

Matthew 23-01-29a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 29th of January, 2023. We're in Matthew chapter 26.

Jesus is in the garden, the arresting party has arrived, and Peter has sliced off the ear of the servant of the high priest named Malchus. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our study, on our time of fellowship, and our understanding, and we'll begin. Father, we are, as always, so grateful for the fellowship that you have designed and included us into.

We're grateful for the spiritual gifts that you've distributed in our midst, the encouragement and the fellowship and the love that is expressed by those who, first and foremost, are related to you through the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for the gift of your Word and the presence of your Spirit, and ask that as we look at this record of the Lord's life and his last days on this earth, that your Spirit will teach us and impress these truths on our hearts in a meaningful way that will enable us to live as we should, live in a way that's pleasing in your sight, that represents the Lord Jesus in his absence, and that prepares us for life and function in the ages that are to come. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Matthew chapter 26, when Peter pulls out the sword and swings it, Jesus says, put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish or die, depending on which text you select by the sword. We covered this last time.

I'm not going to spend any time reviewing it. The sword is a metaphor for human strength. This is how people prevail over one another, both individually and collectively.

In the largest sense, you have the sword used in warfare, country against country. Paul mentions that the government does not bear the sword in vain in terms of capital punishment to restrain and discourage crime and to eliminate incorrigible criminals. It is used by individual criminals, and it is used by those who want to defend themselves against such criminals.

But it is always a symbol and a representation of the use of human strength to accomplish goals. So when Jesus has this discussion about swords, sell your cloak and buy one, it is a prediction that there is going to be a time coming, unlike the time when he sent the disciples out into a largely peaceful kingdom, and before there was active opposition to Jesus and his message. Now there is active opposition, and it is a warning that you're going to need a sword more than you need a cloak, because you will have enemies who will come after you.

This is not an encouragement to fight the Romans if they come to arrest you, or fight the religious authorities if they come to arrest you, and Jesus gives that example here. Put your sword away. Later on he is going to tell Pilate, if my kingdom were partaking of this

world and its current exercise of force, my servants would fight.

But the fact that Jesus told his servants don't fight is significant, and it is significant for us as well. There is a lot of study you can do on to what extent do we resist if government becomes evil and starts coming to take things away and falsely imprison and so on. That is not the direct discussion here, but what we do see is that Jesus offered no resistance and he told his disciples, offer no resistance.

And there is a reason for it, and really the question of, well, should we claim the second amendment and keep our pistols and plenty of ammunition and so on, is answered here in a unique and very practical way. And as with all things that are of prime importance, it is going to be emphasized twice. See if you can spot it here when we read these verses.

Verse 52, Matthew 26, put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He will provide me with more than 12 legions of angels? One calculation puts this number at about 78,000 angels, more than enough to subdue an arresting party of this size and armament. Verse 54, how then could the scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen thus? In that hour, Jesus said to the multitudes, have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to take me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize me.

But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled. So you tell me, what is the answer to the debate question? What is the solution to the issue of when and where and how do we either submit and offer no resistance or take up the sword in self-defense or on offense in the name of Christ and so on? What is the answer? Do you see it here? What is it that Jesus mentions twice? The scriptures.

There has been such a deep emphasis on the content of scripture. We hear people taking a few proof texts, a few selected passages, or even chapters and saying we should live our life in their light when all scripture is God-breathed. All scripture is profitable.

For what? For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. What is the righteous path? Not what is the path of self-preservation in the physical world? What is the path of avoiding detention or imprisonment or worse? Righteousness. What is the righteous path? Well, the answer to that in any given situation is it depends.

It depends. There is a time when Jesus sent his disciples out without a sword. There's another time when he says, him who does not have a sword, let him sell his cloak and buy one.

What does this mean? Does it mean that good, faithful, God-fearing, Holy Spirit

dependent believers need a sword? Or does it mean that the one who is still clutching his money bag and still trying to cope with the world on human terms is going to have to sell his cloak and buy a sword? Because his cloak is not going to be enough to defend him if he's going to depend on earthly power. How do we know what to do in any situation? It is the scriptures. Man shall not live by bread alone.

Jesus states this at the very inception of his ministry when he is in the desert with the devil. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And it is emphasized here.

It's so amazing and impressive to see the Lord Jesus in this hour of intense pressure, conflict, and there is emotion, there is adrenaline. You can see what happens when emotions run high, when adrenaline is pumping. Good people can do bad things.

People that shouldn't do bad things but have authority do bad things. In the grip of trying to subdue someone or in the process of being subdued and not wanting to be subdued, bad things happen. We need objective truth to guide us, to enable us, to sustain us, and to keep us focused on who we are and why we're here.

So Jesus mentions it twice. Verse 54, how then could the scriptures be fulfilled that it must happen thus? It must happen thus. What an interesting thing to say.

Jesus says it needs to happen the way it is happening right now. How do I know this? Because it's been divinely revealed to me by my Father. It has been divinely revealed in the scriptures.

So to be prepared to cope with circumstances of pressure, of conflict, of opposition, of rejection, of injustice, of evil treatment for no good reason. Jesus never committed a sin, never did wrong, and he is being unjustly, falsely, and wickedly accused, arrested. He's going to go to trial, and he already knows and has told his disciples repeatedly he is going to be executed.

He's going to be a victim of capital punishment for no good reason. The rage that one could feel at being treated so unjustly, we get upset when we feel like we've been shorted, or maltreated, or ignored, or whatever. It can set us off in mild things.

Jesus is about to lose his life in a completely unjustified way. What is his response? By the way, what should anyone's response be if law enforcement of some kind decides to take you into custody? Do what Jesus did. No resistance offered.

This is the example. Put your sword away. The scriptures tell us that there will be persecution for the name of Christ.

There will be persecution. There will be opposition. The members of a man's household will become his enemies.

Parents and children will be cleaved apart by the sword. People will turn other people in and falsely accuse them. There is a difference between passivism, which says there is never an occasion to defend yourself, there is never an occasion to bear the sword in battle, and knowing when the occasions are that one should offer no resistance.

There is no record in the scripture, in the New Testament, where Jesus, any disciple, any apostle, any Christ follower offered resistance on the repeated occasions that are recorded, where they were arrested, seized, and imprisoned falsely, beaten without justification, without a cause, and without an excuse. Offered no resistance ever. Paul and Silas in prison.

Peter in prison. There is no example anywhere in scripture of any believer who is getting arrested by the authorities, whether they are religious or civil, offering any resistance whatsoever, and that's significant. Jesus sets the example here.

Put your sword away. He doesn't get into a deep discussion of is there authorization or proper governmental authority behind this arresting party. They have been sent by religious authorities, but they are including some borrowed authority from the Romans, and it's going to continue all night long in that fashion.

Jesus doesn't say, well, I can resist you because you're not legitimately constituted. Like a lamb to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth. This is the idea.

Why? Why does he do this, and how does he know to do it? That the scriptures might be fulfilled, that it must happen thus, verse 54. Verse 56, all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Jesus knows his Bible.

Jesus knows not just the verses, not just the passages, not just the words, but what they mean, what they mean. So what are these scriptures? This, by the way, is a theme in the gospel of Matthew that we have seen over and over again. Let me read you something by William Graham Scroggie, who lived in the 1800s.

He was born in the 1870s, went to Spurgeon's College in the 1890s. He pastored churches in Scotland, in England, and even in America. And during World War II, his health took a turn for the worse.

And so from the 40s to about 1958 or so, he worked on his writing, his theological writing, very erudite, very biblically sound viewpoint. And Scroggie had this to say about the gospel of Matthew. More than any of the other gospels, Matthew's is allied with the Hebrew scriptures in theme and in tone.

Their subjects are its subjects, the Messiah, Israel, the law, the kingdom, the prophecy. Jewish ideas and terms characterize the whole record. Its witness would not have impressed either the Roman, for whom Mark wrote, or the Greek, for whom Luke wrote, but to Jews, its significance would be inescapable.

Matthew's gospel, the gospel before us, is rooted in the Old Testament scriptures. So for this reason, in Matthew, I'm going to give you a list of scriptures. I'll read them quickly.

You don't need to turn to them. But the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy that Jesus refers to here is replete in this gospel, as we have seen in Matthew 1, verse 22. All this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.

This is the birth narrative, Matthew 1. 2.15, when Joseph and Mary go down to Egypt with the infant child, and were there till the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, out of Egypt I have called my son. 2.23, came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene. 3.3, this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

4.14, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet. 5.17, do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets, I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 8.17, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, he himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.

12.17, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet. 13.14, in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, hearing you will hear, and not understand, seeing you will see, and not perceive. 13.35, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.

21.4, all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, saying, 26.24, the son of man indeed goes, just as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed. Our passage, 26.54. Our passage, 26.56. We'll see it in the next chapter, 27.9. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, they took 30 pieces of silver, the value of him who was priced. We went through that with our Zacharias study about the potter's field and the 30 pieces, and what an interesting reference that is.

27.35, then they crucified him and divided his garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, they divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. 27.60, laid his body in a new tomb, which had been hewed out of the rock, rolled a large stone against the tomb and departed. He made his grave.

You remember that prophecy over and over again. Scripture is replete with these. You have parallels in Mark and in Luke.

In John chapter 12, verse 14, talking about the triumphal entry, Jesus, when he found a young donkey, sat on it as it is written, behold your King, riding on the foal of a donkey. John 12.16, his disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was

glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him and that they had done these things to him. John 12.38, that the word of Isaiah, the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? John 15.25, this happened that the word might be fulfilled, which was in their law.

They hated me without a cause. John 17.12, while I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name. Those whom you gave to me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, except the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

John 18.9, that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke, of those whom you gave me, I have lost none. John 18.32, that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke, signifying by what death he would die. John 19.24, that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, they divided my garments, cast lots for my clothes.

John 19.28, after this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. John 19.36, these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, not one of his bones shall be broken. Acts 3.18, those things which God foretold by the mouth of all of his prophets, that the Christ would suffer, he has thus fulfilled.

This is Peter's great speech on the day of Pentecost, if you remember. Acts 13.29, now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning him, took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb, rehearsing the crucifixion. Acts 13.29, when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning him, they took him down and laid him in the tomb.

Acts 13.33, God has fulfilled this for us, their children, in that he has raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, you are my son, today I have begotten you. The entire career of the Lord Jesus, birth, ministry, death, resurrection, all foretold in the scriptures. Jesus knew these scriptures inside out, this is what gave him stability and strength and understanding of what to do and what not to do.

There are even more, these are the more prominent of those scriptures, there are many more I could give you, but the extent to which Jesus anticipated the course of his career in the incarnation based on his understanding of Old Testament scripture cannot be overstated. Jesus knew what he knew almost entirely from his knowledge of scriptures, and because of that he was able to fulfill all righteousness. He tells John this at the baptism, suffer it to be so now, it is necessary for you to baptize me to fulfill all righteousness, to fulfill what is spoken by the prophets.

So what can we see in the gospel of Matthew in this regard? References to Jesus as the son of David, Matthew 1.1, this is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. You can't get one verse into our gospel here without the Old Testament roots being manifest. Matthew 1.20, after Joseph considered this, an angel of

the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph, son of David.

All of these are son of David references in Matthew. 1.1, 1.20, 9.1, I'm sorry, 9.27, let's change that one to a 27. As the news about Jesus spread throughout the region, Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him crying out, have mercy on us, son of David.

Matthew 12.23, the crowds were astounded when the blind and mute were brought to him and he healed them so that he could speak and see. The crowds were astounded and said, could this be the son of David? Matthew 15.22, Jesus withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman from that region came to him crying out, Lord, son of David, have mercy on me. Matthew 20.30, leaving Jericho, two blind men sitting beside the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, Lord, son of David, have mercy on us.

You can put this with this Matthew 21.9, 21.15, 22.42, and 22.45. Every time Matthew references son of David, you've got your Old Testament roots, your Old Testament prophecies in view. We've seen these references to the fulfillment of prophecy already. References to Jewish customs in chapter 15, verse one and two, and we'll see it again in chapter 27, verse 62.

Again, Jewish customs, 15, one and two, and 27.62. References to the law of Moses, Matthew 5, 17 through 19. Matthew 5, 17 through 19. We won't look at all of these, but we'll look at a few.

Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. Truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke, one jot, one tittle will not pass from the law until all is accomplished.

Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' emphasis on the scripture, on the word of God.

Verse 21 of Matthew 5, you've heard the ancients were told you shall not commit murder. Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court. And you remember you have heard it said, but I say in Matthew chapter five, all of these refer back to old Testament scripture and the proper understanding of them, not distorting them, not twisting them, not repurposing them, not over literalizing them and failing to see the principle behind them.

So you have that in 521, in 527, in 531, in 533, in 538, and in 543. If you're writing these down, I'll give them to you one more time. References to the law of Moses in Matthew chapter five, verses 17 through 19.

And in that same chapter, 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, and 43, all in one chapter. And this is what people like to think of as Jesus manifesto for the kingdom. The kingdom is rooted in old Testament scripture.

Chapter seven, verse 12, Matthew 7, 12, in everything then due to others, as you would have them do to you. This is the essence of the law and the prophets. The essence of the law and the prophets.

We've recently seen a similar reference to that. Matthew chapter 11, verse 13, all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, up to and including John the Baptist, the law and the prophets, this from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself. Matthew chapter 12, verse 5, have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and yet are innocent? They perform duties that require work that for others would be a violation of the Sabbath, and yet they are not guilty.

They are innocent. Have you not read in the law? Matthew chapter 15, verse 6, you say that if anyone says to his father or mother, whatever you would have received for me is a gift devoted to God, and he need not honor his father or mother with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

Matthew chapter 22, we have several verses in Matthew 22, beginning at verse 36. Teacher, which commandment is the greatest in the law? You remember how this went. We've seen it very recently.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul. You continue in verse 40 of that same chapter. All the law and prophets hang on these two commandments.

Love the Lord your God, love your neighbor as yourself, the law and the prophets. Matthew chapter 23, verse 23, Matthew 23, 23. Woe to you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, you pay tithes of mint, dill, and cumin, but you have disregarded the weightier matters of the law.

What are the substantial matters of the law? Justice, mercy, and faithfulness. Justice, mercy, and faithfulness. These are the weighty lessons, the substance, the teaching, which should have been absorbed and practiced from the law.

References to the Sabbath in Matthew. We won't read these if you just want to list them out. Matthew 12, one and two.

In fact, there's about half a dozen references in Matthew chapter 12. I'll read these to you quickly. Beginning in verses one and two, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath.

Disciples are hungry, begin to pick the heads of grain and eat them. The Pharisees see it and say, your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath. Verse five, Jesus says,

haven't you read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and yet are innocent? You get a double reference to both the scriptures and the Sabbath there.

We listed that under our previous category. In verse eight, the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. Verse 10, a man with a withered hand was at the synagogue.

In order to accuse Jesus, they ask him, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Verse 11, he replied, if one of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep? Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. This requires knowing what good is and when the letter of the law is transcended by the spirit of the law. It requires discernment.

So our Sabbath references now include chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, verse 5, verse 8, verse 10, verse 11, and verse 12. You find this again in chapter 24, verse 20. Pray that your flight, remember 24 is the prophecy of tribulational persecution, pray that your flight is not in the winter or on the Sabbath.

Then there will be great tribulations such as has not been seen since the beginning of the world until this time nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, they will be shortened.

References to the Sabbath. And finally, we're going to see it again in chapter 28 and verse 1. 28, verse 1, after the Sabbath on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb. That the scriptures might be fulfilled, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled as it is written, the Son of Man goes.

How important is it for the nation of Israel to understand its scriptures, the law, the prophets, and the writings to identify the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God when he comes? How important was it for Jesus himself to know when to do, how to do, and what to do in terms of the will of God, except through the scriptures? Jesus learns the scriptures, knows the scriptures, practices the scriptures, praise the scriptures. Read the high priestly prayer in John 16 and 17. Jesus knows the word of God.

He is the incarnate word of God. And there has been a great de-emphasis on believers knowing and living the word of God, understanding it beyond the literal, beyond the proof text, beyond the Christmas card verse, or the refrigerator magnet verse, or the coffee cup verse, knowing scripture, knowing its context, knowing its import, knowing its message, knowing its emphasis. Justice, righteousness, the weightier matters of the law.

This is our guide. This is our strength. This is what keeps us on the narrow road headed through the straight gate, which we just looked at this past Wednesday.

Well, that the scriptures might be fulfilled. This is the hour of greatest pressure and trial that Jesus and his disciples have faced in the entire earthly ministry, and what does Jesus

say on that occasion, in that moment, twice? Do you not realize that the scriptures must be fulfilled? We're operating in harmony with, in alignment with, under the guidance of and in the power of God's word here. It tells us what to do and what not to do.

Put your sword away. Do you not understand the fulfillment of scripture here? So important. Do not neglect the scriptures.

This is why we have three pastoral epistles telling Timothy in two letters and Titus in one, preach the word. This is the sustenance for our souls. This is what energizes us, guides us, enables us to live a supernatural life in supernatural power with supernatural wisdom.

More to say about this when we come back from the break.