

Matthew 23-01-08b

We resume here in Matthew chapter 26. All of you will be scandalized because of me this night. And Jesus has taught the disciples over and over again about this possibility and has been endeavoring to prepare them, but they have reached the point of test and they really aren't ready at this point.

And it's interesting to consider, Paul tells us that no temptation befalls us, but such as is common to man and with every test, there is a way to pass it. We have the provision, we have the resources to pass the tests that come our way. And it's interesting to consider that they could have passed this test, but they won't.

And I think there is a reason that we will see very soon. I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. This is the next phrase here.

It comes from Zechariah chapter 13, verse seven, to which please turn. This is in the context, awake, O sword against my shepherd. This is Ezekiel 13, seven, awake, O sword against my shepherd.

Of all possible things that might attack the shepherd, this is the sword, the arresting party is going to come armed with swords. Swords are going to be an issue even among the disciples, as we will see. Awake, O sword against my shepherd, against the man who is my companion.

The man who is my companion says the Lord of hosts. Who is the man who is the companion of the Lord of hosts? If the Lord of hosts is God, the father, what man is his companion? This prophetically is speaking of the Lord Jesus, who is the good shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

Anytime you have a quote in the New Testament of the Old Testament, you realize that there is more there than what is quoted. If we continue reading, what do we find? I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. Notice, first of all, here it says strike the shepherd in verse seven, but when Jesus quotes it, he translates this his own way.

I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered, says the Lord of hosts. The Lord of hosts is speaking, I will strike the shepherd. Who is ultimately responsible for the arrest, trial, conviction and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus on this day? I will strike.

This is a part of God's plan. As difficult as it is, as painful as it is, as bitter a cup as it is for the Lord Jesus to drink, it is at the behest and according to the will and plan and purpose of God the Father. And Jesus is clear on this.

He is quoting the Lord of hosts from Zechariah chapter 13. And he says, quoting God, I will strike the shepherd. Doesn't say man will strike him.

Enemies will strike him. Betrayers will strike him. I will strike.

And as a result of the shepherd being stricken, the sheep are going to scatter. In Zechariah, it goes on to say, then I will turn my hand against the little ones. And it shall come to pass in all the land, says the Lord, that two thirds in it shall be cut off and die.

One third shall be left in it. Now pay attention to verse nine, Zechariah 13, nine. I will bring the third through the fire.

I will refine them as silver is refined and test them as gold is tested. They will call on my name and I will answer them. I will say, this is my people.

And each one will say, the Lord is my God. The sheep are going to be scattered and they're going to continue to be tried. They are going to continue to be tested.

I will turn my hand against these little ones, says the Lord. And in all the land, two thirds will be cut off and die. There is a one third remnant that is refined through the fire like silver and like gold.

They as a result, having survived this time of refining and testing are going to call on the name of the Lord. Now, what do you think about this? I will strike the shepherd. The sheep will be scattered.

Two thirds of them in Zechariah will be cut off and have no further contribution. They'll be cut off and die. One third is going to be tested, refined like silver and like gold.

And they're going to end up calling on the name of the Lord and saying, the Lord is my God. What do you think about this? Let me put my question another way. How many disciples are there? Jesus says that they're scattering on this night is fulfillment of Zechariah.

How many disciples are there? There's 12. What is one third of 12? It's four, right? 12 divided by three is four. So could you imagine, and this is not the primary point of what Jesus says here, but he alludes to Zechariah and on the heels of that saying, everybody that ever heard this read in synagogue knows that after the sheep are scattered, only one third of them are going to come back and be faithful and be rewarded.

Two thirds of them are not going to survive the refining process. So 12 disciples. How many of the disciples do you hear about doing anything in the book of Acts? Let's name them.

Who do you hear about by name? Now that there are some allusions to the 12 doing this, that, and the other, how many disciples are noted by name as doing something for the name and sake of the Lord in Acts? Peter, day of Pentecost, Peter is all over the place. He's in prison getting sprung out. He's all over the first 10 or 12 chapters of Acts, right?

John, Peter and John are at the temple.

Remember, silver and gold have I none, but what I have, I'll give you. The man is healed. James is mentioned by name only in chapter 12, I think it is, as being martyred under Herod, but he's mentioned.

He must have been prominent enough that Herod went after him and slew him. We don't have any record of James saying or doing anything other than being killed, but he is named. Okay, there's three.

Is there a fourth? Now I'm not talking about the apostle Paul. Philip, Philip's got a chapter and a half. Remember Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip and the, you know, Simon, the sorcerer and the rest of that member, Philip.

So out of the 12, one third of them are active and prominent. All the rest of them, the only reason we think they did anything is there are ancient church traditions that say that Andrew and Bartholomew and, you know, James the less than the other Simon went around and did things. But there's no real proof or record.

And there are no allusions to them in the book of Acts or afterward. Paul even alludes to Peter, but only a third seem to amount to something, do more than just show up. You've seen what happens in Congress when somebody doesn't vote yes or no.

They just say present. When you have allusions in the early chapters of Acts to the 12, appointing elders to take care of the feeding the widows and so on. There's a chapter and a half on an elder who's not even an apostle named Stephen.

Stephen speaks up. Stephen becomes so prominent that he is martyred for his faith and his boldness. The other eight disciples don't show up in that light, not to do them an injustice.

They might have done something, but scripturally speaking, you only have the four mentioned in the book of Acts. And I think there is a descending amount. You have Peter first and foremost in the book of Acts.

You have John second unto him. You have Philip as third, and then you have James. And the others are never spoken of by name again.

And you would think in the early days of the church when it really mattered, when these men that Jesus had equipped and sent forth and given practice and going out and preaching and healing would have some ministry. He's not in the book of Acts. Now, I'm not saying that they did nothing.

I'm just saying that scripturally speaking in terms of what did they do? And you could perhaps say, well, Matthew as a gospel might count. That's an interesting point. He

might be in there instead of James.

It's hard to know, but somewhere in the vicinity of one third of the disciples is all you see being active after the resurrection and ascension. And the other eight disciples, you hear virtually nothing about. So it's just interesting on that score.

Preparation ahead of time. All of you will be made to stumble. The sheep will be scattered.

But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee. If they will latch onto these words and not forget them. After I am raised, I will go before you into Galilee.

When they see and hear of the arrest and the trial and the crucifixion and Jesus is in the tomb, what would it be good to think on? What are the last things Jesus said to us? Drink this cup, all of you. This is the covenant in my blood. I will be raised the third day.

When I am raised, I will go before you into Galilee. We should be making plans to go to Galilee because Jesus said he would see us there. This doesn't happen.

Why? Seed on stony soil. Jesus says this, says it multiple times. Peter answered and said, even if all are scandalized, all are caused to stumble, tripped up because of you, I will never be made to stumble.

When I was a little child, one of the first things I learned when I was old enough to talk is if my mom or my dad said something, I was not allowed to come back and say the opposite. One of the first three-syllable words I learned was contradict. Don't contradict me.

I'm the parent, you're the child. When I say it, it's so. Don't contradict your mother.

Don't contradict your father. Peter, for the second time, is directly contradicting the Lord Jesus. When was the last time this happened? Do you remember not that long ago in chapter 16? Who do men say that I am? Who do you say that I am? Peter says, you're the Christ, the son of the living God in 1616.

Verse 21, from that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised the third day. From that time, Jesus began and continued to talk about this over and over and over. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, Far be it from you, Lord, this shall not happen to you.

He turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan, you are a scandalizo to me. This, you are a scandalion. This is the noun form of our verb.

You are a stumbling block to me. You are a snare. You are a progress stopper.

You are a diversion and a puller off of the path to me. Get behind me. What did Jesus say about things that cause offense? That cause to stumble? Pluck it out, cut it off, cast it away? When Peter says this and directly contradicts Jesus about the very events that are taking place on this night of our study, You are a scandalion to me.

For you are not mindful of the things of God. You are mindful of the things of men. Mindfulness.

The seed has got to get past the rocks into the soil. Plow those rocks up, pick them up, and get them out of the field in which the seed is being sown. Jeremiah 23, 29.

Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces. Pulverize those rocks with the word so that the seed can get into the good soil and sink deep roots. You are not mindful of the things of God, the words of God, the plans and purposes of God.

You're not thinking about those. You're thinking in earthly human terms. You're thinking circumstantially.

You're thinking subjectively. Eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances. You are not looking to the greater, higher, and eternal purposes of God.

That's why you are an offense. You're a stumbling block. Matthew 16, 23.

Has Peter learned from that experience? He is doing the very same thing on this last night of the Lord's pre-crucifixion life. All the rest of these guys may scandalize because of you. I will never be made to scandalize.

Jesus said to him, Assuredly. When Jesus says assuredly in the old King James, remember this is verily, truly. In Aramaic, which Jesus was no doubt speaking, this would be amen.

Often doubled, amen, amen. It is a sign of authority. You can go all the way back to chapter five of Matthew to see Jesus start to employ this formula of authority.

I tell you the truth. I am the truth. And I tell you the truth.

That's what assuredly means. On my own authority as the walking living truth, I tell you, this night before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times. Peter does not stop.

And with all of his getting, get understanding, he goes into denial. You talk about Peter denying Jesus. He's denying the Lord three times, talking with the maiden by the fire.

This is the first time he denies the Lord. He's denying him right here. He hasn't even gotten to the garden of Gethsemane yet.

He is denying Jesus here. This is a portent of things to come. Peter denies the truth of

what Jesus is saying.

He refuses it. He rejects it. And he ignores it.

This is the crack that is going to cause Peter to come completely apart a few hours from now. This is where he made his mistake, right here, right now. Jesus is telling him something and he's not paying attention.

Isn't this our problem? We get a truth from the word of God. We hear it. Well, that doesn't apply to me.

I'm not in that category. I'm not going to make that mistake. I'm not going to hear the word and straightway forget about it.

I'm not going to fail to understand it and to seek understanding. I'm not going to fail to reflect on it. I'm going to do Psalm 1. I'm going to be the man that doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly.

I don't stand in the way of sinners. I don't sit in the seat of the scornful. But having said that and assured ourselves that we can come to the pie and stick in our thumb and pull out a plum and say, my, what a good boy am I? We don't get to that second part.

The man that does not do those negative things has to also do the positive. His delight is in the law of the Lord. And in that law doth he meditate day and night.

The man that does that will be the tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth his fruit in his season. His leaf doesn't wither. And whatever he does prospers, not just prospers for himself, but prospers on behalf of others, prospers in the plans and purposes of God.

This is the tragic moment for Peter right here. Haven't even gotten to the garden yet. But this is the first of a series of failures.

Peter is, when he should be advancing, he's regressing. He's back to Matthew chapter 16. Far be it from you, Lord.

This shall not happen to you. Now he's saying, far be it from you, Lord. This won't happen to me.

I won't be scandalized. You're wrong. Can you imagine looking into the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ and saying, you're wrong, Lord.

You're wrong about me. And believe it or not, this isn't the first time Jesus has said this. Matthew and Mark place these words on the road to the Mount of Olives.

They went out of the upper room. They are walking through the dark. And Jesus uses the

word stumble because it's so easy to do in the darkness.

You see this in Proverbs. We just saw it in Proverbs chapter four about the wicked. They know not at what they stumble.

Turn over to Luke chapter 22. Matthew and Mark record for us these words on the road to the Mount of Olives. Luke and John give us another part of the story.

Jesus sat down with the 12 in 22, 14 of Luke. You have the upper room meal. This is my body.

This is the new covenant in my blood. Verse 21, this is 22, 21 of Luke. Behold, the hand of my betrayer is with me on the table.

And truly the son of man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing. The name Judas doesn't spring to anyone's mind.

He blends perfectly with the rest of the disciples. This is one of the reasons I'm convinced that he is a believer. And this is a good lesson for us because it tells us how far we can fall.

You can become fallen from grace. You can be an enemy of the cross as Paul tells the Galatians. Look at verse 24.

Now there was also a dispute among them. This is the night of the bread and the cup. This is the upper room that we have just spent so many weeks studying in Matthew 26.

What does Luke tell us that Matthew does not? There was also a dispute among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest. This is the Lord Jesus telling them, I'm about to be trade into the hands of men. I'm about to be crucified.

Which of us is the greatest? How would you classify this kind of thinking and talking? Subjectivity perhaps, eyes on others, eyes on self, eyes on circumstances. Well, you know, the kingdom's coming pretty soon. That John and James, their mother already appealed to the Lord to get them on chairs right next to the Lord Jesus.

Which of us is the greatest? Well, let's go back to when Jesus sent us out two by two. Who did the better miracles? Who did the more powerful? How many demons did you cast out? Well, how many lepers did you heal? Well, who's been doing all the hard work here as we travel and who's done crowd management and who's done logistical support and who's interacted with the most people and has kept order and done the most for the Lord Jesus. Which one of us is the greatest? On this night, can you believe it? You can believe it because we are all made out of the same clay.

We are all capable of this kind of short-sightedness, myopia, blindness, subjectivity, eyes

on self, relative to others. Where do I fit? Am I as good as, am I better? Is somebody thinking they're better than me? Who should be considered greatest? Jesus said to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. Those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors, not so among you.

On the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger and he who governs as he who serves. Who is greater, he who sits at the table or he who serves? Is not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the one who serves. Who washed feet on this night? Who broke bread and handed out the cup on this night? I am as one who serves.

You are those who have continued with me in my trials and I bestow upon you a kingdom just as my father bestowed one upon me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And the Lord said, now, where are we? When the Lord says, Simon, Simon, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith should not fail and when you have returned, strengthen your brethren. But he said to him, Lord, I'm ready to go with you both to prison and to death.

Jesus says, I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know me. Then he says, when I sent you without money, bag, knapsack and sandals, did you lack anything? They said, no. Now he who has a money bag, let him take it.

Likewise, a knapsack. He who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in me.

He was numbered with the transgressors for the things concerning me have an end. They have a purpose and they have a culmination. So they said, Lord, look, here are two swords.

And he said to them, it is enough. Then verse 39, coming out, he went to the Mount of Olives as he was accustomed and his disciples also followed him. So this conversation in verses 31 through 34 is still in the upper room, right? Jesus tells Peter while still in the room, indeed, Satan has asked for you.

And you remember we covered this a few years back. Satan has asked for you all, plural. Simon, Satan has asked for you all that he may sift you like wheat.

Satan wants to do to you what he wanted to do to Job, put you to the test, put you all to the test. Jesus says, I have prayed for you that your faith will not perish, will not fail. And when you have returned, strengthen your brethren.

Your faith is gonna take a blow. You're going to have a failure, but you're going to return. And when you do, you're gonna have a unique opportunity to strengthen your brethren.

Imagine this without the sifting and without the failure and without the return. Peter, you're really a great disciple. You're gonna someday be an apostle.

I want you to strengthen your brethren. Jesus says, Satan is going to sift you all. And Peter, I'm praying for you because you're gonna get the worst of this sifting.

It's gonna be a bitter sorrow that you experience, but when you return, you are going to return. And when you do, you are gonna be in a unique position to strengthen your brethren. Peter says, Lord, I'm ready to go with you to prison and to death.

Jesus says, I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you deny me three times. He tells him this in the upper room. Now they have left the upper room in Matthew and Mark and they're on the road to the Mount.

Jesus says, you are all going to stumble. He's rehearsing what he said earlier in the room. Satan has asked for you all to sift you like wheat.

Peter, I've prayed for you. Lord, don't need to pray for me. I'm good to go.

I'll go with you to prison and to death. Jesus tells him a second time on the way to the Mount of Olives. It's one thing to be told once.

If Jesus repeats himself, how can we not spend time thinking and praying over those words? Turn to John chapter 13. If you think this might just be a narrative happenstance. In John 13, the feast of Passover is near.

Verse two, supper being ended, the devil's put it into heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him. Jesus washes the disciples' feet. You have the conversation of a complete bath or washing feet in the first part of chapter 13.

Then in verse 18, verse 17 is really important. If you know these things, blessed are you if you apply them. If you know them, blessing comes not from knowing them, but doing them, applying them.

13, 17 of John. I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen, but that the scripture may be fulfilled.

He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me. I tell you before it comes that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am. I'm telling you ahead of time.

Why does Jesus tell Peter beforehand that he is going to betray him? He's going to deny him rather. Why does he tell him this twice? I tell you beforehand so that when it comes to pass, you will know that I am. Most assuredly, he who receives whomever I send receives me.

He who receives me receives him who sent me. What on earth is he talking about here?

We went through this in the gospel of John. These disciples are going to be tried.

Those who pass the test, those who communicate, we receive their word. We receive the word of the Lord Jesus. If we receive the word of the Lord Jesus, we are receiving every word that proceeds from the mouth of the father.

I am the way, Jesus is going to say in the next chapter to the father. One of you will betray me. They are still in the upper room.

Verse 26, he who I give a piece of bread when I've dipped it. After Judas leaves, they're still in the upper room. Judas is leaving to go get the arresting party and try to come back to this room.

But when he gets back with the arresting party, Jesus and the remaining 11 will be gone. Judas leaves in verse 31. Jesus says, now the son of man is glorified.

God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him immediately. Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer.

You will seek me. And as I said to the Jews, where I am going, you cannot come. So now I give you a new commandment.

As I have loved you, love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, that you love one another. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus said, where I am going, you cannot follow me now.

You shall follow me afterward. What's he talking about? A death at the hands of enemies. Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for your sake.

Where's this conversation taking place? In the upper room. Jesus answered him, will you lay down your life for my sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow until you have denied me three times. Then you have John 14.

Then you have John 15. Then you have John 16. Then you have John 17.

Then in chapter 18, verse one, when Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Judas knew the place. Jesus tells Peter in the upper room that he is going to deny him.

He tells him on the road to the garden, you are going to deny me. And Peter doesn't believe it. Doesn't prepare for it.

Doesn't strengthen himself. Why does Jesus tell him ahead of time? So that when it does come to pass, 13, 19 of John, you may believe in me, believe in who I am. And that faith

is going to propel Peter in the future to be perhaps the greatest of the original 12 disciples.

Peter and Paul, not excluding John and Philip, Matthew writing this gospel, but Peter is going to excel. He will be noted for his boldness. Still not without failures.

Paul's going to have to remind him that social pressure is still his Achilles heel. He eats with the Gentiles until some Jews from James show up and then Peter gets religious. Decides he can't eat with the Gentiles anymore.

What do others think of me? Subjectivity. You are one of them. No, I'm not.

I don't know the man. Cock-a-doodle-doo. It's going to happen on this night.

What is the application for us? The best of all possible paths is when we hear the word, it sinks deep into the soil, sinks even deeper roots and springs up 30-fold, 60-fold and 100-fold. If we do not allow it to penetrate, we receive it with joy, but when persecution and hardship comes, it's like shallow rooted plants withering and dying and disappearing in the sun. The sun that causes some plants to grow and flourish and produce ears of grain kills those that are too shallowly planted.

That same sun. You can't get 30-fold, 60-fold and 100-fold grain without sun, but it's beneficial when your roots are deep. It's fatal when your roots are shallow.

Can't survive it. It's too much. Ask, seek, knock.

It is a lack of understanding, Jesus says, that causes that shallow seed to fail. It's a lack of understanding and it results in stumbling. It's a lack of meditation.

It's a lack of reflection. It's a lack of digestion. It's a lack of application that causes the failure.

But God is not finished with Simon Peter, and we're going to see the results when we continue our study next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for how powerfully it illustrates for us our challenges, our opportunities, and the necessity we have to rely on your strength, your power, your word and your spirit to provide that which is lacking in our own souls to give us guidance, to give us motivation, to put divine power behind the opportunities we have to represent the Lord Jesus as his body on this earth until he returns.

We pray that as a result, we can grow in grace and knowledge. Our minds will be renewed and we will understand and accomplish your will to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus and your own glory. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.