

When Darkness Reigns

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[0:00] It's the moment that we both love and hate in our favorite stories when the good guy is captured and brought into the villain's lair and he is powerless against pure evil.

I think of Frodo stung by the giant spider Shelob in *The Lord of the Rings*. And we think all is lost. Or Wesley trapped in the pit of despair.

I won't try to do the imitation of the actor who portrayed the albino. The pit of despair in the 80s classic *Princess Bride*.

Or more recently, Batman broken by his evil nemesis Bane. And we think he is to never fly again. And without fail, at this point in the movie, the music is in a minor key.

The lighting is dark. The shots are lingering. And we're meant to feel the depth of loss and sorrow as the story turns dark and hopeless.

[1:09] And we hope that soon the good guy will find a way out of his evil plight and turn the tide. But for now, all seems like it is lost. The story we're going to step in today in Matthew 26 is really gloomy.

That's where we're at, Matthew 26. Human evil, human failure, and human despair are thick in the atmosphere of this passage.

And Jesus is proceeding down into the yawning, dark path that God has laid out for him to walk. It is not positive or encouraging.

It is the evil hour when darkness reigns. When evil comes out to play. Today's passage is a series of dark scenes that are tied together with some common threads.

And they're woven together by Matthew, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to show us something about the bad guys, about the good guy, and about the God that is over all of it. And I think it's going to speak something to us.

[2:10] So I'd like to read it in full together. We're going to start in Matthew 26, verse 57. Matthew 26, verse 57. And we'll read through Matthew 27, verse 10.

And as I read, would you just be listening for a few things? Would you listen to how much space Matthew gives to human failure and human evil?

And would you also be listening for a little bright display of Jesus? And would you also be on the lookout for a few little hints and glimpses of how all of this is according to plan?

So let's read together. Starting at chapter 26 of Matthew, verse 57. This is God's word. Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders had gathered.

And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest. And going inside, he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death.

[3:19] But they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last, two came forward and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.

And the high priest stood up and said, Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you? But Jesus remained silent.

And the high priest said to him, I adjure you, I put you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to him, You have said so.

But I tell you, I tell you all. From now on, you all will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest tore his robes and said, He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment? And they answered, He deserves death.

[4:22] And they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, saying, Prophecy to us, you Christ. Who is it that struck you? Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard.

And a servant girl came up to him and said, You also were with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied it before them all, saying, I don't know what you mean. And when he went out to the entrance, Another servant girl saw him and she said to the bystanders, This man was with Jesus of Nazareth. Again, he denied it with an oath. I do not know the man. After a little while, The bystanders came up and said to Peter, Certainly you two are one of them, For your accent betrays you.

Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, I do not know the man. And immediately the rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, Before the rooster crows, You will deny me three times.

And he went out and wept bitterly. When morning came, All the chief priests and the elders of the people Took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

[5:36] And they bound him and led him away And delivered him over to Pilate the governor. But then when Judas, his betrayer, Saw that Jesus was condemned, He changed his mind And brought back the thirty pieces of silver To the chief priests and the elders, Saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

They said, What is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, He departed and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, Taking the pieces of silver, Said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, Since it is blood money.

So they took counsel and bought with them The potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called The field of blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, Saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, The price of him on whom a price had been set By some of the sons of Israel, And they gave them for the potter's field, As the Lord directed me.

This is God's word. What God wants us to see today, In this passage, Is this. Human nature, And our Savior Jesus, Both showed their true colors, On this darkest of all nights.

All to fulfill God's written will. Human nature, And our Savior Jesus, Both showed their true colors, On this darkest of all nights.

[7:09] All to fulfill God's written will. So as we go, What I want to do, Is I want to unpack all three of those parts.

I want us to see, The true colors of human nature, On display in this passage. And Matthew gives the most amount of real estate, To this in his passage, And I'll be giving the most amount of time, Here, To point that out.

However, I want to circle back around, After we go through all three scenes, And point out, The true colors of Jesus. And then at the end, I want to see how it's all, According to God's written will.

And then we'll be applying it as we go. So first, Let's look, At human nature's true colors, In this passage. The first true color of human nature, That we see here, Is the malicious injustice, Aimed at Jesus, By the religious leaders.

The malicious injustice, Aimed at Jesus, By the religious leaders. We've been introduced to Caiaphas, Way back in the beginning of this chapter, In verse three. He's the high priest, The leading religious leader, Of the Jews at the time.

[8:15] He was one of the most respected, And most powerful men, In Jerusalem. And he was surrounded, By respected and powerful men, Chief priests, Scribes, And elders of the people.

They were the elite leaders, That exercised influence, Over Israel at this time. And, They wanted Jesus dead. Why did this group, Of respected, Pious, Religious leaders, Unite around, Such a murderous, Common cause?

Because Jesus threatened, Their authority. He called them out, On their fake righteousness, Of external religion, Their thirst for human approval, And their utter lack, Of true love of God.

And so, They have succeeded in their plot, They started in verse three, They're back in Caiaphas, His house, They've brought Jesus, In captivity, After grabbing him, Under the cover of darkness, And are bringing him in, For a hearing.

It seems like evil is winning, And darkness is winning. And Matthew makes it painfully clear, That this whole trial, Is an embarrassment to justice.

[9:27] According to Jewish tradition, Capital cases couldn't be tried at night, It's night. They normally took place, On the temple grounds, They're in Caiaphas' house. The defendant had the right, To a defense attorney.

None rose to the occasion. He was able to, The defense attorney was able, To cross examine the witnesses, That came against the accused, And this did not happen.

The accused also had the right, To call witnesses to his defense, And none of this seems to be, Brought up for consideration. They must have had, Some kind of amnesia, About these rules, That they had made.

This was a quick, Cut and paste trial. A hoop to jump through. It was just to bring about, The desired conviction, To prop it up with enough, Outward appearance, To seem legit. And what's so ironic, Is that the evidence, That they try to piece together, Which Matthew describes as false, It won't add up. Mark tells us, The accounts of the false witnesses, That came forward, Were kept on contradicting each other.

[10:29] Finally, We see in verse 60, Two men stand up, And they come forward, With something that might stick, Against Jesus. It's an easily misquoted, And twisted version, Of something Jesus had said, A long time before.

But Jesus is silent. In verse 63, Caiaphas is obviously frustrated, By Jesus' lack of response, So he pulls out his big guns, He puts Jesus under oath, Before God.

He demands, That Jesus declare, Whether he's the Messiah, The son of the living God, Or not. Well, Upon hearing Jesus' faithful, Confession of the truth, Caiaphas tears his robes, Proclaims the sentence, That Jesus has blasphemed God, And gets full agreement, From the rest of the group, That Jesus is worthy of death.

It's a very, Impartial trial, Isn't it? An emotional appeal, By the judge, To the jury, To get his verdict, That he wants. It's very impartial. Extremely fair.

But, On top of all that, It's this last part of the scene, That's very disturbing. Then the restrained malice, Behind all of these proceedings, Comes out, And it's unleashed.

[11:43] Some of those who are present, Either temple guards, Or servants, Or the priests, And elders themselves, They descend upon Jesus, With pure hatred. Spitting, Hitting, Mocking.

This was a physical way, To proclaim the opposite, Of what Jesus had just claimed. That he was not the Messiah, Because what kind of Messiah, Would allow himself to be hurt, Spit upon, Shamed, Told that he couldn't prophesy, The future, Because he couldn't identify, The one who hit him.

Even the most despised, Prisoner, In a courtroom today, Would never receive, Such treatment. Such unrestrained, Hate-filled abuse.

When we behold this scene, It's hard not to be disgusted, With the malice, And the injustice. They have passed the verdict, On Jesus in their hearts, Before hearing any witnesses, Or bringing any charges.

This trial was simply needed, To check the boxes, Of external formality, To make their sentence of death, Official. We see, Something to be disgusted at.

[13:01] Hopefully, Hopefully, We, It also provokes in us, A little bit of humility. Our hearts, Are not unable, Of going this low.

How often, Have you treated someone, With anything less, Than the respect, And dignity, That a human being, Deserves, Deserves, Because he's an image bearer, Of God, Simply because, They rubbed you, The wrong way.

I know myself, I can move a person, From innocent, To guilty, To condemned, In a millisecond, On the judgment seat, On the judgment seat, Of my heart, If they do something, To cross me. I'm sure, It's the same with you.

There isn't as much, Difference between us, And these religious leaders, That we want to believe. The same seat of murder, Lies within us. We should read this passage, With humble and sober, Reflection on the evil, That lies in every human heart, Including our own.

Well on that note, Let's look a little more briefly, At our second scene, And see the second true color, Of human nature, Come out. It is this, Our fear laden, Faithlessness.

[14:20] Our fear laden, Faithlessness. And we need, Look no further, Than our good friend Peter. Matthew has already told us, Back up in verse 58, That Peter is present here, At Caiaphas' house.

He's in the courtyard, While the trial is going on inside. He was following Jesus, At a distance, Which is admirable, Given the rest of the disciples, Were nowhere near. But neither is he, Identifying himself with Jesus.

As one scholar put it, He is wavering, Halfway between courage, And cowardice. Now before we dive in, Let's remember, What Matthew told us, Back a few verses before, That what happened, Only hours before, That Jesus and his disciples, Were on the way to Gethsemane, And Peter, Reacted very strongly, Against Jesus' prediction, That they would all abandon him.

Confidently saying, If all others fall away, I will not. I never will. And Jesus turns to him, And he says, You're going to disown me three times, This very night, Peter.

And it's here, Where this tragic scene unfolds, In the high priest's courtyard. There's a fire going on, The servants of the householder, Gather around to keep warm, Against the cold night. He's at the outskirts of this huddle, And hoping to remain anonymous, And yet gain information, About what's going to happen, To his Lord.

[15:43] He's scared, He's confused, And he's anxious. I would be too. And we see that the intensity, Of the accusations, And the intensity of his denials, Increase dramatically, From beginning to end.

Look at verse 69. He tries to skate past, The servant girl's curious question, With a classic line. I don't know what you're talking about. And then he gets himself, Publicly accused by another servant girl, Within the earshot of everyone else.

And he says, I don't know the man. He disowns Jesus blatantly. And he puts himself under an oath, To give some oomph to his denial. To kind of bolster his credibility.

And the last accusation, In verse 73, You got a group of people, Confronting him, Saying, Certainly, You, Are one of them, Your accent betrays you.

If anybody opens their mouth, If anyone's from, Georgia or Alabama, And they open their mouth, In Wisconsin, It's a dead giveaway. We tend to know, Kind of where they're from.

[16:51] And the Judeans, Southern Israelites, Made fun constantly, Of their northern Galilean counterparts, For their accent. And they say, You got a Galilean accent.

This guy's Galilean. You're one of them. Now it's not proof positive, But Peter's on the spot. So he pulls out his ace of spades. Not only an oath, But a curse.

He calls down God's wrath on himself, As proof positive, That he is telling the truth, That he doesn't know Jesus. And apparently it worked for the crowd.

But then the rooster crowed. He remembered Jesus' prediction, And the fear of the moment, Faded into bitter tears of guilt. He found a dark place in Jerusalem, And wept like a broken man, Because he was a broken man.

He was a colossal failure. And not only did he feel deep remorse and grief, For having disowned Jesus three times, But he was approaching utter despair, Of his soul, As he had just called down God's wrath.

[17:59] And he knew he was lying. Can anyone identify with Peter? All of us have shown our true colors, Of faithlessness.

We can recall them, The moments to our minds right now. Maybe you can recall moments, This morning, Or this week, Of your faithlessness.

We cave due to fear, Or pride, Or unchecked desires of the flesh. We seek to preserve self, Rather than suffer, As we pursue obedience.

These are our true colors. Our faithlessness. There's good news coming. I want to wait just a minute.

I want us to look at this last true color, Of human nature, In this last scene. Here it is. It is human despair, And destruction, For undervaluing Jesus.

[19:08] Human despair, And destruction, For undervaluing Jesus. The first two verses, Of chapter 27, Describe the Jewish leaders, Official sentencing of Jesus.

There was a law, That kept them from, Passing an official sentence of death, At night. So of course, They had to keep up appearances, And make sure they passed, The official death sentence, During the day. And they went off, To Pilate, With Jesus in tow, With a guilty verdict, And with a ready argument, To make sure they get, Pilate's signature, On his execution.

But Matthew doesn't, Immediately move his narrative, To Jesus' trial, Before Pilate, Just yet. He wants to make, One more comment, On the true color, Of human nature, Before that.

He tells us, That Judas hears about, This death sentence, And he feels, Deep remorse, About his decision, To betray, Jesus. We see that, In verse 3, That he changed his mind.

This is not true, Repentance of coming, Back to God, This is, Simply guilty, Remorse. So, He tells us, That Judas hears about, The death sentence, He feels the remorse, And we see, Why he feels this remorse, In verse 4.

[20:26] He comes into the temple, In despair, And he tried, To return the 30 silver pieces, To the chief priests. And he says, I've sinned, I've sinned, By betraying, Innocent blood.

Judas recognizes, The evil that he's done, He knows that he is, Responsible for the violent death, Of an innocent man, And it leads him, To guilt ridden, Despair. He is desperately, Seeking some relief, From his sense, Of shame.

He goes to the, Spiritual leaders of Israel, At the time, To seek that comfort, And is, Sorely disappointed. They tell him, What is that to us? See to it yourself.

It's not our problem. You take care of your own, Seared conscience. Well, Judas does. After a desperate, Attempt to put the money back, Where it came from, To try to clumsily, Make up for his sin, He takes care of his, Despair problem, By ending his life.

He hangs himself. The leaders, Then decide, That it is, Since it's unlawful, To return blood money, To the temple treasury, They do what their law, Permitted them to do, With blood money, Which is to meet, A public need.

[21:40] There was a public need, For a burial place, For foreigners, Outside the city limits, And so they used it for that. But before we move on, Do you see how twisted, Their thinking is? It's unlawful, To return blood money, To the temple treasury.

It's not unlawful, To draw that money out, In the first place, To betray an innocent man, And lead him to death. The irony is just thick. Both Judas, And these leaders, Valued Jesus, At 30 pieces of silver.

And although Judas felt remorse, And the leaders did not, Both of them are on their way, To destruction. They both valued Jesus, Cheaply.

He was the price, Of a common slave, Or in the leader's eyes, Just enough to buy, Some cheap property, Outside the city limits, To dump polluted bodies, For burial. So the result for Judas, Is a guilt ridden soul, With no hope of redemption.

And the prophecy, At the end of this scene, Which we'll look at in a little bit, More in depth, Is echoing a passage in Jeremiah, Where God promised destruction, For those who valued him, And his word, Cheaply.

[22:59] Friends, What value do you put on Jesus? What worth does he hold, In your heart? What do you prize him at?

Really? To know him, Is to treasure him, Above all else. To have him, Is to cling tightly to him, And it will be seen, In the end, How greatly you value him.

The God man, This absolutely unique person, Is your master, Your rescuer, Is your only hope in life, In death. Do you value him?

Do you value him cheaply? To do so, Is to invite despair, And destruction, From a wasted life. Are you trading him in, For the pursuit of pleasure, Or comfort, Or fame, Or the accomplishment of, Your will, Not the father's will?

If you're doing that, Repent. Turn to the one, Who is precious, Beyond all riches, And we're going to see, How precious he is, In just a moment.

[24:20] Matthew spends, Considerable time, And space, In this chapter, Painting a picture, Of the human nature, True colors, And we ought to feel, The ugly weight, Of it on our souls.

We ought to see, The dark colors of it, Reflecting out of our own hearts. We are meant to feel, Disgust, At this. Malice, And injustice, Towards others, Who offend our pride, Or the heavy sense, Of our own, Faithlessness, Or the way, That we value Jesus, Cheaply.

If we ended here, It would be depressing sermon. But there's another, Who is showing, His true colors, In this passage, And I want to look, At that right now. Let's look at, Jesus' true colors, It comes out, Particularly, In the first scene.

Pastor Mike, Preached last week, On Jesus' true colors, That came out, In the garden of Gethsemane. He fought, The battle, In prayer, Of submission, And obedience, To the father's will, At the utmost cost, To himself.

And then he rose, To meet his betrayer, With courage, And with confidence, Having resigned himself, Completely, To do his father's will, Every step, Of the way. And that's how, We see him in this passage, Actively, Resolved, To do the father's will, Every step of the way.

[25:45] Even though, Verse 56 tells us, That he's completely alone. It's him, And his obedience, To God, And that's it. We also see, That he's utterly silent, In the face of his accusers.

It would be easy, For him to shoot down, These lies, That are aimed at him. But the only words, He speaks in this passage, Are the very words, Of truth and faithfulness, That bring, His, Condemnation.

He incriminates himself, By speaking the truth. And he does it, Steadfastly, Resolved, To follow through, With the father's will.

Caiaphas puts him under oath, To answer whether he's the Messiah, Or not. Jesus makes his good confession, As Paul calls it, In 1 Timothy 6, He answers Caiaphas, Calmly, And truthfully, A stark contrast, To the hasty falsehoods, That are zipping about, That night.

He says, Yes to Caiaphas, I am the Messiah, It's a very hesitant, Yes though. Not hesitant, In that he's not the Messiah, But, For Caiaphas, And the rest, The Messiah was an obvious, Vanquisher of his enemies, They liked power, So it makes sense, That their Messiah, Would be obviously powerful, Not this weakling, Standing before them, So powerless, He hadn't put up a fight, Jesus wanted to make sure that he answered Caiaphas and said, yeah, I'm the Messiah but I'm not your kind of Messiah and then he clarifies the kind of Messiah that he is with two potent Old Testament passages Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 Psalm 110 is the most oft-quoted Old Testament passage in the New Testament, period it's really, really powerful in the way that it portrays the Messiah both of these passages show that the Messiah would have a unique relationship with God in fact, he would share God's power and authority so, yeah, I am that kind of Messiah, Caiaphas

[27:58] I am going to be the vanquisher of my enemies but not in the way you think Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 has the Messiah seated at the right hand of God's throne and in Daniel 7 coming with the clouds of heaven bringing God's kingdom to earth as God's appointed king sharing God's power and authority in an absolutely unique way Caiaphas wouldn't argue with this depiction of power and authority but notice the slight shift of phrase that Jesus uses he changes Caiaphas' phrase of the Christ, the Son of God to the Son of Man and if we've been reading carefully through the book of Matthew we find that the Son of Man is Jesus' favorite way of referring himself to, yes, the Messiah but the Messiah and he certainly triumphs but he triumphs through suffering back in verse 2 is one of the many examples where Jesus tells his disciples right on the eve of his destruction of his crucifixion that the Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies and crucified that's how Jesus wins that's how he vanquishes his enemies not by blasting them but by dying for them this kind of self-sacrifice was incomprehensible to these religious leaders they were only interested in self-preservation keeping a hold of their own power yes, I am that kind of Messiah speaking the

truth, Caiaphas but I'm the Messiah who dies and that's how I win and hear the very real warning in this powerful confession of Jesus notice that he says you will see the Son of Man it's a y'all you it's a plural you y'all will see the Son of Man see you at the right hand of God and coming on the clouds of heaven these leaders motivated by pure hatred and envy are standing over God's anointed one in judgment and they're ready to condemn him to death and Jesus is saying be careful the tables are about to be turned you are the judges now sitting on your corrupt judgment seat but very soon you will be standing before me as I sit at God's mighty right hand and that judgment seat knows nothing but pure justice man, doesn't this put awe in your heart?

the steady resolve of the Son of Man to obey His Father's will with the utmost perfect execution and gritty determination man, who is like this guy?

it should put awe in your hearts it's this resolve, Christian that won your freedom it's His active determination in every moment when He could have called down twelve legions of angels at any point of the whole proceeding it's this resolve that won your freedom it's this resolve to be beaten and shamed and accused by hateful evil men that purchased the forgiveness of your hateful evil heart it's His resolve to do His Father's will so faithfully that He purchased your restoration from fear-filled faithlessness to do what is right it's His resolve to treasure His Father's glory and His Father's will above all else the ransomed people like you and me who value God's glory and His will cheaply aren't you in awe of this absolutely unique person who at any moment could have stopped the whole thing?

our response should be quiet worship who is like this man and do you know why we're reading Peter's story two thousand years later?

this is the most encouraging part of the whole sermon hopefully because Peter told it he freely confessed his massive failure when he realized what Jesus endured so He could be healed and restored and put back together again he told his story freely he's like oh yeah you think your sin's bad?

[32:19] I disowned Jesus three times the very night He died for me Peter was so familiar with his failure and he confessed it freely do you know what God is saying to us in this passage?

because of Jesus' true colors of faithfulness we could be totally honest about our faithlessness stop hiding stop hiding your mess stop pretending you're fine when you're not confess that you're just a massive failure like Peter you've got nothing that you won't do better that you can't do better apart from Jesus that's the whole point of the gospel that you're more messed up than you think you are and you are more loved than you could ever dream do you see how much Jesus loves colossal failures and how much he resolved to do for colossal failures like us one author from a previous generation said this about Peter's failure isn't it kind of God that he would see to it that the most prominent leader in the church would fail so spectacularly that everyone would fear that none may presume that they can stand in the face of temptation and that all may have hope of restoration if there's hope for Peter there's hope for us because of

Jesus' true colors lastly we want to see how this human evil and this beautiful resolve of the son of God work together in this passage to fulfill God's written will all this human junk and all this sparkling obedience of Jesus was foreknown and foretold by God in his word it's a fulfillment of his gracious promise to rescue and redeem people like us if you look back at verse 54 and verse 56 of chapter 26 Jesus has this on his mind he's telling Peter calm down man how then should the scriptures be fulfilled that it might be so verse 54 verse 56 all this has taken place that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled this is all according to plan nothing is off this passage is just heavy with irony the ones who thought they were in control who held the power were actually playing perfectly into God's hands

Caiaphas and his crew they knew about the triumphant messiah of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110 for sure they knew he would come on the clouds and that he would be sitting at God's right hand but they had no clue that that messiah is the same as the suffering servant in Isaiah 53 listen to Isaiah 53 7 and think about Jesus standing on trial he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent so he opened not his mouth he doesn't resist or defend himself he has actively submitted himself to

the will of the father that was ordained hundreds of years before listen to verse 10 of Isaiah 53 it was the will of the lord to crush him he has put him to grief it was not the will of the council only the will of the council fulfilled the will of the father to crush his son on the most momentous day in history to perform the greatest loss which was the greatest victory and not only was the father's word fulfilled uttering demonstrating his utter control of the situation but so was Jesus word at the very moment that his adversaries are slapping him and mocking him that he can't prophesy which one of them hit them because they have blindfolded him

Luke tells us but one of Jesus' recent most recent prophecies was being fulfilled at that very moment outside in the courtyard with Peter disowning him human failure woven together with the son's obedience to fulfill God's perfect word Jesus is in perfect control of this situation and the third scene Matthew sees a fulfillment of God's word by making a brief reference to a prophetic theme that's found in a mashup of passages from Jeremiah 19 and Zechariah 11 that's in verse 9 and 10 of chapter 27 he cites Jeremiah because Jeremiah is the most important prophet Matthew if you compare some Old Testament passages prophecies to the fulfillment in the New Testament it's like whoa exact matchup sometimes it's like I'm not really sure if I see it this is one of those I'm not really sure if I see it it's because there's more than one way for prophecy to be fulfilled one could be just a one to one oh this is that but sometimes it can be a fulfillment of a prophetic theme or a pattern and the prophetic theme and pattern in Jeremiah 19 and Zechariah 11 is that they share in common that Israel has rejected

[37:51] God as their true leader and their shepherd and therefore judgment's on the way in Zechariah 11 the flock of God rejects the true shepherd and replaces him with false shepherds who value the price of the true shepherd at 30 pieces of silver Matthew isn't being shy with his Jewish audience here he's saying if you despise your true shepherd if you don't value him you are flirting with judgment and it is written it is written it is written friends that's the reason we gather around this book every Sunday it's not a textbook on moral living or on dead doctrine this book is breathing it's living God's word has an authority that cuts through our excuses and our pretenses and God's will will be done he has spoken the question is are we listening do you hear the authority of God's word cutting to the heart of the matter of our ugly true colors do you hear the good news coming forth with clarity of Jesus displaying his true colors do you hear him drawing you with this word of authority it's greater than you does it draw you to worship does it draw you to surrender your life to the crucified and risen

Christ does it draw you with comfort and encouragement as you fight the fight of faith to believe that he is good and he richly rewards those who earnestly seek him does this word draw you to imitate Jesus' full obedience because we're identified with him and we will suffer for the sake of the name does it draw you to want to imitate his boldness his resolve to obey the father no matter what it costs consider him who endured such hostility from evil men the author of Hebrews tells us you haven't shed blood yet in your fight against sin imitate him does God's word have such authority to draw you and enable you by his spirit to do that yes it does let me close with these words again from Hebrews therefore let us lay aside every weight and the sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking to

Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith who for the joy for the joy of redeeming a people for himself set before him endured the cross despising the shame and now is seated at the right hand of the throne of God and one day our eyes will see him every eye will see him exalted vindicated do not despise him but treasure him press forward in faith not in fear if you are here today and you are aware of your guilt before God and you are seeking relief from your despair come to him come to Jesus the elders will be down here at the front available for prayer don't let the authority of God's word be deflected off your heart but respond in obedience and faith let's pray our one defense our righteousness oh God how we need you we are a bunch of messy people we know our own hearts father you are able even at this moment by the work of your spirit in each heart to draw forth faith worship obedience and joy in the one whose true colors really shine pray that you do it now for the glory of your name for our great joy for eternity in Jesus name amen amen been