

Eight Woes

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Date: 29 February 2024

[0 : 00] So tonight we're going through one chapter of the Bible, Matthew 23, and some call this chapter! The Eight Woes. Now if you don't have a King James Bible, it's seven woes, but there's eight woes! In the Word of God, there's eight woes in Matthew 23, and we see the Lord's addressing the scribes and Pharisees, and he's warning against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the scribes. He's talking to the crowds here, and he's getting really, it's a very strong rebuke. It's quite a harsh word, a hard word, because he's exposing their hypocrisy and calling them to genuine repentance. So looking at this theme of hypocrisy, and what does it look like? How can we avoid it? And what can we learn about this subject? The word hypocrite, it means stage actor. It's a play actor, really a religious pretender. And of course, rather than that, we want to be the authentic, don't we? To be real. Amen.

And I'm sure that's our heart, all of us here, and our church and our church family. And we think about this truth about hypocrisy versus authenticity. And who are you, really? And there's timeless truths here, there's lots of application that we can think, yeah, that's something I need to avoid. That's something I want to be more like Christ rather than like the Pharisees. And so we know people say about our churches, oh, they're legalistic, they're Pharisees. That's commonplace for people to say such things about our kind of churches. And we want to dismiss that and dispel that and not be like that. Of course, we're not, as God helps us not to be. And likewise, our sister churches in Adelaide. So we're talking here about eight woes. And there's timeless truths. It's good for us to take stock and evaluate what it's all about. It's a message for believers today, because we can relate to it. When our Lord addresses a crowd, even 2,000 years ago, we can find ourselves in that number. We can make application just as they did. And we can examine our own hearts and actions and to try God helping us not to fall into that same trap of hypocrisy. So I'm putting it really in more of a positive slant as to what's generally what are good things and how they miss the boat on those things. So the first point is authority. Matthew 23. We'll just read that first three verses. It says,

Then spake Jesus to the multitude and to his disciples, saying, So the Pharisees had authority. They had authority in that they were interpreting the law of Moses. They sat in Moses' seat. So they had authority. And we could say, in some ways, they had pretty right doctrine. They were pretty right as far as the letter of the law. But they failed to practice what they preached. So they had the right authority. We could say, in modern terms, they went to the right Bible school. They've got the right Bible.

[3 : 13] They're in the right fellowship. They had the authority right. And they were called separators. So they had separation right of sorts. The point I'm making is they had authority. But the problem with the Pharisees, they used their authority wrongly.

And they were speaking truth, but all the while they were living contrary. So really, it's like the familiar saying, isn't it? They didn't practice what they preached. So they had the authority. Really, the Word of God. They had the law of Moses. They had the authority. But the application was wrong. And really, we can think of that for ourselves. If we're going to talk the talk, we've got to walk the walk, don't we? It's got to walk in our shoe leather.

And so it reads on verse 4, And we talked about yokes this morning.

And sort of these burdens, this burdensome thing. The Pharisees burdened people. They loaded them up with all of these religious rules and imposed regulations. And we know, like the Pharisees, they had a whole list, didn't they?

[4 : 18] Someone reckoned it was some hundred things. They put all these things. They're extra biblical, really. What the Pharisees had, we know. They had all these big, long lists. And if people didn't tick all the boxes, then that was a problem.

And so they put all these things on people, but they wouldn't lift a finger to help them. And really, they were impossible burdens. Impossible burdens. Almost really, I suppose, a works-based kind of thinking, that it was all about that, wasn't it?

Their authority was right, but their application was wrong. And so they missed compassion and mercy. We read on verse 5, They made them big and showy.

And they enlarged the borders of their garments like another religious sign. And they loved the uppermost rooms at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues and greetings in the markets and to be called of men.

Rabbi, Rabbi. So the Pharisees, our Lord rebukes them because they were practicing their faith just for public recognition. They were seeking honor for themselves. And so we think of this word, honor.

[5 : 37] Who should we really be honoring? It's a question, isn't it? These men, and I can be guilty of it, seeking honor for myself, to be seen of men.

Verse 5, it's interesting where it says to be seen of men in verse 5. Apparently the Greek verb is *theathenai*, which has a connection to the English word theater.

So it's like they're putting on a show. They're putting on this performance. They're like being theatrical. And everything that they were doing was to be seen of others, for others to see. Basically they were show-offs.

And we can be like that as believers. It can be a fault in us, I think, that we might want to show off what we do and make some show of what we are doing.

And that's wrong, isn't it? And so this is with the Pharisees here. They loved the power, the pride, the praise, the prominence. But yet the Lord Jesus, he says, I'm meek and lowly.

[6 : 36] Now rather than honoring the men per se, we want to honor the Lord, don't we? That's the right honor. And so they didn't really have that right.

But the Pharisees wanted the place of honor for themselves at the banquets and the feasts and at the best seats in the synagogue. So the Pharisee had a special seat and they had kind of reservation.

It's like they were kind of big noting themselves. And it says that they love to be greeted in public places with people crying out, Rabbi. And apparently the word Rabbi literally means my great one. So it's kind of magnifying the person as someone great. And they like that. They want it to be called great. And of course, who is the one that we should want to call great? It's not any preacher. It's the Lord, isn't it? We should honor the Lord, honor him. And our Lord warns us, don't be like them. We're called rather to humility and sincerity in worship. So we see the next thought I had was of this theme of humility.

[7 : 40] And verse 8, it reads on, But be not you called Rabbi? For one is your master, even Christ. And all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth.

For one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters. For one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.

And he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. So we see of the Pharisees, you know, God commenced humility, but they had pride.

They were prideful. And we know it's a theme of scripture, isn't it? Humility is something we're exhorted to over and over again. That we should be humble.

We should humble ourselves with humble service rather than seeking honor and recognition. And this should be our heart. There's things, and I know this applies to some of the ministries in our church, some of the ministers in our church.

[8 : 39] So whether it's the youth ministry, the children's ministry. We don't know the half of what they do. We don't know the half of what they give. Of the application of their time.

Of the application of their energy, their love. Of their devotion to their ministry. Because they're not prideful about it. And they're not blowing their trumpet saying the money they've spent.

Or the things that they've put hours into. And that's what we should have, isn't it? That should be our heart. Humility. That's a good thing. I commend that to you. And of course we see with the Pharisees, they were kind of like, and you see it a lot these days.

I know you see people taking titles for themselves. And it's especially in the, obviously in the false church side of things, people like to call themselves prophet or apostle.

That's ridiculous, isn't it? I mean, we know, of course, the church was built on the apostles and prophets, their foundation. And that was then. It's not, they're not needed now. And some even, they comically even call the pastor's wife first lady.

[9 : 47] I'm sure she'd love to be called that. But I'm just, it's kind of a, it's a ridiculous thing, isn't it? Where some inflate the man, they call him a reverend. I mean, really, it's not a biblical title to call a preacher reverend.

A reverend is his name, it says, of our Lord, doesn't it? Some might mistakenly call themselves that. Or they call themselves senior pastor, as if they're somehow above everyone else.

And, you know, they could be called doctor. Maybe they've earned a doctorate. But it's kind of, it becomes a showy thing, doesn't it? Where we brag on about titles. And there's nothing wrong with pastor to identify our function or ministry.

But it's not a rank. It's not a rank, is it? We're the chief servants. We're the chief servants. And it seems wrong when it's all about, as if such a thing is like a rank above others.

It's not that. Not at all. If anything, we're here. And so, but with the Pharisees, we see it's all about this preeminence and privilege. And so, and they were quite self-serving.

[10 : 54] So these are all things, oh, I don't want to be like them. All right. I'm sure we all have that heart. And so, as the title of this message goes, our Lord then delivers eight woes. Eight woes.

As I say, the King James has eight woes. I think that's the right number. Not seven. And there's a preacher called Robertson who called these words, the rolling thunder of Christ's wrath.

The rolling thunder of Christ's wrath. Or wrath, depending on what your accent is. And so, a woe is this expression of righteous anger. So, our Lord's words are very harsh. Now, it's interesting.

Our Lord's words were harsh to them, but to the common people, he was full of gentle love, wasn't he? So, he saved his harsh words for these folk.

And seven times he calls them hypocrites. Five times he calls them blind. And he calls them fools, serpents, and sons of hell. So, we're going to look at these eight woes together, just quickly.

[11 : 51] And I'm going to counter what the woe is with what actually the truth is that we should commend. So, the first one, verse 13, it says, So, the Pharisees, they're actually shutting the door of heaven to people.

They're saying you can't go in. Their delivery of the salvation message was such that they're actually hindering others from getting saved. Of course, we know salvation is very clear and simple through faith by grace.

But we could see, perhaps for these ones, they were getting salvation wrong. That's really fundamental, isn't it? To get salvation wrong. So, they did not enter the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor did they let others go in.

So, it's real false teaching here. They're corrupting, really, the message of salvation, how to get to heaven. And really, we know, as they did reject the saviour himself, so effectively, they were refusing to enter the kingdom of heaven.

They refused Christ. And they were hindering others from believing in Christ. So, it's a real serious matter, that one, isn't it? And now, the second woe is concerning prayer.

[13 : 13] Verse 14. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer. Therefore, you shall receive the greater damnation.

So, the second woe is about their prayer. They were corrupting prayer. And they had this oppression as well.

So, we see, they were condemned here for a pretense, making long prayer. So, and in the context, it's saying there that you devour widows' houses.

So, these Pharisees, really, they were crooks. They were crooked. I like to think, really, as a modern correlation, we could think of them as being, not the preachers who shepherd the sheep, but the preachers who fleece the sheep.

You know, we think of the health, wealth, prosperity gospel, that they're devouring widows' houses. You know, send me a hundred bucks, and I'll give you a little vial of oil from the Holy Land, and I'll say a prayer for you.

[14 : 19] That's what they mail out, don't they? They're devouring people. For all this falsehood that they do, the health, wealth, prosperity preachers, they're sharks and thieves.

And so, of the Pharisees, really, they're stealing from the vulnerable. They were using up people. They're treating people as disposable commodities. That's what they were doing, devouring these

widows' houses.

You know, we don't want to be like that. We should be rather loving the widows and caring for the widows, as James talks about, isn't it? Pure religion. But the Pharisees, they were enriching themselves from the estates of the widows and showing some kind of a show of devoutness. They were showing devotion while stealing from the vulnerable. And it says of their long prayers. They were making long prayers. Someone said, apparently, the prayers that they would pray would sometimes be three hours long and three times a day.

So they had a lot of devotion, right? They had devotion, but the wrong application of it, all right? And really, it's fake spirituality, isn't it? Making all these long prayers just for people to see them pray, and yet, at the same time, hurting the vulnerable that they should have shown love to, all right?

[15:40] So the devotion was wrong, the application of it. We see another aspect is zeal. Verse 15, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte.

When he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. So the Pharisees here, we could say this is a good character quality, zeal.

They would compass sea and land to make one proselyte. They would drive kilometers, well, walk or ride a camel or a donkey, hundreds of kilometers to make one proselyte and make them twofold more the child of hell than themselves.

So they had zeal. So again, brothers and sisters, we're exhorted to zeal, aren't we? The zeal of God is a good thing. We should have zeal. According to knowledge, we should have zeal. That's true. And faithful zeal, the zeal of his house, the zeal for God.

But for the Pharisees, the zeal was wrong. The zeal was misdirected zeal. We could think of that as we see the people knocking on our door, well-dressed men and women and presenting themselves so politely, but preaching a false gospel at our door.

[16:56] Misdirected zeal. That's what the Pharisees had. It was misdirected zeal. They had plenty of zeal, but it was misdirected zeal. And they, as the Pharisees, they preached God, but they converted people to dead religion, making them twofold a child of hell than themselves.

So we've got to watch that, don't we, brothers, sisters, that we're not falling into that, that our zeal be right. It's the right application of zeal. A zeal for God, a zeal for his word, a zeal for the truth of the gospel, not a zeal for some dead religion or religion of works, really, but rather a religion of faith, of true righteousness.

So we see number three, that zeal was wrong. Another one is, we could say, is their integrity was wrong. We see that really from verses 16 through 22.

It's talking about how they were blind guides. So they were swearing by the temple. They were making these vows. And they were kind of misapplying all of this.

They were really kind of corrupting this idea of truth. And there was kind of a selective obedience. And the Pharisees, they were fancying themselves as guides of the blind, but they themselves were blind.

[18:16] And we could practice that maybe if one of the youngsters here, we were to put a blindfold on you and someone leads you. But what if the one leading you was blindfolded as well?

That's the picture, isn't it? Really, isn't it? And that's what is true with these. They were blind guides of the blind. They themselves were blind, so how could they guide anyone else? And their spiritual blindness was such that they were ignorant of so many things.

Even the very identity of the Messiah, of the way of salvation. They were blind to the true meaning of Scripture about their own sin. And I won't labour the various verses here, but the oath that they used, the oaths that they vowed, were really just showing their misguided priorities.

And they were being meticulous about the minor details, but neglecting the weightier things as we come to next. So we'll just take it up from woe number five. Woe number five, the weightier matters. So we see that verse 23, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you pay tithe of mint and anise in common, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.

[19:23] These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. So here we see, really, the weightier matters are what matter, aren't they?

The weightier matters are what matter. And for these Pharisees, really, instead of practising love, and of having these weightier matters, which it declares as the law, judgment, mercy, faith, they missed that.

They didn't have that. They majored on the minors, and minored on the majors. And I've heard it said, as far as preaching the gospel, as far as we are ambassadors of Christ, declaring salvation, make the main thing the main thing.

In other words, our aim should be to be magnifying the Lord, to declaring salvation, clearly and truly, to declare the truth, to manifest the truth, to live the truth, to walk it out.

But here for the Pharisees, really, sadly, it was an outward show. And so they were kind of nitpickers, really, in the sense that they taught the law, but they didn't practise the more important parts of it.

[20 : 32] You know, really, we could put it, judgment, justice, mercy, faith, faithfulness. They missed that, but they were obeying the minutiae of the law. So what they would do, as they would get their spices, they would tithe the spices.

You can imagine what they might have done, as they carefully would count, you can imagine, if they were going to be really strict about it, they would count every single grain, every single grain of their herbs and spices, to make sure they gave the right amount.

But it's not about weighing the herbs, it's about weighing our heart, isn't it? And so they made this big deal about the small things, like tithing spices, while they ignored the crucial matters.

They diligently counted out. You can imagine, it talks about mint there, doesn't it? that they would get their mint to plant, and they would count out one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, oh, the tenth one.

And they would go through this ritual of somehow weighing up everything, to the minutest detail, so that they could be law keepers, to this minute extent, but missing out the whole point, of the weightier matters.

[21 : 47] So they didn't care about justice, they didn't care about mercy, they didn't care about faith, faithfulness. They missed that, but they were just straining these gnats and swallowing camels.

So in other words, they were counting these things of really, these gnats of little importance, but they were tolerating these massive sins of failing to show mercy and righteousness.

So that's the fifth woe. Number six, number six, the next woe, verse 25, woe unto you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites, for you may clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

They are blind Pharisee. Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. So here are the Pharisees where we could say, now the truth here that we're getting skew-whiffed was sanctification.

The cleansing that mattered wasn't the cleansing of the cup and of the plate, but of the inside of them, the inner heart of man.

[23 : 00] They had all this ritual cleanliness, these ceremonial washings, and they majored on that, that false cleansing. But God is interested in who you are on the inside, isn't he?

Who you really are. And so these ones, sadly, they presented this appearance of being clean, but really they were carnal. They presented that they were not sinful, but they were dirty inside.

And inside they had all these hidden, worldly desires and carnality. They were full of greed and self-indulgence. And look, it's possible for me to look good on the outside, but it's a mask.

We can put on a face, can't we? Pretend that we're something that we're not. Or pretend that we feel something that we don't feel. And so this was really the literal meaning of hypocrite.

So in the Greek theatre, the actors, hypocrites would wear masks. So they had this mask, and it might have been a, you know, they would hold it on a, I guess a pole, on a stick, and it would have a smiling face.

[24 : 13] But behind the mask, they might have been scowling. And so it was really masking, it was hiding the true character and emotion of the character.

And so the literal meaning of hypocrite is, quote, one who speaks from under a mask. One who speaks from under a mask. So here they were saying, oh, you know, we've got all the cups and plates are clean, but inside it says, they were full of this foul, dirty stuff in their hearts.

And our Lord says, get the inside right first. That's what counts, not the outside. So we think of the process of sanctification. Of course, we need Christ to sanctify us.

We need his holiness. And seven is a light to it, the seventh woe, righteousness. So verse 27, it reads, So in this time in Israel, so they've got these mausoleums, these tombs, and they're painted sparkling white, whitewashed.

But of course, what's inside of a tomb? Dead man's bones. So here they were, they were like this, like this tomb that looked all bright and shiny, but on the inside, their heart was wrong.

[25 : 36] Their heart wasn't right. And they didn't have the true righteousness. It was all about self-righteousness. We can all make that mistake. Because really, when it really boils down to it, the outside isn't nearly as important as the inside, is it?

It's about the inside, isn't it? God helping us. And we know our Lord searches the hearts. And here were these ones, they thought themselves righteous as they scrupulously kept the law.

But in fact, they weren't righteous at all. It was just a mask. And it hid their hidden feelings of ungodly ways. They were full of wickedness. They were like whitewashed tombs, beautiful on the outside, but full of dead men's bones.

Verse 28, Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto man, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. So again, it's a challenge to us. Am I like them? Am I like the Pharisees?

The Pharisees made this show. It was all a show. Outwardly, they looked great. But their hearts were full of corruption. Think of what's inside a tomb.

[26 : 40] It's a rotting corpse. A smelly, rotting body. And the beautified tomb didn't change what the inside was like.

And so we can be spiritually dead on the inside. God helping us, we won't be like the Pharisees. Amen. So they had an outward purity, an outward show, but their inward righteousness, they neglected that.

The righteousness was neglected. Righteousness is a truth, but they got it wrong. They got it wrong. Here's another woe that they received from our Lord. Woe number eight.

From verse 29, we say, Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

Wherefore, you be witnesses unto yourselves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. So our Lord's saying to them, you know, they're bragging on, well, we wouldn't have killed the, we wouldn't have killed the men of God of yesteryear.

[27 : 46] We would have stood with them. We wouldn't have killed them. But actually they did.

They were, they were the sons of those who murdered the prophets. Verse 32, and it reads on, Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers, ye serpents, ye generation of vipers.

How can you escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes and some of them you shall kill and crucify and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barakias, whom he slew between the temple and the altar.

So we see, really, the Pharisees really were quite hypocritical in kind of saying, oh, we weren't like them who hurt the men and women of God of old, but really they were just like them.

We can think back through church history and see what happened in church history. Often the church was the most persecutor of the believers. Now, the Roman Catholic, the Catholic Inquisition and all the dread, horrific things that were done to the men and women of God.

You read Fox's Book of Martyrs and yet the church for today, the Roman Catholic Church, they haven't really apologized for all of that, have they? They're really just accepting it. They haven't really backtracked.

[29 : 08] They still teach the same falsehood that they would brutalize and martyr the men and women of God of old. So they're just like these Pharisees, I put to you.

So the Lord exposes the Pharisees for their hypocrites. Where is the grace? They honored the prophets of old, but yet they were plotting to persecute and kill the present day prophets.

They boasted about the past. Oh, you know, they had this high regard for the dead prophets of old. But in the meantime, they were persecuting and murdering the prophets of today.

Really, they were cut from the same cloth. And we see that our Lord puts there is from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias. It's like from A to Z, isn't it?

Zacharias was the last, Abel was the first martyr. From Abel to Zacharias, from the first martyr to the last. He says, you're responsible for all the righteous blood that's been shared.

[30 : 06] So it's a real woe, wasn't it? A real condemnation of the Pharisees. And so, we see, of course, the word teaches us to love God, to get the love right.

So here they were, they're saying, oh, we love the, you know, you could name the names, all the people that have died for their faith. We love them.

But if they were alive today, we'd be against them. We'd be persecuting them. We'd be throwing stones at them. We'd be burning them at the stake, telling them to recant. You know, they're saying that they love the old faithfuls, but if it had been in the present, they'd have been doing just the same thing.

They didn't have the love of God. And really, they missed the whole point. And of course, even more so, they rejected God's chosen Messiah himself, standing in front of them. So they got it all wrong.

They didn't love God. They didn't love the brethren. They didn't love the truth. They didn't love salvation, the saviour. And so when we think about it, the Pharisees, they were all caught up in the externals, but the inner man was wrong.

[31 : 11] We see all of these things that we've talked about and we see that our Lord goes on to talk about his approach is compassion. We see that there as it closes there, the last few verses of the chapter, verse 36.

Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.

And ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Here were these Pharisees, proud, filled with wickedness, but this shallow, superficial show that they were putting on.

And really, they were missing the point, really. I mean, we want to be godly people, don't we? I like the names of some churches that kind of capture the spirit that I would like for our church.

[32 : 17] Grace Baptist. Shouldn't we be Grace Baptist? Shouldn't we Liberty Baptist? I think they're good names. They're good truths, aren't we? We're independent Baptists. Let's have a bit of grace.

Let's have a bit of liberty. You know, we see sometimes that's lacking, but our Lord's addressing as he's addressed all the woes, he finishes it with really compassion. He says, Jerusalem, Jerusalem. He laments over Jerusalem. He's weeping here and he's expressing this deep sorrow of their rejection of himself as the Messiah. And he's saying, I want it to be like a hen would gather her chicks.

Now, I know some of you have chooks, chooks, some of you have chooks or have had chooks. And really, he's comparing the people of God to chickens here.

And he's saying, he wants to gather his people as a hen would gather her chicks, but they were unwilling. They were unwilling. In sort of preparing this message, I came across a sermon and the preacher was talking about the spirit of a chicken.

[33 : 22] The spirit, it's kind of quite amusing somewhat, the spirit of a chicken. And some of us who've kept chickens or have chickens could relate to this. And really, you could think and compare, well, some people act like chickens.

What do chickens do? They follow the crowd. You know, one chicken goes off here, the other one follows. They run around aimlessly. They fight over things.

The chickens fight, you know, they squabble, you know, they make all the noises they make as they fight to get that little seed grain and fight with each other. They fight over things. They're easily frightened.

You get a chicken and they're easily frightened, aren't they? Another thing about chickens is they scratch around in the dirt. You know, they just beaver away but might miss more things than that. And they're helpless against enemy attacks. Of course, we that keep chickens, you've got to make sure there's protection from the fox. And so we think about, maybe we've got the spirit of a chicken

running around, following the crowd, a bit aimless, fighting over things, easily frightened, you know, helpless.

[34 : 27] He says, come under my wings. Our Lord says, come under the wings of himself, the Almighty. And we see, the Pharisees got it wrong, Jerusalem got it wrong.

He says, I wanted you to come but you didn't. You would not. Our Lord was willing and he's not willing that any should perish but they were not willing. And we see, as our Lord, even as he delivered these woes, there's a tone of compassion.

Even as he's quite hard and harsh, this is a hard sermon. He still had compassion with it. He said, I wanted to gather you. I want you. I want you, my people.

I want to gather you under my protection. Jerusalem, I want you. But they rejected him. And now the city would face judgment as it did. There's woes, there's judgment but there's love, there's compassion.

And he showed his emotion, didn't he? The sorrow of his heart. Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Jerusalem. You could hear the cry of his heart, the cry of love for the people that he wanted to hear, to receive, but they received him not.

[35 : 32] So what can we learn from all of this? Hopefully you've taken some value out of this, some thoughts. Yeah, there's truths here but they got them wrong. And we see our Lord's heart through it all.

Really it's a plea to authenticity, isn't it? To sincerity. To live it, to be real, to get back to the scriptures. It's reality, isn't it? Being real. And brothers and sisters, we've got the real life to live. There's challenges, there's situations, there's people that don't understand and people that might, might not understand us.

And misunderstandings can cause hurt. We see that our Lord exercised true humility here, didn't he? And in the sense that even after delivering the woes, he said, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I wanted to gather you.

And we see our Lord, he showed true humility. His priority was the weightier matters, mercy, justice, compassion. And it's the same for you and me, you know, as a pastor, as churches, sometimes we can put burdens on people that really our Lord doesn't want us to put on people.

[36 : 47] people. I can be guilty of that. I have been guilty of that. Let's be real. Let's be genuine. You know, there's hurting souls. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Elizabeth, Elizabeth, Adelaide, Adelaide.

God wants to reach this city, these people, the hurting, the lost, the straying sheep. Let's practice what we preach.

You know, I'm always conscious of that, you know, as I go out into the world and they know who I am, what I am and, you know, scrutiny is normal for me. That's what I'm used to.

I'm always being scrutinised as far as, you know, in my day by day working, you know, serving on the local council and they know who I am. They're watching me like a hawk. That's normal and actually that's a good thing.

It's a good thing because I don't want to do the wrong thing. I want to do the right thing and, but it's not about show or outward but it's about the inward and amen. So, may the Lord work on our hearts.

[37 : 48] We can think of the great joy of God that he gives to us as the people of God. Wow. He doesn't say woe to us. He says praise to us, doesn't he? He says well done to us because we got these things right.

Let me just flick through it real quick. That we get the authority right, the word of God. That the authority is not of man's making but the word of God.

That's the authority. We get the authority right. We get the honour right. It's not about honouring a man. Putting him on a pedestal. Bowing down to some man. It's about honouring our Lord. That's what, that's the honour that he is due.

It's not about pride of place, of position, of prominence. It's about humility for all of us. And I like to kind of, it's a bit of a joke I have that our church dress code is be clothed with humility.

That's our church dress code. That's a requirement. That we should have humility. Amen. We should have humility. It's a good thing. We want to get the salvation right. Not works based. Not like the salvation which really made people a twofold child of hell.

[38 : 51] But salvation by grace through faith. Not a salvation of works, of man's making, but by grace through faith. Salvation, get that right. Get the devotion right. So that's what we're praying,

but we're also living it too.

We can pray for the widows and devour their substance or we can pray for the widows and actually help them. So we can pray for this widow or we can actually say, how can we actually help her? How can we actually show our devotion is more than mouthing words in a prayer, but it's actually living it. Actually, I can do something to help. Get the devotion right. So you get the zeal right. Yes, we should be reaching out.

We should be going over land, sea through rain, hail, sleet or shine. We should be going knocking doors, reaching souls for Christ. We want to get the zeal right, not a zeal like the misguided zeal that was making false converts.

We want to get the integrity right such that we're not making a pretense or making vows about this or that, but the heart's wrong. Get the integrity right. Get the weightier matters right such that we're not fussing over the minute details of this or that, but we want to get the judgment right, the justice right, the mercy right.

[39 : 57] We want to get the word of God right, the weightier things. We want to get the sanctification right such that it's not about our outward or putting on a show or looking the part. It's actually how are we really in the inner life, in the prayer closet, in the inner heart of ourselves.

So we've got the sanctification right. It's by his spirit. We get the righteousness right such that he is my righteousness. It's his robes of righteousness. It's Christ in you. It's his righteousness.

We get that right. We get the love right such that we want to care for our city. We want to care for souls. We want to reach out in love.

We want to be that people who get it right in terms of, not like the Pharisees who are actually mistreating the God's people of today.

We want to love God's people of today, love the brethren, love one another, have the love of the truth, the love of sound doctrine. And lastly, to get the compassion of our Saviour in all of this.

[40 : 55] Now we can say some hard things. We can condemn the Pharisees and we can condemn the Phariseeism in ourselves, in myself, the hypocrisy, which we can be inclined to do.

But we're going to have the overarching umbrella is grace. The overarching umbrella is compassion. Amen. Let's close. Lord, we thank you for your great word.

We thank you, Lord, that you do love us so, such that we're like chickens that you wanted to gather under your wings, Lord, to find that protection. And yet Jerusalem refused it, Lord.

They refused your invitation to come. Lord, we pray we might not be such. Lord, we pray we might avoid all of these mistakes, the traps of the Pharisees.

Lord, help us to rather have these good qualities that we could see as the opposite, the virtues that we could aspire to, Lord. Pray for every heart, every home, for our brethren here from South City and their family here.

[41 : 57] Lord, for anyone that's visiting, that's new, that they can take some of this in, take it to heart. Lord, especially if there's any yet to trust you as their Lord and Saviour. Lord, we know there's religion, there's dead religion, yet there's true faith, there's true saving faith, and it's found entirely by your mercy and grace, and it's extended to such as we that can hear it and receive it.

Lord, we pray that we'll hear your word, we'll say, yes, Lord, I see that you died on the cross for my sin. You died for my sin to be forgiven, that I can have forgiveness today for all of my sin, that you paid for it there, that I can be set free and know your salvation, that I can know your grace.

Lord, I pray, we pray, each one that might know that today and walk in that truth, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.