesus to these who are asking, when will these things happen? What will be the sign that they are about to be fulfilled? Jesus began by telling them, see to it that no one deceives you. Don't be fooled. The first response, if we ask God a question and then we're looking for the answer, analyze whatever candidates come to your mind as a potential answer.

Do we look for two doves to fly over and this is a sign from God that I should do a thing? Don't be fooled. When you start looking for when these things will happen, what will be the sign they are about to be fulfilled, Jesus says, there's gonna be a lot of people that get fooled. You don't be fooled.

Do not be one of them. So back in our passage in Matthew, what will be the sign of your coming? What will be the recognizable symptoms of the end of the age? And in Matthew 24, four, which is our passage, you had the very same thing. See to it that no one deceives you for many will come in my name saying, I am the Christ.

And you have the emphatic pronoun in there. I myself am the Christ. And you notice they've got single quotes in your New King James there and in many other versions,

people claiming to be the Christ.

Here's my suggestion. If Jesus is talking to the four disciples who know him best, and he says, don't let anyone fool you when they say I am the Christ, how easy would it be to fool Peter, Andrew, James or John saying you're the Christ when nobody knows Christ better than they do? They've been traveling with him for over three years. Why would Jesus warn them and say, don't let anyone fool you telling you that they are the Christ? They know he's the Christ.

Peter, the great confession, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. These deceivers are going to come and affirm that Jesus is the Christ. Take those little single quotes off of there.

These people are gonna come and say, I myself am the Christ. They're gonna affirm me. And in doing so, they will deceive many.

Don't be deceived by those who are gonna come and claim to be in the camp. I believe in the same Jesus you believe in. I affirm the Christ of your experience.

These guys are gonna come and deceive a lot of people. You should not be deceived by those who acknowledge that I am the Christ and then go on to lie in my name. That's the danger.

Fairly simple to spot a false Christ. Somebody that says, I'm Jesus, really? I don't think anyone can be easily fooled or I am the second coming. I'm gonna bring the blessings of God.

Anybody that knows two thimblefuls about the kingdom of God, the plan and purpose of God, the justice and righteousness of God, the word of God, isn't gonna be fooled by some pretender to be Christ. How do believers get fooled? Why does Jesus warn the four most advanced disciples in the group, be careful that you're not deceived by men who are coming and affirming me as the Christ and are gonna fool a lot of people with lies. That takes much more discernment.

That takes much more care. And this is the situation we are in today in spades. Many, many within Christian circles, in the position of being Christian pastors and teachers and thought leaders and influencers and bloggers and so on, affirm the Jesus in the Bible and say the Jesus of the gospels is Christ and they go on to lie and deceive and lead people astray away from the truth of the word of God, a right understanding that keeps us on that narrow path headed through that straight gate.

And many are deceived because the initial presentation is an affirmation of Jesus. Oh yes, I believe in the Jesus you believe in. I say he's the Christ just like you do.

And with that foot in the door, they go on to lead people directly into grievous error,

false faith, false way of life, bad priorities, horrible goals, and misplaced values, corrupted values, the values of social justice, the values of humanism, the values that are a part of the satanic counter-revolution in this world. That's where believers get led because it is just like when Satan masquerades, when he dresses up as an angel of light, okay, you're an angel of light. You're not the prince of darkness.

You're an angel of light. So I'll listen to what you have to say. The initial presentation is a deception and it fools people into listening to what follows.

That's what Jesus is warning against. Why wouldn't Peter say, but Lord, how could anyone fool us? We know you, we see you. Because it isn't somebody claiming to be Christ.

It is someone claiming that Jesus is Christ and going on to deceive. It is prevalent. It is widespread.

It is pandemic in the world today. And this is what we need to be watchful for. Watch and pray.

Jesus is gonna tell these same disciples in the garden, watch and pray that you do not enter into temptation, that you're not fooled, that you're not led astray. Watch and pray. So what's our theme? What's the title for this lesson? Ask the question.

God is searching the earth, looking for those of us who will look to him. It is the will of God that we be gathered under his protective wings. It is up to us to not will otherwise, to not choose otherwise.

And many times people make bad decisions because they are deceived and they are fooled. We have the light of the word of God. We have the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. There is no reason for us to be fooled. We are so well equipped.

We are so well provided for. And the truth of the word of God shines out and shows us the path. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119, 105. Psalm 119, 11. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

I like that. I can remember him, 105 has got that big searchlight right in the middle, 105. It's like a flashlight.

It's a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path. It's like that thing the doctor used to strap to his forehead. And then 119, 11.

11 is a parallel. That's the two sides of the road. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not stray off the narrow path.

Hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. This is the blessing we have. It's the wonderful provision of God.

Let's ask him for peace, ask him for power, ask him for wisdom, ask him to enter us into the sources of that strength, which are the presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of the truth of God's word. We cannot be defeated. We cannot be deceived.

We cannot be led astray as long as we are looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and look where he is now, seated at the right hand of the Father. And we can be raised up with him. We can serve, we can reflect his glory now and in the ages to come.

What a privilege, what an opportunity. Well, we're gonna pick up here and get into the meat of Matthew chapter 24, the Lord Jesus describing the wars and rumors of wars, the famines and earthquakes and pestilences. It sounds depressing, it's gonna be great.

We're gonna have a wonderful time looking at it. And we'll resume this study next Sunday, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you that we are called by your name.

We are your children. Our house has not been left to us desolate because the founder and builder of the city has secured it to us with promises. We are safely held in your hands and in the hands of the Lord Jesus.

And with our house built on the rock, if God be for us, who can be against us? And it is such an opportunity to live in this time to have our faith exercised. We pray that as we reflect on these truths, as we look at the world around us, that you will answer our fervent prayer, that we be wise, that we exercise love toward one another as we love you, and that we shine as lights in the midst of our generation so that those who are seeking and those who are looking for hope will see it in us, ask about it, and come to relationship and faith in you. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.