

The purposes of the Father

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 14 July 2019

Preacher: Aaron Reeves

[0 : 00] You is verse 25, as it contains two statements that make reference to things preceding this section.

! Number one, you'll see it says, when you look at the screen, it says, at that time. And second thing is, you have hidden these things.

So with this in mind, let's just spend a little bit of time building up the context to these verses. I want us to have a very clear picture of how these things relate, what these things relate to.

So we're going to be looking at the entirety of this chapter, since we're coming to the end of it, and refreshing our minds as to what's been happening. And we'll be looking at Luke 10.

So if you have a finger spare, wedge it in there, and hold it there for a little while, and we'll come to that. So going back to the beginning of Matthew 11, we see that Jesus is preaching and teaching in the towns of Galilee.

[1 : 11] And at this point, he's standing before a presumably very large crowd. Jesus has been performing many miracles around Galilee.

If you were to glance back at chapter 9, you'd see quite a substantial list of amazing and miraculous things that Jesus has been doing.

He healed the paralyzed, healed the sick, he raised the dead, drove out demons, and he allowed the blind to see, the mute to talk.

Jesus is doing these amazing things. It's no wonder that he's drawing crowds. As we come to this chapter, we start to hear about John, who, being in prison at the time, had encountered a period of doubt as to whether or not Jesus was actually the Messiah that he'd been waiting for.

As Chris described a couple of weeks ago, he had a momentary wobble. So John sent his disciples to Jesus to get confirmation that Jesus was who he said he was. Jesus' response to this, as he spoke to John's disciples, was to remind them.

[2 : 22] He reminded them of the miracles that he had been performing. This was confirmation to John and his disciples that Jesus is the Messiah, as prophesied by Isaiah 700 years previously.

Don't have to turn to it, but... It's on the screen. In Isaiah 35, it says... Say to those with fearful hearts, Be strong, do not fear.

Your God will come. He will come with vengeance, with divine retribution. He will come to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. So John would have recognised these verses that Jesus spoke of, when he spoke about his miracles.

It's indirectly. So John's disciples leave, and Jesus then begins to address the crowd. And he starts by talking to the crowd about John.

[3 : 35] John, in verses 11 to 14, Jesus outlines John as the last in the line of prophets who would point towards the coming of Jesus. John being the prophet that had stood and announced him.

Jesus had high praise for John. He referred to him as the greatest arisen that was born of woman. Jesus then goes on to draw a line in the discourse.

And he moves on to talk about the next generation. That is, the people that come after John. And where does Jesus' opinion of this next generation lie?

Jerome was saying last week that Jesus likens the generation to discontented children, overly critical, nothing is good enough for them.

As verses 18 to 19. Jesus then goes on to the penultimate section of the chapter to proclaim woe on unrepentant towns and to speak of judgment because they did not repent.

[4 : 53] Jesus points once again to his miracles as he did with John's disciples. It's a big signpost to these kingdom things. And he says, these things are so important.

Even the most notoriously corrupt people of history would have been moved to response. And yet, something of this next generation is totally unresponsive.

So that's a bit of background to this chapter. There's still another thing that we need to look at.

There's Luke 10. We won't read all of this section, but you'll see that something happens in this chapter that's not accounted for as such in the book of Matthew.

So Jesus appoints 72 people, or 70 people in some versions, to go out and to share the things of the kingdom of God. He gives them authority to heal the sick and to overcome the power of the enemy.

So let's look at the instruction given to these 72 people.

[6 : 05] This is verses 8 to 11 of Luke 10. So if we add these people, to the people Jesus references in Matthew 11, we see that Jesus is building a picture of the next generation people.

This picture is showing them to be polarised. That is, there are people that turn in repentance and there are people that do not turn in repentance.

And again, people have a choice to respond to the things of God's kingdom. Which at this point are clearly seen in Jesus as he hands the authority to the 72 people.

Miraculous healings again being a big signpost to the kingdom things. And this brings us in Luke 10 to Jesus proclaiming woe on the towns that do not repent as we see in Matthew.

That's on verse 12 of Luke 10. If you look down to verse 21 in Luke 10, we see another familiar verse. At that time, Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned and revealed them to little children.

[7 : 54] Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. This is the beginning of the text we're looking at tonight, isn't it? So we have this whole section which, for whatever reason, Matthew didn't account for in his gospel, but it is very relevant to our text.

And that is the background and context to the verses that we're going to read and study. So let's hop back over to Matthew and we'll pick it up from there. So we're going to look at the structure of the verses just very, very quickly.

Matthew 25 to 30. The three main sections to this text, So we have Jesus prays for God's purposes. We have the identity of Jesus.

And thirdly, we have yoke doesn't refer to eggs. Now that's intentional because I can't count how many times someone's explained to me what a yoke is and I always forget.

So I put this here from this point on I should remember. So we start Jesus prays for God's purposes.

[9 : 24] So we've read through verses 25 and 26 a couple of times. Now, what's happening? Jesus is praying as a response. Depending on your Bible, your text might say Jesus said, Jesus declared, Jesus answered.

Now all of these words in the English translation have an immediacy about them. Like the response is directly related to the things that happened right before. Because that's usually how these things work in English.

This is true of the Greek word that's used which I've forgotten to write down here. But in the Greek text it has a bit of a deeper meaning. It can also mean to conclude oneself after a situation.

So I don't think Jesus is simply only responding to the 72 people that returned to him in Luke 10 or to his own comments on the unrepentant towns in the chapter but to the circumstances of this next generation as a whole.

I remind you that we saw Jesus as polarising to people. And then that in mind let's notice how in these two verses Jesus speaks of two groups of people.

[10 : 44] He starts also referring to these things you'll see in the text. These things from the wise and the learned and revealed them to little children.

Amen. The things being exactly what the context told us.

The things connected to the kingdom of God. These are as we read in Luke 10 things that are implicitly linked with Jesus. He performed miracles. He gave authority to perform miracles to his disciples and have power over evil.

As Jesus refers to these things in prayer he attributes them to being God's sovereign purpose in verse 26 of Matthew. Yes Father for this is what you were pleased to do.

But this comes with something that's a little difficult to understand. As Jesus describes these two groups of people he says that God has hidden these things from the wise and the learned and yet revealed them to little children.

[11:54] So how are we to take that? Does God discriminate against the academic and keep things from them? I would say most certainly not.

I think the key is right there in the text that actually the Greek word that is used for hidden in this text can also mean concealed covered.

God is not intentionally hiding things from people hoping they will never find it. That's a human thing. truth be told in this very building I have a pot of quite nice coffee which is hidden and I can tell you that when I hid it I didn't want anybody to find it.

That's not an invitation to a treasure hunt by the way. What God is saying here is that there is a criteria to meet and if you want these kingdom things to be revealed you must make the effort and meet the criteria.

Can anybody complete the title of this popular children's game? Hide and seize. Exactly. So these kingdom things come from God and God says that we must become like children to find them.

[13:21] But let's not get our children confused which I imagine happens with twins. Jesus used a children analogy to talk about this next generation didn't he?

We heard from Jerome. They were the bratty children. They were the children who don't listen and complain. What we need to be is like the little children.

As Jerome said last week we need to be humble. We need to be ready to learn. We need to be ready to accept authority. We need to be ready and trusting.

If we were to flick forward to Matthew 18 we see this text verses 1 to 5. at that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

He called a little child to him and placed the child among them and he said truly I tell you unless you change and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

[14:32] Therefore whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. So we start to see God's grace to reveal the things of his kingdom and it's really only hindered by our response.

Jesus said in Matthew 19 let the little children come to me and do not hinder them for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. verse 26 of our chapter tonight shows that this is what God is pleased to do.

He's pleased to reveal the kingdom things to people. But there is that criteria. And that is what is so beautiful about God's grace. Thankfully we don't need a doctorate to gain access to the kingdom. Everybody has the capacity to become like little children don't they? And there's a warning here I think about knowledge and I think maybe a more than subtle nod to the Pharisees who were the teachers of the day and the academics of society at that time.

They knew the law inside out and yet they got it completely backwards. They hated Jesus and plotted to kill him. Jesus said in John 7 has not Moses given you the law yet not one of you keeps the law.

[16:09] Why are you trying to kill me? You can have all kinds of good kingdom facts and all kinds of knowledge in your head but if that knowledge doesn't match up doesn't tally up with what's in your heart you're in a lot of trouble.

1 Corinthians 8 says this about knowledge it says we know that we all possess knowledge but knowledge puffs up while love builds up those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know but whoever loves God is known by God.

So this is Jesus praising God's sovereign purpose to reveal these kingdom things to people who turn to him and God is pleased to do this for us but we need to be like little children humble and ready to learn.

That brings us to my next point the identity of Jesus. So it brings us to verse 27 in the second section of the text.

Jesus lays it on the line doesn't he he says all things have been committed to me by my father no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him.

[17 : 34] Another way to say this might be Jesus has been given all authority and we see this we've seen this in his miracles and his identity is the son of God in his fullness is really only seen by God.

Jesus then claims himself as the way to the father including the authority to reveal the kingdom to whom he chooses we'll just look at a couple of verses that support what Jesus is saying here John 11 after he said this he went on to tell them our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep but I am going there to wake him up his disciples replied Lord if he sleeps he will get better Jesus had been speaking of his death but the disciples thought he meant natural sleep and that is exactly what Jesus did wasn't he went and he woke Lazarus from the dead in Matthew 3 God spoke directly from heaven and there were probably people in the crowd that Jesus was speaking to that heard this Matthew 3 as soon as Jesus was baptized he went up out of the water at that moment heaven was open and he saw the spirit of

God descending like a dove and alighting on him and a voice from heaven said this is my son whom I love with him I am well pleased and if those things weren't enough to establish Jesus sovereignty and his authority Jesus himself rose from the dead Mark 16 later Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating he spoke firmly to them because they had no faith they would not believe those who had seen him after he rose from the dead he said to them go into all the world preach the good news to everyone anyone who believes!

and is baptized will be saved but anyone who does not believe will now we really see the identity of Jesus he is the son of God there's no no disputing it and as the son of God he carries with him that authority so those are the first two main sections of the text Jesus praises God in prayer for God's purposes and he reveals things to people who he chooses and he exclaims his sonship with the father and tells us of his authority so who do you go to if you want to know to things of the kingdom of

God you won't get any hide in the creator of heaven and earth you go to Jesus the only one that can give you access and this leads us to our final part of the text yoke doesn't refer to eggs so we're looking at Matthew 11 and depending on your experience with either a bible or farm animals you might be asking what is a yoke here's a picture of a yoke yoke so yoke is a big piece of wood that's used to link animals together why to share a load or a burden in our last verses in this chapter

[21 : 49] Jesus calls out come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden light so who is Jesus inviting in this text exactly everybody the text says all you who are weary and burdened everybody needs spiritual rest don't they everybody none of us here anywhere are immune to the burdens that a harsh and unforgiven world has to offer Romans 3 says for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by

Christ Jesus! ending ending that Jesus is talking about is a different kind of rest.

It's a spiritual rest. We saw the picture of the yoke. Jesus says, come and be yoked together with me. You will receive a spiritual rest that is unlike anything you can experience in the world.

He goes on to say, learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. Jesus is gentle and humble, isn't he? Point you towards Philippians 2.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Which for me is the perfect outline of how we should be if we are yoked together with the Messiah.

[24 : 24] We have to learn from him. That's an ongoing process of being humble ourselves and continually changing to be like him.

This is why it's so important to be growing. That's a joyful thing. Because his work is light. It says it right there in the text.

You won't find any of the heavy burdens that come with doing the work of the world or a corrupted law.

However, doing the opposite of what God commands will always lead to a heavy load. Look at the bitterness and the rage of the Pharisees as an example.

They would not stop until they had Jesus' blood, until they took his life. Imagine living with that inside you.

[25 : 29] That rage, that bitterness, that anger. Of course, they couldn't take Jesus' life. Jesus laid it down and he took it back up again. Now we come to the conclusions.

I usually only have one conclusion. But there are things here I felt really need to be said. Recognizing the Lord.

This is my first conclusion. What did Jesus use to identify himself to John's disciples at the beginning of the chapter? He pointed to his miracles, didn't he?

As prophesied by Isaiah 700 years earlier. He knew that John would be reassured by that. Jesus' speaking was always calculated.

It's always purposeful. Nothing's ever random. When Jesus spoke to the crowd about John, what did he tell them? Tell them John was a prophet.

[26 : 41] As prophesied by Malachi 400 years earlier. When Jesus was proclaiming woes on the next generation, for them being ignorant and unrepentant, what did he point to?

He pointed to his miracles again. Emphasizing that even the most corrupt should be able to recognize what those miracles mean.

Jesus then projects forward in time in his talk of judgment and I ask you, who could know the outcome of a judgment before the judgment happens?

It can only be the judge. We have 72 disciples returning to Jesus in Luke 10 and say, even the demons submit to us in your name.

Something becomes very clear in this text. Jesus, not only in verse 27, but throughout the chapter is saying, recognize who I am.

[27 : 49] Jesus lays it out in verses 25 and 27 when he talks about his relationship with the Father. So when Jesus says, come to me, there could be this tendency when you take that verse on its own and you think of all the nice things and you think, oh, I can go for rest.

No. You are approaching God himself. There is no messing around in this process. This is serious business. And this was God's sovereign purpose.

Long before any of us were on the earth. The Lord God planned for us a sovereign saviour to bring us to his kingdom forever. Conclusion two.

If you're not a Christian. Christian. So how would you view all this if you're not a Christian? I'd say to you, examine very, very carefully what these words say.

Maybe you're walking around day to day burdened by the things of the world with no spiritual rest. God's God's solution.

[29 : 07] The solution according to this text is clear. You go to the Messiah because only the Messiah can fix that. Maybe you feel like you're okay and feel burdened by life at all.

To which I'd say if they're not already there and you're ignoring them, burdens will come. And when they do, who are you going to turn to that could possibly compare with the creator of heaven and earth?

Nobody. Nobody. Not so. Do it now while you still can. Because as we read earlier, there is a time of judgment coming.

Conclusion three, if you're a Christian. which I think is most of us here tonight. I would say to you, examine carefully what these words say.

Maybe you're walking around day by day burdened by the things of the world with no spiritual rest. You see how the same thing can apply. This isn't something you do once and then forget about it for a week or two.

[30 : 26] that's the picture of a weak Christian. That's the picture of someone that's leaving themselves open to all kinds of attacks, being distracted by the world.

That could be anything, can't it? It could be pubs, women, men, music, art, family, socialising, even work can distract you.

None of those things on their own are inherently bad or evil. people, but if they're getting more of your attention than Jesus is, something is very, very wrong and it will show.

That's the time to stop daydreaming. I'm speaking from my own experience by the way, I'm not standing here and saying that I'm above this and you should do this.

No, this is my personal experience. Every day is a potential for disaster if you're not protected properly.

[31 : 33] Do we really want to live every day like Indiana Jones? I didn't intend that to sound exciting, now it's verbalised.

Yeah, no, it's okay on film, but in reality it's exhausting and dangerous. You're dodging disaster every day, day in, day out.

You could lose your hat. We need to always, always be in the word, always examining ourselves and our behaviour and I thought of three points which can help us do this.

Oops, what's going on there? Okay, three points aren't there?

Ah, yes, well done. My slides are a little mixed up, it's okay. Be prepared to admit when you are wrong. all of these things are really difficult, aren't they?

[32 : 38] I find that the most difficult. Be prepared to make the sacrifice when it's needed. Be prepared to tell someone when you think they're on dangerous ground.

I think all of these things, these three points can really help us as a church. Before anyone says anything, I know I spend too much time in the pub, I'm working on it.

No telling me that afterwards. Let me ask you, when you look at the last three verses of this chapter, what word grabs your attention?

the last three verses of the chapter.

I think after everything we've heard, I think there's one thing we cannot escape from.

[33 : 44] not eggs. It would be a strange world if we couldn't escape from eggs. The yoke.

We all need to ask ourselves, don't we, are we walking yoked with Jesus? Or are you wandering, coming back occasionally and then putting it on?

Jesus commands, take my yoke upon you and learn from me. Like I said earlier, it's not something you do occasionally, it's an ongoing process. Life will throw stuff at us.

Sickness, loss, worry, panic, illness. Don't even get me started on families. I'm joking.

We're all human, aren't we? We all mishandle things and get things wrong frequently. There should be nothing more important to us than learning from Jesus.

[34 : 46] That's how we deal with these things. Because his promises are absolutely rock solid.

There will be rest for anybody burdened for those who take up his yoke.

So think of what happens when you put that down. Let's sing. 894.